

Meghan Camello, TechWerx

Hello everyone, we'll get started in just a minute.

Looks like attendance is rounding off, Bill, do you want to.

Bill Ferris, TechWerx

Very good. Yep, happy to. Hello everyone. Thanks so much to everyone for being here for this webinar. Just got a few quick announcements before we begin. If you need any assistance today throughout the event, please use the Q&A function, and I'll be happy to address any technical needs you might have or need in there.

The Q&A is the best place to place questions you have for our presenters today and our panelists, and we'll try to get to as many questions as possible, and as you see the questions submitted, you're able to upvote those, upvote those questions, and that will help us understand which of those questions are most interesting to all of you.

Today's office hours are being recorded and will be posted for archival viewing, and you'll get an email about that when it's ready. So lastly, if you would like to use the caption function on your screen for today's webinar, you just click on the CC button on the toolbar and click on Show Subtitles, and each of you can individually manage that for your own screen.

So without further ado, I'd love to hand things over to our panelists and presenters to get us going.

Meghan Camello, TechWerx

Awesome. Thank you, Bill.

Hello, everyone. Good afternoon, good morning, depending on where you're joining us from. We're very excited to host the first Office Hours for the Partnerships for Academic Industry Career Training Initiative, or the PACT Initiative.

This opportunity is being funded by the Department of Energy, Hydrocarbons and Geothermal Energy Office, and Office of Indian Energy Policy and Programs.

So, for a brief intro, I'm going to do a few housekeeping items. My name is Meg, and I'm part of the TechWerx Hub, and I'll explain a little bit what TechWerx is but a couple housekeeping items before we get started.

Questions that you all have in the Q&A will be handled towards the end of this session. We're going to be using the Q&A function of Zoom. If you don't see it on the bottom of your screen, there is three dots. If you click on that, you should see the Q&A, button. So please

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go ahead, and enter questions as you have them. Vote for questions that you want to make sure get answered. And note that when you submit a question, the name that you registered with to attend this webinar will appear with your question, but if you'd like to ask a question offline, you can feel free to send us an email at info@techwerx.org.

Just due to timing, we might not be able to get through all of the questions that we have today live, but we'll try to get through as many as we can, and for those questions that we aren't able to answer live today, all of the questions will be handled offline and passed over to DOE, and they'll work on getting them answered. All of the answers, both the ones that are answered live and the ones that are answered offline, will be posted on the FAQs on the opportunity page of our website. And we'll continue to update this FAQ section periodically over the next month.

And just a couple other things before we get started. Per DOE guidance, we do not allow any AI chatbots or note-taking assistance in this webinar. So, tools such as Otter.ai and other note-taking AI bots. Though you shouldn't need them because this Office Hours is being recorded, and the recording, along with the transcript, the FAQs, and the slides that we're presenting today will be available on the website in a few business days, and you will receive an email when all of this information is uploaded on our website.

The Department of Energy's Hydrocarbons and Geothermal Energy Office and Office of Indian Energy Policy and Programs, through a partnership intermediary agreement with TechWerx, is seeking to increase the number of skilled individuals in the energy workforce.

TechWorks is an innovation hub designed to facilitate connections and collaboration between DOE, academia, nonprofits, startups, and other innovation stakeholders across the United States. The hub is managed by RTI International, which is an independent research institute based in Research Triangle Park in North Carolina.

TechWerx offers opportunities in many different topical areas, so we recommend that you follow us on LinkedIn, or sign up for our newsletter on our website so that you can get email updates and newsletters, and be notified of new opportunities as they are announced.

For this opportunity, TechWerx is working with the Hydrocarbons and Geothermal Energy Office and Office of Indian Energy Policy and Programs at DOE.

Today, we are joined by two people from the office, Caleb Woodall, Program Manager of University Training and Research with Hydrocarbons and Geothermal Energy Office, and Raymond RedCorn, Tribal Affairs Specialist with the Office of Indian Energy Policy and Programs. With that, I'm going to pass it over to Raymond to introduce himself, provide more information about the PACT Initiative.

