Industrial Assessment Center (IAC) Operations: Technical Assistance Field Managers and Clearinghouse/Mission Integrator

I. Background/Context

The Federal Government has been funding the IAC Program since 1976. Currently, the US Department of Energy (DOE) supports IACs at 37 institutions of higher education (IHE) across the nation. These IACs serve two purposes: first, they bolster U.S. manufacturing competitiveness by providing small- and medium-sized manufacturers with assessments and recommendations to improve energy efficiency and productivity; and second, they train the next generation of energy-savvy professionals through on-site involvement in these assessments. In addition, the IAC Program has long been characterized by its ability to adapt to changing needs of manufacturers and to incorporate advancing technologies. For more information about the IAC program, including several recent program expansions, see the following: https://www.energy.gov/mesc/industrial-assessment-centers-iacs.

For more than 30 years, a technical assistance Field Manager has played a crucial role in the operations and impact of the IAC Program. This Field Manager provides technical assistance and outreach to the IACs and serves as a mechanism for ensuring the individual IACs and their associated satellite centers perform at the highest possible level and that their activities support the achievement of MESC goals.

As the current Field Management contract is coming to an end, DOE will be selecting a new technical assistance Field Manager for the 37 IHE-based IACs funded through annual appropriations since its founding.

In addition, a recent $150 million program expansion under the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) is dedicated in part to extending the scope and reach of the IAC Program through the following initiatives:

- Establishment of IACs at community colleges, trade schools, and union training programs (Expansion IACs), for which initial selections were recently announced and for which additional funding rounds are forthcoming. The new IACs, like the existing IHE-based IACs, will require a technical assistance Field Manager to support essential operational oversight and engagement functions; and
- Creation of a clearinghouse of available expertise, tools, and resources to support IACs and assist small- and medium-sized manufacturers with industrial processes and energy efficiency.[1]

Likewise, BIL also appropriates $400 million in grants of up to $300,000 per entity for small and medium-sized manufacturers (SMMs) who have received an IAC assessment or a qualified similar assessment to implement the recommendations in those assessments.[2]

I.A. Purpose

DOE, in collaboration with its Partnership Intermediary, ENERGYWERX, intends to establish a nimble and responsive IAC operations and engagement organization that maximizes the impact of the recent

[1] 42 U.S. Code § 17116 (b)(2)(F)
[2] 42 U.S. Code § 17116 (i)

expansion of the IAC program while ensuring operational excellence of the full IAC network. This organization will consist of three identifiable and connected functions that could be performed by separate entities, a single consolidated entity, or a combination thereof, including:

- A manager for the new clearinghouse, who will also serve as a "mission integrator" responsible for ensuring that efforts across these functions are integrated as relevant and add up to more than the sum of their parts.
- A technical assistance Field Manager that services the traditional IACs – i.e., those based at institutions of higher education (IHE) – and that will support the success of the implementation grant program; and
- A technical assistance Field Manager for the new Expansion IACs at community colleges, trade schools, and union training programs.

In addition, the newly announced Centers of Excellence for the IAC program – five groups of Centers selected from the network of IHE-based IACs – will be crucial partners for these efforts. The Centers of Excellence serve as regional hubs for the IAC Program. They coordinate with and advise IACs located in their regions. In doing so, these regional Centers of Excellence advance DOE's strategic goals of (a) enhancing performance, increasing energy efficiency, and reducing industrial emissions at small- and medium-sized manufacturing facilities; (b) implementing the expanded IAC Program in a manner that leverages resources from across the Federal Government, as well as from State, Tribal, local, private sector and nongovernmental entities, to bolster the American manufacturing base; and (c) equitably developing the clean energy workforce of the future.

I.B. Key Estimated Dates

Applications Open	**3/14/2024**
Objective Strategy Session	**3/26/2024**
Office Hours Session	**4/18/2024**
Application Deadline	**4/23/2024**
Review and Selection	**4/23/2024 - 5/24/2024**
Selectees Announced	**6/5/2024**
Activities begin	**7/1/2024**

II. Applications Requested

Through this solicitation, MESC intends to provide opportunities for applicants across a range of experience levels in manufacturing and clean energy operational oversight and engagement. Applicants can apply to any single, or any combination including all three of the following tracks:

Track 1: Clearinghouse Manager/Mission Integrator

This function develops, maintains, and publicizes an external-facing IAC Clearinghouse website; manages associated outreach and communications; and ensures program data flows to and from IAC program entities to SMMs and other stakeholders; and harmonizes and integrates activities across the program.

A successful Clearinghouse will support two primary objectives: (1) connecting SMMs to IAC services and relevant MESC, DOE, and broader federal resources that help them with industrial processes and energy

efficiency, and (2) working with the regional Centers of Excellence to connect the institution of higher education (IHE)-based IACs and Expansion IACs, as well as peer institutions interested in building similar programming, to develop technical expertise and tools that support the Centers to strengthen their approaches to technical assistance and workforce development, including via specialized technical opportunities (e.g., virtual assessments, smart manufacturing assessments, experiential learning and curriculum development).

