

Shane Hamstra, TechWerx

Welcome, everyone, good afternoon, good morning, depending where you're joining from today. Thank you for joining today's PACT Initiative informational webinar. We'll get started in just a few moments as the attendee list continues to rise.

Just for your information, on your Zoom screen, you can enable the closed captioning on your screen individually.

So, for those who have just joined, thank you for being here. We'll go ahead and get started. Just a few logistical announcements before we begin. First of all, if you would like to use the closed captioning, you can enable that on your own screen individually by clicking on the CC button on your Zoom toolbar. Also, shortly on your Zoom toolbar you will see the Q&A panel become live. Throughout today's event, we encourage you to use that Q&A to submit questions, comments, and if you have any Zoom technical needs there as well.

So, without further ado, I will hand things over to Meghan Camello of our TechWerx team to get us started.

Meghan Camello, TechWerx

Awesome. Thank you, Shane. Hello, everyone. We're very excited to host this webinar for the Partnerships for Academic Industry Career Training Initiative, or the PACT Initiative.

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

So, a brief introduction. As Shane said, my name is Meghan, and I'm a part of the TechWerx Hub, and I'll go over a little bit about what TechWerx is.

But a couple housekeeping items to start. So, questions will be handed towards the end of this session. We're going to be using the Q&A function in Zoom. So, please go ahead and vote for the questions that you want to make sure get answered. We'll kind of filter out based on upvotes, and note that when you submit a question in the Q&A, the name that you registered with to attend the webinar will appear with those questions, but if you'd like to ask a question offline, you can send us an email at info@techwerx.org.

Meghan Camello: Just due to the size of the webinar, we might not get through all the questions today, but we'll try to get through as many as we can. For those questions that we aren't able to answer live today, we'll be passing over those questions to DOE, and we'll work on getting them answered. All of the answers, both for the questions that we addressed live during the session today, as well as the ones that we answer offline, will be

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posted on the FAQs on the opportunity page of our website. And we'll continue to update the FAQs periodically over the next few months.

And just a couple other things before we get started. Per DOE guidance, we do not allow any AI bots on this webinar, so tools such as Otter.ai or other note-taking AI chatbots. You shouldn't need them, though, because this webinar is being recorded, and the recording, the transcript, and the questions will be all uploaded to the opportunity page in the next few business days. So, with that, we can move to the next slide.

Today we're here to go over the PACT initiative, or the Partnerships for Academic Industry Career Training Initiative. The goal of the PACT Initiative opportunity is to increase the number of highly skilled individuals entering the American energy workforce. To do this, the PACT initiative will establish regional consortia, which comprise of academic institutions, industry employers, and workforce development organizations. And the consortium will develop hands-on training and credentialing program in skills areas that serve the natural gas, coal, oil, and geothermal energy industries.

The PACT initiative will provide approximately \$11.3 million in funding to institutions of higher education, including up to \$2.3 million specifically for tribal colleges.

During today's webinar, we will provide some background and context on why DOE is supporting this initiative. We'll introduce TechWerx and the Department of Energy program offices that are involved in this initiative. We'll provide an overview of the PACT initiative, we'll review the application requirements and the process for submitting an application, and then we'll conclude with question and answers at the end.

I'm now going to pass it over to Caleb to discuss why DOE is supporting this initiative.

Caleb Woodall, DOE HGEO

Thanks, Meg.

We wanted to start with why DOE has developed a PACT initiative.

Based on data from the annual U.S. Energy and Employment Report, we know that America's subsurface energy industries employed over 1 million Americans in 2024. And based on data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics, we know that these jobs pay significantly more than the U.S. median wage, and even more than the median wage in the energy sector.

However, despite these large, the large opportunity of high-paying jobs, employers in the fuel sector often report difficulty in filling their positions for maintenance workers, technicians, trades workers, and even scientists and engineers.

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Through the U.S. Energy Employment Report, we see employers cite insufficient qualifications, lack of training and experience, and an overall small applicant pool as the reasons for this difficulty.

The PACT initiative has been developed to overcome the challenges stated by energy employers by improving the volume of trained, qualified personnel entering the American energy workforce. The partnerships involved in the awarded projects here will facilitate the development of well-rounded training programs that lead to industry-recognized credentials for in-demand, high-paying occupations.

Back to Meg to, talk a little bit about TechWerx.

Meghan Camello, TechWerx

Awesome, thanks, Caleb.

So, the DOE Hydrocarbons and Geothermal Energy Office and the 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.

TechWerx is an innovation hub designed to facilitate connections between DOE, academia, nonprofits, startups, and other innovators across the U.S. energy ecosystem. 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 and sign up for our newsletter on our website, techwerx.org, so that you can be notified of any new opportunities as they are announced.

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 these offices, Caleb Whittle, Program Manager for University Training and Research with the Hydrocarbons and Geothermal Energy Office, and Chelsea Mervin, Energy Access Specialist with the Office of Indian Energy.

With that, I'm going to pass it back over to Caleb to introduce himself and provide more, information about the PACT initiative.

Caleb Woodall, DOE HGEO

Thanks again, Meg. So, the mission of the Hydrocarbons and Geothermal Energy Office is to unleash the full potential of America's hydrocarbon and geothermal resources to provide affordable, reliable, and secure energy.