Raymond RedCorn, DOE IE

Thank you, Meg, really appreciate it, and we're happy to be here today, and just want to thank everybody for just showing up to ask questions. We really appreciate you being here.

As Meg mentioned, I'm a Tribal Affairs Specialist for the Office of Indian Energy Policy and Programs. We are an office within the Department of Energy, which was established by Congress specifically to serve tribes, and in that vein, we are excited to be partnering with the Hydrocarbon and Geothermal Office and TechWerx. Specifically to be offering \$2.3 million, or up to \$2.3 million for tribal colleges and universities to participate in this opportunity. With that, I will hand it to Caleb.

Caleb Woodall, DOE HGEO

Thanks, Raymond. My name's Caleb Woodall, and as says on the screen I manage the University Training and Research Program within the Hydrocarbons and Geothermal Energy Office of the Department of Energy. Our office, HGEO, is established to cover advancements for the industries of coal, oil, and natural gas, and geothermal energy, and really unleash the full potential of those subsurface energy resources.

The University Training and Research Program seeks to train the next generation of highly skilled workforce to support those target industries of coal, oil, gas, and geothermal energy.

In today's Office Hour session, we'll be providing a brief overview of the opportunity and outline the requirements and process for submitting an application before leaving ample time for audience questions.

The following presentation is just an abbreviated version of the webinar we provided on May 13th, so you can find a recording and the slide deck and the transcript of that full webinar presentation by scrolling near the bottom of the opportunity page on the TechWerx website.

So first here, we're going to take an overview of the PACT initiative opportunity. So, as a reminder, why DOE has developed the PACT initiative? We've really developed it to overcome the challenges that are stated by energy employers, especially highlighted in our U.S. Energy and Employment Report. And, as such, we are seeking to improve the volume of trained, qualified personnel entering the American energy workforce.

The partnerships involved in awarded projects here will facilitate the development of well-rounded training programs that lead to industry-recognized credentials for in-demand, high-paying occupations. So, as just stated, again, just to make sure it's very clear, and, you know, we have the purpose and objectives here very clearly laid out. You know, the PACT initiative has been developed to increase the number of highly skilled individuals entering the American energy workforce. So our objective here is to establish regional consortia to

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develop hands-on training and credentialing programs in skill areas that serve the natural gas, oil, coal, and geothermal energy industries.

DOE has made approximately \$11.3 million available to fund projects at institutions of higher education, and up to \$2.3 million of this funding will be awarded exclusively to tribal colleges and universities.

The PACT Initiative has two topic areas. At high level, awards under Topic Area A will involve enhancing an existing training program, or reorienting an existing training program to focus on energy careers. Proposed budgets for these awards must be within the range of \$100,000 to \$300,000. And then awards under Topic Area B will establish new training programs that focus on energy careers. Proposed budgets for these awards should be within 1-2 million dollars. The number of total awards in each topic area will depend on the number of highly scored proposals that we receive, but we've given a general range, kind of based on some math here on the screen.

The eligible technology areas that we're really looking to stimulate the workforce for are here on the screen. The training program proposed must prepare people to work in one or more of these technical areas that are also described on the opportunity page. When identifying a technology area of focus, keep in mind that the core mission of the Hydrocarbons Geothermal Energy Office that we've discussed in the webinar and on the website as well. Our goal with this PACT initiative is preparing a highly skilled technical workforce to support the oil, natural gas, coal, and geothermal industries.

Again, we're establishing consortia here, so we're seeking to support consortia with several members that collaborate to create a successful workforce pipeline in our target industries. As such, we expect each consortia to involve one two-year institution of higher education, two industry employers, and one workforce development entity. This is at a minimum. It can involve however many other members that you and your application team see fit.

A two-year institution should be the primary host of the training program, where participants enroll and receive credentials upon successful completion of the program.

The industry employers should be able to identify skills needed in the industry, they should recognize the credentials that are awarded by the training program, and they should be capable of hiring graduates of that training program.