Additionally, a successful applicant will also propose a thoughtful and practical approach to ensuring effective collaboration across the Clearinghouse and two field managers' activities that ensures the IAC network is more than the sum of its parts while also preserving space for different parts of the program to operate efficiently and independently as appropriate. The functions of the Clearinghouse Manager/Mission Integrator include:

- **Developing and maintaining a Clearinghouse website with the following core components**:
    - SMM-facing landing page that helps SMMs navigate federal manufacturing support programs (including IACs) and access resources to address industrial process (including product diversification and workforce) and energy efficiency (including fuel switching) challenges and opportunities. This website will include information on (1) low or no-cost technical assistance options available to SMMs, including and beyond IAC assessments; (2) federal grant funding options like IAC implementation grants available to SMMs, with an option to include other public and private financing resources over time; (3) manufacturer self-assessment tools and energy-saving technical solutions for SMMs to consider; and (4) resources on workforce development and training programs relevant to SMMs, including apprenticeships.
    - A searchable database and accompanying map that lists IACs and various technical assistance providers, by geography. This database and map should (1) allow SMMs to easily find an IAC provider in their region and (2) enable existing IACs to find technical expertise and tools that they can use to strengthen their approaches to both technical assessments and workforce training. Over time, this database and map could be expanded to include workforce training programs (beyond IACs) relevant to SMM workforce needs.
    - Integration with the current IAC website and existing and future databases that track IAC assessments, recommendations, and other program learnings.
- **Cultivating and deploying a network of technical experts, in partnership with Centers of Excellence, National Labs, Manufacturing USA Institutes, and others**. Expertise will range from technology (e.g., leading-edge energy efficiency solutions) to pedagogy (e.g., curriculum design for workforce training programs) to community benefits (e.g., helping IACs and SMMs increase job quality for energy workers). Staff an "Ask an Expert" portal (integrated into the Clearinghouse website) that would connect manufacturers, IACs, and training program seekers to the right technical expert for their needs.
- **Supporting external-facing communications and outreach activities to increase public awareness of the IACs and other resources for SMMs**. In partnership with DOE, the Field Managers, the Centers of Excellence, and individual IACs, the Clearinghouse Manager will meet with stakeholders beyond direct IAC program participants to publicize the IAC program and other federal programs that serve SMMs. The Clearinghouse Manager will present, or support IAC

program team members in presenting, at online webinars and conferences, and develop externally oriented communications materials like user testimonials that would also be integrated into the Clearinghouse website.

- **Developing technical and informational resources for IAC clients and SMMs nationwide**. The Clearinghouse Manager will maintain and update the manufacturer-facing website functionality (referred to as IAC 101) to connect SMMs with technical information and other tools resulting from the substantial knowledge base of the Field Manager and Centers, and thereby increase the reach of the IAC program beyond facilities directly engaging with the IAC assessment model.
- **Harmonizing the delivery of technical assistance across the various components of the IAC program**. The Clearinghouse Manager, in its "mission integrator role," will ensure program data from the IAC assessments, logistical and planning data from the activity log, and student data from the registry are effectively conveyed from the Field Managers, Centers, Centers of Excellence, and ENERGYWERX to affected SMMs and other stakeholders, and that data and insights from one part of the program are shared with the others (e.g., between the IHE and Expansion IACs).
- **Ensuring collaboration and sharing across elements of the IAC program**. The Clearinghouse Manager, in its "mission integrator role," also will facilitate interaction between different parts of the IAC program (e.g., IHE IACs, Expansion IACs, and implementation grants coordinators) in partnership with the Field Managers, Centers of Excellence, and implementation grants coordinators, to ensure that relevant connections are made, insights and best practices are shared, collaborative action is occurring where appropriate (e.g., encouraging closer relationships between an IHE Center and Expansion IAC with intersecting programs), and that the IAC Program overall achieves more than the sum of its parts.

Track 2: IHE Technical Assistance Field Manager

This function serves as the liaison between the MESC Program Manager and the individual centers based at IHEs, including: monitoring center operations, assessments, and outreach activities; providing technical reviews and feedback on all IAC assessment reports; providing training and technical assistance to IAC staff and students; maintaining and upgrading the IAC websites and databases; developing technical assistance resources for IAC clients; extending the IAC program impacts beyond manufacturers and students immediately engaged by the centers (in partnership with the Clearinghouse Manager/Mission Integrator functions); and facilitating collaboration between traditional IACs and the Expansion IACs, as well as supporting the reach and success of the IAC implementation grant program (including helping to recruit applicants and helping them access application supports as needed, such as from the Centers of Excellence).