The workforce development entity should be part of, designated by, or formally partnered with the public workforce system under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act. This entity should have expertise in workforce development and should provide leadership in at least two activities listed on the opportunity page, such as understanding and analyzing

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regional need for education and training in the target technology area, assessing potential participants for the program, and providing supportive services.

The application must be submitted by an institution of higher education. This institution may be the two-year institution that is the host of the program, but that is not required. So, it may be also submitted by a four-year institution who can be involved in the program, but should not be the primary host of the training program where students are receiving credentials.

Other stakeholders, including DOE national laboratories, Indian tribes, other educational entities, workforce intermediaries, regional apprenticeship and training representatives, can also be included in the consortium, but are not required here. The ones on the screen are what we're requiring.

So, the award process, and I'll review this is at a high level, what projects will be achieving. Awarded projects in both topic areas will begin in Phase 1, the planning phase. And, during Phase 1, the awarded consortium will develop an action plan to enhance or establish their training programs. This could last between 2 to 12 months, as proposed in your application. After successfully meeting go-no-go metrics that you establish in your application and through award negotiations, projects will move on to Phase 2, the execution phase. In this phase, consortia will implement the action plan through which the enhanced or established training programs will graduate at least one cohort of students. This phase will last 12 to 24 months, again, as proposed by the applicant. Also, part of Phase 2 is reporting. So, awarded consortia will be responsible for emitting semi-annual reports of student work placement rates for 2 years after the initiation of courses. To be clear, we're looking for rates of enrollment, retention, graduation, and work placement to ensure that, or to be able to monitor the progress and success of the programs that we're supporting.

All right, so those are all some of the details of what the PACT Awards will entail. Again, more details are included on the opportunity page and in our previous webinar. Now let's review how you're going to submit an application.

As stated earlier, each consortium must include, at a minimum, one two-year institution of higher education, two industry employers, and one workforce development entity. The application should involve signed documentation of commitment from each consortium member. That's not including the prime applicant, just every other member that is involved in this application. We want signed documentation that you're actually involved in... and you're aware that you're involved in this application and potential project. In addition, the applicant must qualify as a domestic entity and certify that it is not owned by, controlled by, or subject to the jurisdiction or direction of the government of a country of risk.

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We have 5 review criteria that your application is going to be evaluated against. These include demonstrating a regional need for this training program and these specific occupations, the workforce strategies and metrics employed in the program, participant support services that will be available to the participants the quality of the consortium team proposed, and the work plan and budget that you provide in a Excel sheet template that is available on the TechWerx Opportunity page. We highly encourage you to review the full details of the review criteria on that opportunity page.

Now I'll hand it back to Meg to discuss the steps to submit an application.

Meghan Camello, TechWerx

Thanks, Caleb.

To submit an application for the PACT initiative, applicants must fill out the application form that's on the TechWerx website within the PACT initiative opportunity page. There is a save progress box at the bottom of the page if you want to save along the way, and the work is saved automatically every 60 seconds.

Within the application form, there are three uploads required for this opportunity.

The first is the project narrative upload, and this should include information relevant to the review criteria that Caleb just went over, and that are outlined in the opportunity announcement. There is a project narrative template on the opportunity page that we encourage you to use, and there's a 7-page limit, including the cover letter for the project narrative upload.

The second upload is the budget template. Again, there's a budget template to download on the opportunity page that we encourage you to use, and the budget template must be uploaded as an Excel XLS file or XLSX file when you're submitting your application.

And then the third and final upload is any supporting documentation. So here's where you'll upload the supporting documentation, that's outlined in the opportunity page, so that would include the letters of commitment from your partners.

We'll be hosting an additional office hour session on July 9th from 3 to 4 p.m. Eastern, to answer any last-minute questions before applications are, due. The applications close July 17th by 5 p.m. Eastern, though we always encourage you to do it earlier rather than later in case there are any technical difficulties.

Applications will be reviewed during this fall period, and we expect that activities for selected performers will begin in and around the new year.

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All right. Well, with that, we'll now move into Q&A. It looks like we have a few questions already in the chat, so, if you have any Q&A that have emerged as you listened to our presentation, feel free to enter in the Q&A. And with that, I will start going through the Q&A.

So, the first question we have here, Caleb, is around, kind of the technology areas of interest. Does oil and gas well decommissioning (plugging and abandoning) fall within the scope of the technology areas?

Caleb Woodall, DOE HGEO

Good question. We will follow up with that one in writing. Thanks for that question.

Meghan Camello, TechWerx

Here's another question around partnership. For a four-year university as lead institute, what level of leadership is expected or preferred when the training program is hosted at a two-year IHE?

Caleb Woodall, DOE HGEO

Yeah, that's also a good question. For clarification, I wouldn't say we have an expectation of what that level of leadership needs to be. I think that that's more to be determined among your partner within your consortium. It could be that, you're very much the primary organizer of the program, and your partner to your institution is there more to with the actual training, or it could be you're kind of as an advisory role, and in a role of maybe technical support to get the application through the finish line as well, and help with reporting and project management. It's really up to you, but we're, you know, in your application, there's our, there's budget and milestones template where you need to be proposing, like. And that's where you'll be able to reflect what your anticipated involvement is among the different, organizations.

Meghan Camello, TechWerx

Thanks, Caleb. I see here a question... Would a workforce program focused on lithium-bearing subsurface brines, brine handling, produced-water/brine treatment, chemical process operations, instrumentation, and safe subsurface-resource operations be responsive under PACT?

Caleb Woodall, DOE HGEO

Yes, that is, and, like, just to make sure I don't misspeak, but I believe that that one is pretty clearly included. It would fit under the integration, safe use, and maintenance of, of these technologies, and also you asked about produced water treatment and disposal, so that would fit under one or both of those.

Meghan Camello, TechWerx

We have here a question around, kind of the topic A or Topic B. If an existing technical program adds modules, equipment, instructor training, or a new credential, would this fit under Topic A?

Caleb Woodall, DOE HGEO

Yes.

would fit under one or both of those.

Meghan Camello, TechWerx

Can one required employer be a national process slash technical company, and the other a regional employer?

Caleb Woodall, DOE HGEO

I'm not sure what is meant by national process or technical company. But I would say that we do seek to outline, don't really have a definition or a way to verify what an employer is, but we've outlined what we want to see from an employer, and that is the ability to identify the needed skills, recognize those credentials that are awarded, and having a capability of hiring the graduates of this training program. So if you think you can justify that one of those, a national process or technical company, fits that description, then I would encourage you to include that in the application.

Meghan Camello, TechWerx

The next question we have here, if an industry partner is funded, does money flow from TechWerx to the IHE prime and then to the partner? What agreement should the partner expect...subaward, subcontract, services agreement, or something else?

This award is fixed price, milestone-based Agency Directed Funding Agreement. The contract will be set up where the money will flow to the institution of higher education, the prime applicant, and it's up to that prime applicant to distribute the funds to the consortium partners.

Next question we have here, are a parent and subsidiary company considered two employers if they have separate EINs, tax IDs?

I think that's one that we can answer offline.

Caleb Woodall, DOE HGEO

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I would encourage you to consider, kind of, the spirit of the way that we've developed this initiative. We don't necessarily just want this to be a training program that is very narrow in where graduates can go to maybe only one employer. We also tried to balance, we don't want to have... there's a certain time that you're able to create a consortium and application, so we don't want to require five industry employers, but we do want you to be able to show that this training program that DOE is investing in with public dollars is going to help students go to a variety of employers in the marketplace, and not just one. So, I would consider this just the spirit of that when, when, you know, pulling in partners there.

Meghan Camello, TechWerx

Great, thanks, Caleb.

We have here a question around the expected or suggested duration of each new course offered under this program, and if participants need to complete all the courses in the stackable credential to be considered a successful participant.