Additionally, a successful applicant will also propose a thoughtful and practical approach to ensuring effective collaboration across the two field managers' activities and clearinghouse that ensures the IAC network is more than the sum of its parts while also preserving space for different parts of the program to operate independently as appropriate. Specific functions of the IHE-based Field Manager include:

- **Coordinating and monitoring Center operations, assessments, and outreach activities**. Ensure that the Centers are able and equipped to perform their required assessments, provide guidance

on follow-through activities in order to promote greater implementation of recommendations through proactive follow-up with industries, assist the Centers in developing marketing and outreach strategies, and develop and maintain IAC communication pieces for both outreach/promotion (including for the IAC implementation grants) and results reporting.

- **Conducting periodic on-site surveillances of Centers**. Engage in monitoring activities that ensure the Centers are able, equipped, and performing their required assessments and following all required methodologies for the IAC assessment process and requirements, assessment guidelines, appropriate training/tools, and assessment results reporting.

- **Establishing a consistent and updated online IAC reporting tool and format**. Gather feedback from Centers and selected SMMs, with the ultimate aim of establishing a working page that will accept uploaded report data in a format that will be easy to follow for plant personnel and includes new assessment sections relating to industrial decarbonization and other topics (e.g., commercial building assessments, cybersecurity, and resiliency planning), as appropriate.

- **Coordinating IAC student and alumni activities**. Develop and maintain an active student/alumni support system, including a student-focused part of the IAC webpage, informational resources to promote technical excellence and activities to improve cross-communication between students and other Centers and alumnae. This includes managing the student and alumni registry, promoting its use, and keeping track of metrics associated with student use. The Field Manager will also facilitate IAC mentor/mentee relationships, including the Women for Energy Efficiency (WE2) Network, through events, workshops, seminars, etc., and by providing opportunities for leadership development and facilitating the exchange of ideas with others in the energy field. Moreover, the Field Manager will help identify potential candidates for participation in any future IAC internship/apprenticeship program – both students and host entities.

- **Providing technical reviews of all IAC assessment reports**. Review all IAC assessment reports to ensure they include necessary information and that all calculations are correct and are consistent with fundamental engineering principles. The reviews should include an evaluation of the Centers' recommendations on technical grounds and preparation of a critique summarizing the reviews within 30 days of receipt, both of which are returned to the Centers for response. As appropriate, Field Manager personnel will participate in the evaluation process for applicants under the IAC implementation grant program. In addition, the technical reviews of the assessment reports are the basis for Center performance evaluations or an IAC "report card," which are prepared at the end of each quarter and also include measures for student participation numbers and student certificates issued.

- **Integrating DOE priorities on practices and technologies into IAC operations**, possibly including decarbonization, resiliency planning, smart manufacturing, product line diversification, cybersecurity, energy management, and commercial building and wastewater treatment assessments. These integration activities will likely involve collaboration with third-party organizations with relevant subject expertise such as the national laboratories, Manufacturing USA Institutes (e.g., CYMANII for cybersecurity, CESMII for smart manufacturing), and state, regional, and Federal partners (e.g., NIST MEP).

- **Providing training and technical assistance to IACs**. Provide training on both technical issues and programmatic priorities as needed. The Field Manager will remain current on best practices in industrial energy efficiency and promote these amongst the Centers, including via leveraging the clearinghouse website and network of technical experts (Track 1).

- **Organizing meetings, webinars, and training sessions, and hosting an annual Directors' meeting**. Provide logistical support for any specialized meetings, monthly webinars or other in-person or virtual sessions, including the annual Directors' meeting. In addition, as new Centers or inexperienced Directors at established Centers join the program, they will require extensive training both technically and on programmatic and administrative procedures. This might be accomplished, for instance, via multiday hands-on training courses led by the Field Manager. Close collaboration with DOE will indicate when such training is advisable.

- **Maintaining and upgrading the IAC websites and databases**. Provide continuous operational oversite, maintenance, and updates to the IAC.university website and database. In addition, periodically review all individual Center websites to ensure that program priorities are followed, including that they are current and provide potential clients and end users with relevant, actionable information. Ensure these operations are harmonized with the outreach and engagement activities of the soon-to-be-developed IAC clearinghouse. Provide database quality assurance, including: reviewing data uploaded to ensure it is consistent throughout the recommendations (e.g., using the same cost of energy, same operating schedule, etc.), ensuring the data passes reasonableness tests (e.g., do numbers fit within what would be reasonable for various types of recommendations), and ensuring that the data is complete and includes DOE-requested flags for items such as replication and spinoff projects. Maintain data services such that all needed quantitative reporting through the database is available to DOE (for reporting purposes) in a timely and useful manner. Incorporate Center of Excellence specialized assessment reports into the IAC databases, too.

- **Facilitating commercial building assessments**. Fully integrate commercial building assessments conducted under the on-going pilot project into the traditional IAC program by: (1) reviewing and critiquing all current commercial building assessment reports to devise a consistent report template; (2) continuously evaluate the results of the pilot program to identify best practices and better understand the differences between commercial and industrial assessments; and (3) evaluate community college and professional training activities to make sure that pilot efforts address program workforce development goals. Coordinate, where appropriate, with the newly launched Building Training and Assessment Centers – overseen by DOE's Office of State and Community Energy Programs (and several of which are co-located with IACs).