Caleb Woodall, DOE HGEO

Yeah, we don't have a prescribed length of that. Again, we're looking for a strong application that describes a credential that is valued in industry. And maybe this just takes one semester or less, the equivalent 4 months or so, or maybe it takes 2 years, but we're looking for that duration to be commensurate with the skills that they're going to be accumulating and learning through the training program: So, as far as the successful participant, we do want the participants to be receiving those credentials to really complete the training program.

Meghan Camello, TechWerx

Great, and we have another question here around, kind of, timeline. Will the funding continue on past the initial project? As in, will there be funding support in years 2, 3, 4.

Caleb Woodall, DOE HGEO

Yeah, so the funding would be provided in kind of two batches, your Phase 1 and your Phase 2. You'll define that and propose the amount in your budget during the application, and we'll kind of finalize that during award negotiations if you are selected. And, past that, Meg, do you have any additional, kind of, clarifiers there?

Meghan Camello, TechWerx

I think you summarized that.

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I see a logistical question here around, can an institution participate in or submit more than one application? They can only submit one, but they can be a partner on another application.

And similar question, can an institution apply for both Type A and Type B? One application per institution of higher education, but they can be a partner.

A four-year institution is affiliated with a two-year institution. Can this four-year institution serve as the lead, with a two-year institution serving as the host site?

Caleb Woodall, DOE HGEO

Yes.

Meghan Camello, TechWerx

We have a question here around the budget. Is there an anticipated budget range that reviewers will consider most competitive?

Caleb Woodall, DOE HGEO

No, we're just really looking for the proposed budget to be commensurate with what you're, proposing, the activities, and that can kind of go two ways. I suppose, it could, be that we feel like it's offering too high of a budget for the activities that you describe. Or the other way around, that you might be proposing a \$2 million budget, but it feels like all the activities you described are kind of unrealistic and might really need \$3 million. So, you know, either of those might be less competitive, I suppose, in that sense. But yeah, so we're really looking for the budget and the level of effort described to be equal there.

Meghan Camello, TechWerx

Meghan Camello: Great, I'm going to paraphrase this one.

They're working with a small liberal arts college in Mississippi, and they're trying to reactivate a dormant adjacent campus, and they're wondering if the PACT initiative would be a good, opportunity for starting with a certified geothermal heating and cooling training program.

Caleb Woodall, DOE HGEO

Yeah, we're going to try not to answer questions that are very specific to one certain application, but I would say, like, I think there's pieces there that fit some of the real description of this program. I think I would also go back to the answer we just gave of

whether you can accomplish some of your ambitions, with the budget provided here, or whether that, whatever activity you're really wanting to happen here, might need more or less funds than we're looking to offer through this opportunity.

Meghan Camello, TechWerx

Great. We have a couple questions around, like, the... how we're defining micro-credentials.

Would the development of micro-credentials within an existing program be considered an enhancement, or part of a new program? That's question one.

Caleb Woodall, DOE HGEO

Trying to think of how to answer this. It's a rather long, question here.

Development of micro-credentials within an existing training program sounds a bit like enhancing. We've outlined that. I would really look at the slide that's on the screen here. Where establishing a new program, that Topic B, we do kind of prescribe a minimum of... we're looking for developing at least 3 new courses, and there's a new credential that is not currently available at the two-year institution that is now available to students through this award. Versus topic A is it's probably an existing training program, an existing credential. Maybe there's a new micro-credential as part of this. But overall, we're looking to enhance this by meeting a need that perhaps the current existing training program isn't meeting that need in industry, and that's either by bringing in new equipment for the training, updating the training for your instructors so they're more aware of how to get your students into our target energy sector jobs, in our target industries. Or providing a few new courses that bring it up, the training program more up-to-date with current industry practices. We went through a few example scenarios in the webinar a few weeks ago. I'd encourage you to look through there. That might also help, help that question.

Meghan Camello, TechWerx

And then, a follow-up question to that is... are we considering micro-credential, or defining them as competency-based or skills-based, or, like, a certain number of credit or contact hours that, a participant needs to complete.

Caleb Woodall, DOE HGEO

Yeah, we really look at, not necessarily micro-credentials, but just, you know, industry-recognized credentials. So, again, we don't define a certain number of credit hours, a certain time, a certain number of courses for that. In Topic Area B, we do say at least 3 new courses, because we're not looking to provide 1 to 2 million dollars to really just bring a

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bunch of existing courses you already have and smack a new label on it, that's a new credential. We are looking to support bringing new material to your institution, but otherwise, we're really not prescribing what constitutes a credential. It's more of, encouraging you to work within your partners, industry employers, your workforce development organizations, and determining what is needed in your region, in your state, in your local area. And meeting that need, and telling us through your application why something is a need, and how getting dollars through this opportunity would help you meet that need for the industry and for the aspiring workforce there.

Meghan Camello, TechWerx

Great. We have a question here. What baseline educational qualifications does DOE expect of program participants at the point of entry (e.g., high school, diploma, GED, associate degree)?

Caleb Woodall, DOE HGEO

No, no requirements there, but again, we are looking for these programs to be hosted at two-year institutions of higher education. So, we're looking for credentials that can be earned by people without going through a four-year degree or further than that. So, we're really looking to support those occupations that an individual can get in 2 years or less. So yeah, I guess to answer that question, we're probably not looking for people where they already have a baccalaureate degree, or even potentially not someone that already has an associate's degree.

Meghan Camello, TechWerx

We have a question here around the level of indirect costs that are permissible.

I think we're leaving this up to the discretion of the applicants to determine and propose, how that fits into the program.

And then we have a question here around the commitment from partners for the sign, documentation from partners requirement, does letter of commitment suffice?

Caleb Woodall, DOE HGEO

Yes, and I believe that's the term we use in the opportunity page, letters of commitment. We're not looking for MOUs. In fact, we list a MOU as an activity that can take place during Phase 1, if you want to set up a more formal partnership agreement, but that's not required for the application.

Meghan Camello, TechWerx

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And we have a clarifying question here around, program expansions versus new training program. If a curriculum already exists at a four-year university and we want to form a new consortium to bring it to a two-year institution: Would that be considered a new program or an expansion?

Caleb Woodall, DOE HGEO

If that program does not exist at the host site of the training program, then that would be something new. Again, like we said, we're not looking for something that takes 4 years to complete, but, yeah, I'll leave it at that.

Meghan Camello, TechWerx

For option A, someone asked, can it just be new equipment, or do we have to add one to two new courses. Also, does funding allow for enhancing existing equipment?

Caleb Woodall, DOE HGEO

Yeah, we have and or here on topic A. We know that these are lower dollar awards, we're not looking for all of this to occur, but we're really looking to help you identify the need to enhance this course and get more individuals, through that training program into our target energy careers. So, any of the things on the screen, and I think we even have including but not limited to in there. We're really looking to meet the needs that exist in your area.

Meghan Camello, TechWerx

We have a question here.

Is a four-year institution eligible to apply for both Topic A and Topic B awards? Under Topic A, can newly developed courses be offered as electives that count towards students' degree requirements while providing education in energy-related fields? And which energy areas are covered under this project.

I would refer to the opportunity page that outlines all the technology areas that we have for PACT there.

The other question around eligibility to apply for both Topic A and Topic B, I believe you have to pick one or the other, Caleb? And then you can be a partner to another application.

Caleb Woodall, DOE HGEO

You know, one organization or one individual cannot submit multiple applications, but they can be a part of another one.

Meghan Camello, TechWerx

Can a four-year institution serve as the lead, and a two-year institution serve as the host, while the three new courses required for Topic B are offered at the four-year institution?

Caleb Woodall, DOE HGEO

Well, we are looking for, students to be hosted at that two-year institution, and then students getting credentials from that two-year institution. I suppose if the four-year institution is nearby, and the students are taking courses there, but still, you know, benefiting from that two-year institution, that there's a scenario where that could be permissible. But, again, like another question, I would also just pay attention to our mission and objective stated for this opportunity, and the spirit here. We're really looking to increase, the skilled trades roles in our target industries.