- **Monitoring Center of Excellence operations, assessments, and outreach activities**. Ensure that the Centers of Excellence can perform their specialized assessments, provide guidance on engaging and coordinating with the other Centers of Excellence and Expansion IACs, assist in client recruitment and follow-through activities to promote greater implementation of recommendations, and develop and maintain communication pieces for outreach, promotion (including of the IAC implementation grants opportunity), and results reporting.

- **Providing technical reviews of all Center of Excellence specialized assessment reports**. Review all Center of Excellence assessment reports to ensure they include necessary assessment information and that all calculations are correct and are entirely consistent with fundamental engineering principles. Provide comments/corrections, as necessary, and return the reports to the Center of Excellence. The Field Manager should provide summaries of review and critiques of the assessment reports to the Centers within 30 days of receipt.

- **Supporting the success of the IAC implementation grants program.** Work with the DOE program team to maximize the reach and success of the implementation grants program. Ensure the Centers are reaching out to their previous and new clients to inform them of the grant opportunity and how to get more information. Collect and synthesize feedback from the Centers and their clients on how to improve the program.

Track 3: Expansion Technical Assistance Field Manager

This function performs many similar activities to the IHE Technical Assistance Field Manager, but with a focus on the new Expansion IACs (and without the focus on the Centers of Excellence). The range of training and manufacturer technical assistance activities conducted by these IACs will be broader than that for the IHE-based IACs; likewise, many of these IACs will be less familiar with managing federal awards than the traditional IACs. As a result, the role of the Expansion Technical Field Manager will likely involve more hands-on support for development and deployment of operations, assessments, and outreach activities; federal award management; and structured impact measurement.

Additionally, a successful applicant will propose a thoughtful and practical approach to ensuring effective collaboration across the field managers' activities and clearinghouse that ensures the IAC network is more than the sum of its parts while also preserving space for different parts of the program to operate independently as appropriate. Functions of the Expansion IAC Technical Field Manager include:

- **Collecting, reviewing, and managing Expansion IAC program data**. Specific data priorities will be developed by DOE with Field Manager input, but data collection categories may include: participants trained, students/trainees placed in jobs, related job quality measures, SMMs served and type of service provided, and employer partnerships developed. Review data to ensure there is a standardized format(s) and level of detail across IAC programs, as appropriate. Maintain a database of these program metrics for all Expansion IACs and design the database to align with IACs' reporting requirements.

- **Monitoring IACs and ensuring quality of program delivery**. Provide quality control and oversight of (1) services that IACs provide to SMMs and (2) IACs' student training and workforce development activities, including ensuring that job quality (as defined by the Department of Commerce and Department of Labor's Good Jobs Principles) remains a salient consideration for IACs' program design, employer partnerships, and career pathway supports. This may include in-person SMM site visits for technical assistance alongside DOE program staff. Review all reports submitted by Skilled Trades IACs to ensure the IAC is pursuing and achieving milestones aligned to the program's overall objectives, including both reports on services provided to SMMs (e.g., a post-assessment summary) and reports on workforce development and job quality outcomes.
- **Providing onboarding assistance to new IACs**. Provide technical assistance and other support to new IACs to ensure a smooth transition as they join the existing group of centers.

- **Connecting IAC program leaders and participants to resources, expertise, and mentorship opportunities across and beyond the IAC network**. Help individual IACs find and utilize expertise and technical resources, both across the IAC network and from the broader fields of manufacturing and workforce development. This work may include facilitating 1:1 or group working sessions among IACs facing similar challenges and opportunities, as well as helping IACs use the clearinghouse well. Playing an effective "connector" role will require the Field Manager to build close relationships with individual IACs and proactively stay up to date on the latest activities and challenges across programs. As a connector, the Field Manager will also play a critical role in developing mentor/mentee networks suited to the unique strengths and opportunities of the skilled trades IACs.

- **Providing coaching to strengthen IACs' technical knowledge and workforce development capacity**. Develop and maintain—either in-house or via collaboration with partners including the IHE-based IAC Field Manager (Track 2)—deep and broad expertise on workforce development best practices, as well as clean energy, energy efficiency, and advanced manufacturing solutions relevant to SMMs. Use this up-to-date expertise to provide coaching and technical resources to individual IACs. Help IACs identify strengths and areas for improvement in their program delivery. Specific coaching focus areas may depend on the individual IAC, but could include:

    - Ensure IACs develop and adopt industry-recognized and -valued credentials, and train for in-demand skills;
    - Help IACs better incorporate the Good Jobs Principles into their programming (e.g., in deciding which roles to train for and employer partnerships to emphasize)
    - Support IACs to develop deeper and more effective employer partnerships and increase job placement and retention rates;
    - Confirm that IAC-provided student support and mentorship programs are appropriately designed for target populations and identify ways to improve effectiveness;
    - Encourage IACs to incorporate Registered Apprenticeships and other high-quality work-based learning opportunities into program activities;
    - Help IACs develop and deploy technical assistance services for SMMs that provide hands-on learning opportunities for students and trainees (in close partnership with the IHE Field Manager); and
    - Provide opportunities for IACs to learn about technical challenges in manufacturing and solutions aligned to IAC goals (in close partnership with the IHE Field Manager).