Meghan Camello, TechWerx

We have a question here around, like, how success will be measured. We mentioned graduating a cohort for success. What might that look like? Would that be number of credentials, successful job applications, number of placements?

Caleb Woodall, DOE HGEO

Yeah, let's see if I can scroll back to just have this on the screen here. Our purpose and objective, we're really looking to increase the number of highly skilled individuals entering the natural gas, oil, coal, and geothermal industries. We know that different consortia, different localities are going to have different population sizes and different number of students. Realistically going to be going through the first one or two cohorts of this program, so we don't really define or have explicit expectations on number of credentialed peoples, or people going through it. We do look to be monitoring semi-annually, the rates of enrollment, retention, graduation and work placement, because we want to be able to monitor how that is going, and that'll help us know more about supporting these type of programs in the future, what else we need to do to increase that. In a way, ideally, all of the students that go through will get their credentials and go and work in our target industries, but if you notice the go-no-go criteria, it's not outlined on these slides, I would encourage you to look online, but the go-no-go criteria is not based on student enrollment or placement rates. It is based on essentially having a functional consortium team and creating an action plan that presents a high likelihood for a successful program that will provide services to the students and, to ultimately increasing the number of people entering our targeted industries as a highly skilled workforce.

Meghan Camello, TechWerx

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Great, I see another question here around whether level of placement of enrolled students is required, and I think we just answered that, .

We have a question here. For industry partners, does DOE prefer companies that are local to the applicant institution and student population, or can industry partners from other states be included if they play a meaningful role in workforce development?

And correct me if I'm wrong, Caleb, but industry partners do not need to be geographically proximate to the institution of higher education, but we do want it to be, make sure that the project is addressing, like, the regional workforce need that is near the institution of higher education.

Caleb Woodall, DOE HGEO

That's right, yeah. So we don't have a geographic requirement, but again, you know, it's a little bit of the spirit and a little bit of what we describe as the intended roles here. So if your industry employer is able to meet these roles that we've outlined on the opportunity page, then that should be sufficient.

Meghan Camello, TechWerx

I see a question here around... I think some of these are follow-up questions. What counts as an industry-recognized stackable credential, and does it need to be an existing external credential, or can it be a new credential co-developed with employers?

Caleb Woodall, DOE HGEO

Yeah, I, I think what we see as a credential is something... a valuable credential is something that's industry recognized. Perhaps it's something that can be added on with additional credentials and improve the career prospects for individuals going through this training program. It does not necessarily need to be something that already exists. It's exactly what you described, a new credential co-developed with employers, because we want employers to be recognizing this credential and giving, you know, the students that go through it a high opportunity of employment, and we want to be offering industry a really good pipeline of workers to enter the workplace.

Meghan Camello, TechWerx

I see two questions here around allocation of funds. Can a portion of grant dollars be directed at the training recruitment efforts? Because recruitment is a problem for the trades. Guess we'll start with that one.

Caleb Woodall, DOE HGEO

Yes.

Meghan Camello, TechWerx

And then...Does DOE have any expectations regarding the relative allocation of funds among the Institute of Higher Education, the community colleges, workforce development entities?

Caleb Woodall, DOE HGEO

We don't have any prescribed amount there. It's really up to your consortium members and your team, and what is commensurate with each of the activities and involvement in the project.

Meghan Camello, TechWerx

Can the total project duration be more than 36 months?

Caleb Woodall, DOE HGEO

Well...It can be if, if you propose it to. We're really looking for what we are saying needs to be accomplished in the timeline that we've laid out. So, we do want to be able to see one cohort completing the time in this, overall 36-month period. Sometimes there are no-cost time extensions if want it to take longer, but we're really looking for the money to be spent, and especially a program to be established in one cohort fully start and complete the program within that 36-month time frame.

Meghan Camello, TechWerx

I see here a question for a Topic B application, may a consortium propose establishing a new training program while also incorporating enhancements to an existing program if both support the same needs?

Caleb Woodall, DOE HGEO

Yes.