- **Establish and maintain an Expansion IAC webpage, in coordination with the Clearinghouse Manager and IHE Field Manager**. Develop an external-facing webpage with the Clearinghouse Manager and IHE Field Manager that includes brief descriptions of each Expansion IAC, including the IAC's objectives, leadership, location, and key achievements. Work with the Clearinghouse Manager to integrate this information into the broader IAC Clearinghouse and with the IHE Field Manager to ensure parallelism of information, where appropriate.

- **Organize meetings, webinars, and training sessions**. As needed, provide logistics support for cross-IAC meetings, and webinars. This may include an annual Expansion IAC Directors' Meeting, or other cross-IAC onboarding and training events (possibly including combined IHE and

Expansion IAC directors' meetings). Close partnership with DOE will determine when such sessions are needed.

- **Integrate DOE technology, workforce training, and community benefits priorities into Expansion IACs**. This includes both technical focus areas (like decarbonization, resiliency planning, and product line diversification), workforce training approaches (like Registered Apprenticeships and worker upskilling opportunities), and community benefits topics (e.g., job quality and diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility). Encourage IACs to incorporate DOE priorities further into their work where possible within grant agreements.

II.A. Community Benefits

To support the goal of building a clean and equitable energy economy, applicants are expected to ensure the network promotes DOE's community benefits priorities, namely: (i) providing meaningful community and labor engagement; (ii) investing in high-quality jobs and a skilled workforce; (iii) advancing diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility; and (iv) contributing to the President's *Justice40 Initiative* goal that 40% of the overall benefits of certain federal investments flow to disadvantaged communities (DACs). For more on how DOE defines each area, please see: https://www.energy.gov/infrastructure/about-community-benefits-plans.

III. Eligibility and Award Overview

III.A. General Eligibility Requirements

Every performer and sub-performer(s) must meet the following eligibility requirements:

- **Must be domestic entities.** To qualify as a domestic entity, the entity must be organized, chartered, or incorporated (or otherwise formed) under the laws of a particular state or territory of the United States; have majority domestic ownership and control; and have a physical place of business in the United States.

- **In good standing for Federal program participation.** Entities banned from doing business with the United States government such as entities debarred, suspended, or otherwise excluded from or ineligible for participating in Federal programs are not eligible. Additionally, nonprofit organizations described in Section 501(c)(4) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 that engaged in lobbying activities after December 31, 1995, are not eligible to apply for funding.

Please note that federally funded research and development centers (FFRDCs) are eligible to apply, but will be funded outside of the Partnership Intermediary Agreement if selected.

III.B. Project Partners and Subrecipients

Partnerships with other stakeholders are strongly encouraged, including formal subrecipient(s) and other implementation partners. All subrecipients must meet the General Eligibility Requirements noted above.

III.C. Coordination with Other Manufacturing Investment and Industrial Assistance Efforts

DOE encourages responses to this solicitation that coordinate with, leverage, and build upon existing programs and entities, including:

- Department of Labor-recognized High Road Training Programs
- Existing and planned DOE and other federal investments in clean energy supply chains catalogued on the Building America's Clean Energy Future and Investing in America resources
- DOE's Better Plants program, Onsite Energy Technical Assistance Partnerships, and the ISO 50001 program.
- Federal Energy Management Program
- Manufacturing USA Institutes
- National Institute of Standards and Technology's Manufacturing Extension Partnership (MEP)
- State Energy Offices and Programs
- Trade associations and regional energy efficiency organizations
- Energy services providers and utility efficiency programs and
- Other related Federal, State, and Tribal efforts

III.D. Estimated Funding Level and Timing

Solicitation Topic	Maximum Funding	Award Duration	Required Cost Share	Annual Funding
1. Clearinghouse Manager/Mission Integrator	Up to $3 million	4 years	0 percent	$750K, subject to annual go/no-go decision
2. IHE Technical Assistance Field Manager	Up to $8 million	4 years	0 percent	$2M, subject to annual go/no-go decision
3. Expansion Technical Assistance Field Manager	Up to $5 million	4 years	0 percent	$1.25M, subject to annual go/no-go decision
TOTAL	*Up to $16 million**	4 years	0 percent	

** MESC expects that there will be economies of scale associated with an award if a single entity proposes to perform the services under multiple Tracks.*

IV. Application Process and Contents

IV.A. How to Apply

Use the Submittable online portal to submit all materials.

IV.B. What to Submit

A **complete** application for Tracks 1, 2 and/or 3 of this solicitation requires an online questionnaire, a project narrative (submitted as an attachment to the questionnaire), letters of commitment from all subrecipient and third-party cost share providers, resumes for key personnel, and a project budget, as detailed below.

Additionally, the applicant must certify it is not owned by, controlled by, or subject to the jurisdiction or direction of government of Country of Risk. DOE defines Country of Risk to include China, Russia, North Korea and Iran. This list is subject to change.

The project narrative cannot exceed **10 pages** in total (excluding the cover page) using 12-point font and 1-inch margins, including supporting visualizations or graphics. If an applicant elects to submit a proposal for multiple Tracks, the overall page limit for the project narrative is increased by 5 pages for each additional Track – i.e., 15 pages for any two Tracks and 20 pages for all three Tracks.

Any content in excess of 10 pages will not be considered by reviewers. **Note that the letters of commitment, resumes, and budget workbook DO NOT COUNT towards the 10-page limit.**

The table below outlines the content that should be in the project narrative.

Section	Suggested length	Description
Cover Page	1 page max. (does not count toward 10-page limit)	The Cover Page should include: • Project title • Lead applicant institution • Proposed budget • Names of business point of contact and lead project managers • Names of subrecipients and any other formalized project partners, including identified employer partner(s) • Project location(s) • Any statements regarding confidentiality
Understanding and Approach	3 pages	The Understanding and Approach should contain the following information: • Key considerations that inform the scope and approach of the proposed recipient/sub-recipients; • Description of the overall vision and objectives of the proposed work, as well as a justification for why the proposed approach is best suited to address the of stakeholders, especially with respect to disadvantaged communities; and • Discussion of the impacts and benefits of the proposed approach, including how it will address the four community benefits topics in Section II.A. • For the Clearinghouse, please also explain the proposed approach to developing the website (e.g., in house vs. subcontracted).
Project Team and Past Performance	2 pages	The Project Team and Past Performance section should include summaries of any relevant projects conducted by the prime recipient and/or subrecipients and how they relate to the proposed scope of work, with a particular focus on work with small- and medium-sized manufacturers, universities, community colleges, trade schools, and union training programs.
Workforce Development and Training	2 pages	The Workforce Development and Training section should describe expertise and the approach for developing and delivering technical training to students and small and medium-sized manufactures, as well as fostering long-term engagement, mentoring, skills enhancement, career navigation services, and job quality for these individuals.
Workplan	2 pages	The Workplan section should: • Describe the major tasks throughout the course of the project, including expected milestones and duration of each task
Project Resources	1 page	The Project Resources section should: • Identify the organizations participating in the project and their capabilities, expertise, and responsibilities; and • Describe relevant resources (e.g., facilities, online information hubs, technical assistance materials, equipment) being leveraged. *Note: for the Expansion field manager (Track 3), please make sure to identify the specific expertise on the team for <u>each</u> of the institution types: community colleges, trade schools, and union training programs.*

If selected, performers will establish a business-to-business agreement with ENERGYWERX and define project activities (e.g., tasks, milestones, deliverables) in a concise Statement of Effort (SOE) document. MESC also expects awardees to provide regular updates on progress through quarterly calls and concise reports, and to participate in peer-to-peer learning opportunities/workshops a few times per year.

Letters of Commitment

Submit letters of commitment from all subrecipient and third-party cost share providers. If applicable, the letter must state that the third party is committed to providing a specific minimum dollar amount or value of in-kind contributions allocated to cost sharing. The following information for each third party contributing to cost sharing should be identified: (1) the name of the organization; (2) the proposed dollar amount to be provided; and (3) the proposed cost sharing type (cash or in-kind contributions).

Each letter must not exceed 1 page. Save the letters of commitment in a single PDF using the following convention for the title "LeadOrganization_LOCs".

Letters of support or endorsement for the project from entities that do not have a substantive role in the project are not accepted or reviewed.

Resumes for Key Personnel

Applicants must submit a one-page resume for the Project Director and up to five additional senior/key personnel. The resumes should include the following:

- Contact Information;
- Education and training: Provide institution, major/area, degree, and year for undergraduate, graduate, and postdoctoral training;
- Education and training: Provide institution, major/area, degree, and year for undergraduate, graduate, and postdoctoral training;
- Research and Professional Experience: Beginning with the current position, list professional/academic positions in chronological order with a brief description. List all current academic, professional, or institutional appointments, foreign or domestic, at the applicant institution or elsewhere, whether or not remuneration is received, and, whether full-time, part-time, or voluntary; and
- Awards and honors.

Save resumes in a single PDF using the following convention for the title "LeadOrganization_Resumes".