Meghan Camello, TechWerx

I will say, when you're submitting the application, I think you can only check topic A or Topic B, so that will be at the discretion of the applicant.

If an organization participates in multiple proposals, how will DOE evaluate potential overlap in activities, personnel, or budgets across those applications?

Caleb Woodall, DOE HGEO

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We're looking for signed letters of commitment within the applications, and then we're looking at individual applications. In the budget spreadsheet, there's milestones that show the involvement of each organization. We're looking for the level of commitment and involvement described in each of these applications. So, I don't know necessarily that we're going to be going into that level. If you've proposed a certain involvement in one or more applications, like, we're going to take that seriously.

Meghan Camello, TechWerx

We have a question here. Are established community-based training partners excluded from conducting the training?

Caleb Woodall, DOE HCEO

No. They are not excluded from conducting the training but we are looking at the two-year institutions of higher education as the lead applicant, and we want credentials and the primary host where students enroll and receive credentials to be at the two-year institution.

Meghan Camello, TechWerx

Is there a limit on indirect costs for each partner on the proposal?

I believe we answered that. It's at the discretion of the applicant.

Shall we tackle this long question?

May an applicant propose training that supports multiple career pathways within the energy sector?

Caleb Woodall, DOE HCEO

Yeah, we've got the general overarching, technology areas that we're looking to support, and these are overall, within the main mission areas for the Hydrocarbons and Geothermal Energy Office. So, if it trains people and supports, and provides skills that are useful in multiple career pathways, that is alright. I think in the application, you do need to select one primary technology area that you are addressing.

Some of these other bulleted questions within that question. I think you might take a look at the review criteria. We do... we are looking a heavy weight on demonstrating the regional need and documented need for the training program and for the occupation. They should be clearly connected to energy production, operation maintenance, as was on the slide that we just had on the screen.

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Yeah, I would say a lot of the bullets in this question are really, I think, answered in the previous webinar and in the opportunity page.

Meghan Camello, TechWerx

And I think the rest of them are follow-up questions, and I'm not sure what they're following up for. Regarding the workforce partner, the answer says should. I think in the FAQs, you'll see, how we're thinking about workforce development entities in regards to this opportunity. You can take a look at the FAQ and assess whether your organization fits in that definition.

If equipment or instrumentation is proposed as part of a consortium, does DOE have a preference for whether it is housed at a community college or at an institute of higher education?

Caleb Woodall, DOE HGEO

No, we don't have a preference, but it should be available to enhance the training of the students involved in the training program.

Meghan Camello, TechWerx

I see here a question around, like, defining the regional need in the project narrative.

What types of quantitative evidence are most persuasive? Workforce commission data, employer hiring data.

Caleb Woodall, DOE HGEO

Yeah, we've got an abbreviated version of this on the slide here, on the screen. We do look for, in the full description, there's a table of the review criteria, and we do ask for that, quantitative evidence. So, I think, I think all of that is, is strong and persuasive, and again, the role of the workforce development entity that is a required partner to be helping provide some of that quantitative evidence.

Meghan Camello, TechWerx

Yeah, and we outline in the opportunity the different activities that we expect the workforce development entity to undertake. I think we say at least two of the activities.

All right. I see Nicole's question, but I'm not sure what it's referencing, so Nicole, if you want to clarify your question in the Q&A, we'll, we can answer that.

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But before we wrap up for today, I'll just remind you all that the applications for the PACT initiative are due, by 5pm on July 17th. We are going to host another office hours on July 9th at 3, so if there are any other questions that you have, as you're preparing your application, feel free to sign up for those office hours. You can register on our website.

As I mentioned at the beginning of this session all of the FAQs that we answered, the slides that we've showed, the transcript, the recording, all of that will be available on our webpage in the next 3 or so days, and you will all receive an email recap that lets you know when all of the information is available on our website.

If you have any questions between now and July 9th, our email is info@techwerx.org, and we are happy to answer any questions. With that, thank you for attending, and we look forward to seeing your applications.

Caleb Woodall, DOE HGEO

Thanks, everyone.