Project Budget

Applicants must complete the Project Budget, which is found on Submittable. Applicants must complete each tab of the Project Budget for the project as a whole, including all work to be performed by the prime recipient and its subrecipients and contractors. The "Instructions and Summary" included with the Budget Justification Workbook will auto-populate as the applicant enters information into the Workbook. Applicants must carefully read the "Instructions and Summary" tab provided within the Budget Justification Workbook. Save the Budget Justification Workbook in a single Microsoft Excel file using the following convention for the title "LeadOrganization_Budget".

IV.C. Review Criteria

Review Criteria for Clearinghouse Manager/Mission Integrator

Applications for Track 1 will be evaluated against the technical review criteria shown below. All sub-criteria are of equal weight.

Criterion 1: Project Management Approach (30%)

This criterion involves consideration of the following factors:

- Demonstrated understanding of Program goals, objectives, and responsibilities.
- Effectiveness of proposed organizational model for achieving Program goals, objectives, and responsibilities, including promotion of community benefits.
- Demonstrated ability to use technology and data tools to support achievement of Program goals, objectives, and responsibilities.
- Completeness and reasonableness of proposed workplan and milestones.
- Adequacy of identification of risks and timely and appropriate strategies for mitigation and resolution.

Criterion 2: Project Team and Past Performance (25%)

This criterion involves consideration of the following factors:

- Qualifications of proposed staff, including past experience with website development and maintenance, industrial facilities, and student and worker training.
- Demonstrated expertise in developing, maintaining, and publicizing an external-facing website; managing associated outreach and communications activities; and ensuring program data flows
- Demonstrated ability to work effectively with governmental and nongovernmental stakeholders, including universities, community colleges, trade schools, and union training programs, to advance Program goals and objectives.
- Demonstrated experience engaging in broad regional outreach to small- and medium-sized manufacturers and particularly manufacturers in disadvantaged communities.
- Demonstrated expertise coordinating and collaborating with stakeholders to develop and deploy technical resources to benefit small- and medium-sized manufacturers regionally.

Criterion 3: Teaching, Training, Workforce Development, and Job Quality (30%)

This criterion involves consideration of the following factors:

- Quality of plan to support development and delivery of effective web-based technical resources and solutions to regional small- and medium-sized manufacturers and their workers.
- Quality of plan to facilitate networking and remote engagement activities for students, alumni, and existing workers.

- Quality of plan to remotely assist small- and medium-sized manufacturers to support workforce education and training.
- Quality of plan to support partnerships with registered apprenticeships, JATCs, and labor-management training partnerships, and to ensure participants are trained for high-quality jobs in accordance with the aforementioned Good Jobs Principles.

Criterion 4: Project Budget and Resources (15%)

This criterion involves consideration of the following factors:

- Reasonableness of budget and spend plan for proposed project and objectives.
- Adequacy of facilities, equipment, and other resources.

Review Criteria for Field Managers

Applications for Tracks 2 and 3 will be evaluated against the technical review criteria shown below. All sub-criteria are of equal weight.

Criterion 1: Project Management Approach (30%)

This criterion involves consideration of the following factors:

- Demonstrated understanding of Program goals, objectives, and responsibilities.
- Effectiveness of proposed organizational model for achieving Program goals, objectives, and responsibilities, including promotion of community benefits.
- Demonstrated ability to use technology and data tools to support achievement of Program goals, objectives, and responsibilities.
- Completeness and reasonableness of proposed workplan and milestones.
- Adequacy of identification of risks and timely and appropriate strategies for mitigation and resolution.

Criterion 2: Project Team and Past Performance (25%)

This criterion involves consideration of the following factors:

- Qualifications of proposed professors and staff, including past experience with industrial facilities, providing student training in energy related matters, and active integration with existing curriculum.
- Technical expertise and experience working with small- and medium-sized manufacturers to improve energy efficiency, material efficiency, productivity, cybersecurity, and resilience, and reduce waste, emissions, and pollution.
- Demonstrated ability to provide or facilitate high-quality training and education to students and small- and medium-sized manufacturers regarding new and priority technologies, tools, and practices.

- Demonstrated ability to work effectively with governmental and nongovernmental stakeholders, including universities community colleges, trade schools, and union training programs, to advance Program goals and objectives.
- Demonstrated experience engaging in broad regional outreach to small- and medium-sized manufacturers and particularly manufacturers in disadvantaged communities.
- Demonstrated expertise coordinating and collaborating with stakeholders to develop and deploy technical resources to benefit small- and medium-sized manufacturers regionally.

Criterion 3: Teaching, Training, Workforce Development, and Job Quality (30%)

This criterion involves consideration of the following factors:

- Quality of plan to support development and delivery of effective technical resources and solutions to regional small- and medium-sized manufacturers and their workers in a variety of formats.
- Quality of plan to support development and delivery of effective mentoring, training, and curricular resources to IACs their directors, their staff, and their students or trainees.
- Quality of plan to support regional student-focused activities, including connecting graduates and private industry, supporting student research competitions, hosting regional events, recognizing achievements, and maintaining alumni involvement.
- Quality of plan to ensure participants are trained for high-quality jobs in accordance with the aforementioned Good Jobs Principles
- Quality of plan to work with small- and medium-sized manufacturers to support workforce education and training, including through learning opportunities associated with IACs, leading to upskilling opportunities for incumbent workers to learn and earn credentials, resulting in promotions or raises in the workplace.
- Quality of plan to support partnerships with registered apprenticeships, joint apprenticeship training committees (JATCs), and labor-management training partnerships to ensure quality earn-as-you-learn training resulting in nationally recognized credentials.
- Quality of plan to leverage national and regional relationships, including through the entering of articulation agreements with community colleges, trade schools, and union training programs, to support development of clean energy workforce pathways offering equitable access for all Americans to high quality clean energy jobs.

Criterion 4: Project Budget and Resources (15%)

This criterion involves consideration of the following factors:

- Reasonableness of budget and spend plan for proposed project and objectives.
- Adequacy of facilities, equipment, and other resources.

- Level of commitment from the proposing college or university and the host department that a Center will have strong administrative support as well as support from other departments, potentially including business, marketing, communications, IT, and other areas.

IV. D. Program Policy Factors

In addition to the above criteria, DOE reviewers may consider the following program policy factors in determining which applications to select for Business-to-Business Agreement negotiations:

- The degree to which the proposed project will draw and expand upon the prior success and impact of the IAC program and the applicant as an IAC;
- The degree to which the proposed project exhibits technological diversity when compared to the existing DOE project portfolio and other projects selected from the subject FOA;
- The degree to which the proposed project, including proposed cost share, optimizes the use of available DOE funding to achieve programmatic objectives;
- The degree to which the proposed project is likely to lead to increased high-quality employment and manufacturing in the United States;
- The degree to which the proposed project, or group of projects, represent a desired geographic distribution;
- The degree to which the proposed project incorporates applicant or team members from Minority Serving Institutions (e.g., Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs)/Other Minority Serving Institutions); and partnerships with Minority Business Enterprises, Minority Owned Businesses, Woman Owned Businesses, Veteran Owned Businesses, or tribal nations.

IV.E. Pre-Selection Clarifications and Post-Selection Information Requests

At DOE's discretion, the review panel can send requests for clarification via email or live discussion to solicitation applicants. These requests are a critical tool for DOE to secure the information required to evaluate an applicant's proposal and qualifications. Lead applicant contacts should be prepared to respond to any requests within [four] business days of receipt.

If selected for Business-to-Business Agreement negotiations, DOE reserves the right to require that selected applicants provide additional or clarifying information regarding the application submissions, the project, the project team, the award requirements, and any other matters related to anticipated award.

V. Review Process

The application review process includes several steps and will take multiple months to complete from the application due date to DOE's announcement of selections for negotiation. DOE anticipates using the following review process:

- **Receive and screen applications.** ENERGYWERX will receive applications and transmit to DOE. DOE will review applications to ensure they meet basic eligibility requirements. Incomplete applications and applications from entities deemed ineligible for IAC awards will be notified and will not receive further consideration.

- **Application review.** DOE may use independent expert reviewers and federal employees to review applications in-depth for each evaluation criterion. Selections are made among technically meritorious projects and use of program policy factors as outlined in Section VI.C to make the final decisions.
- **Request clarifications as needed.** DOE, via ENERGYWERX, may send requests for clarification via email or live discussion (interview) to applicants. These requests are a critical tool for DOE to secure the information required to evaluate an applicant's proposal and qualifications. Lead applicant contacts should be prepared to respond to any requests within several business days of receipt, specific deadlines and requirements will be provided at the time of request.
- **Notify applicants.** Selected and unselected applicants will be notified of their application status by ENERGYWERX. Selected applicants will move into Business-to-Business Agreement negotiations with ENERGYWERX. Unselected applicants will receive consolidated reviewer feedback that can inform future applications to the IAC Program or to other programs that better suit their objectives.
- **Negotiate Business to Business Agreements.** Selected applicants will work with ENERGYWERX to align on a final Business to Business Agreement including timelines, milestones, and payment amounts and agreeing to the Research and Development Agreement terms and conditions.
- **Sign Business to Business Agreements and execute projects.** Selected applicants, ENERGYWERX, and DOE will sign the final Business to Business Agreement and move into project execution, reporting, and monitoring for the duration of the project (see Section VII.D for more on reporting and monitoring).

V.A. Cost Share

For most applicants, cost sharing is not required under this solicitation. However, per Section VI.B., an applicant's ability to leverage outside funding to ensure and enhance the success of the program, as well as its sustainability following the federal award period, may be considered.

In the event an applicant intends to propose voluntary committed cost share, ENERGYWERX has included a cost share information sheet on this funding opportunity's landing page to assist applicants in calculating proper cost share amounts.