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As such, HGEO has 3 technology areas of focus. Coal, oil and gas, and geothermal energy. With these HGEO aims to stabilize, optimize, and grow the American coal industry, restoring it as a cornerstone of the U.S. energy mix. We seek to enhance the resilience, reliability, and performance of our nation's oil and natural gas systems. And finally, we aim to reduce costs and risks associated with geothermal development.

Within HGEO, we have the University Training and Research Program, or what I might refer to as UTR. The UTR program is the primary funding source for the PACT initiative.

There are 3 pillars that make up the mission of the UTR program. That's expanding the capabilities and education of students, maintaining and enhancing the capabilities of institutions of higher education, and develop education and training initiatives to support HGEO and DOE-wide priorities for R&D.

The UTR program is a standalone program within HGEO that has had consistent funding in DOE's congressional budget. Historically, the UTR awards have focused on R&D projects, through which students are trained, often at the graduate or undergraduate level.

Through the PACT initiative, HGEO seeks to broaden its focus on education and training by investing in programs at two-year institutions, including technical and community colleges, trade and vocational schools, and tribal colleges and universities.

I'll pass it to Chelsea to talk about the Office of Indian Energy.

Chelsea Mervenne, DOE IE

Thanks, Caleb. I'm Chelsea Mervenne, the Energy Access Specialist for the Office of Indian Energy Policy and Programs. Our office was established in 2005 with the mission of promoting tribal energy development and use, increasing energy affordability, strengthening tribal energy and economic infrastructure, and bringing electricity to tribal lands and homes, all of this while centering tribal sovereignty.

Our office supports federally recognized tribes, tribally controlled colleges and universities, or you'll hear us refer to them as TCUs, intertribal organizations, and tribal energy development organizations.

Our core functions, in pursuit of this mission, the Office of Indian Energy provides financial assistance, in the form of grants, no-cost technical assistance, to support energy project analysis and engineering and capacity building to enable tribes to fully participate in unleashing American energy. And now, I will pass it back to Caleb.

Caleb Woodall, DOE HGEO

Thanks, Chelsea.

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Now that we've introduced the purpose of the PACT initiative and the DOE offices supporting it, let's get into the details of the opportunity.

The PACT Initiative has two topic areas. At a high level, awards under Topic Area A will involve enhancing an existing training program or reorienting it to focus on energy careers. Proposed budgets for these awards must be within the range of \$100,000 to \$300,000.

Alternatively, 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.

The total number of awards in each topic area will depend on the number of highly scored proposals that we receive, but a general range is given on the screen here and on the opportunity page.

The training program proposed must prepare people to work in one or more of the technical areas on the screen and describe an opportunity page. When identifying a technology area of focus, keep in mind the core mission of the Hydrocarbons and Geothermal Energy Office that have been discussed today. Our goal with the PACT initiative is to prepare a highly skilled technical workforce to support the oil, natural gas, coal, and geothermal industries.

Through the PACT initiative, DOE seeks to support consortia with several members that collaborate to create a successful workforce pipeline in our target industries. As such, we expect each consortium to involve one two-year institution of higher education, two industry employers, and one workforce development entity, at a minimum. The two-year institution should be the primary host of the training program, where participants enroll and receive credentials upon successful completion of that program. The two 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 program. And 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 organization 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 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 a two-year institution of higher ed, but that is not required.

Other stakeholders, including DOE National Labs, Indian tribes, other educational entities, workforce intermediaries, regional apprenticeship and training representatives, and so on, can also be included in the consortium, but are not required.

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Now, let's look at some example scenarios of what potential applications might look like. These scenarios are being laid out for illustrative purposes only here, and prospective applicants, you know, strongly encourage you to adhere to the additional eligibility requirements and merit review criteria outlined on the opportunity page.

In this first scenario here, a university is the lead applicant for a project that involves a training program that'll be hosted at a technical college. This project involves adding certifications and digital skills to an existing training program for natural gas power plant operators. In this scenario, the consortium would apply for topic area A, the enhanced topic area.

In the second scenario, a trade school leads a consortium that will establish a new apprenticeship program for electricians to support and enhance oil recovery operation in their region. In this scenario, the trade school would apply for topic area B, the established topic area.

Couple more scenarios here. In the third one, a tribal college leads a consortium that establishes a new GIS certification program to support a local tribe's energy resource exploration efforts. In this scenario, the tribal college would apply for Topic Area B, and they are eligible for that \$2.3 million available exclusively to TCUs.

In the fourth scenario, a university leads a consortium that updates a welding program at their partner tribal college, and adds that instruction for welding with advanced automation equipment and techniques for pipe fitting. In this scenario, the university would apply for Topic Area A, but they would be eligible for that \$9 million available to all institutions of education. So, while collaboration between universities, you know, non-tribal universities, and tribal colleges are certainly welcome, to be eligible for that \$2.3 million, the application must be submitted by a tribal college or tribal university.

Finally, one last scenario here. In this fifth scenario, a university leads a consortium on a project that involves acquiring new equipment to develop an elective course and certification within its petroleum engineering program. In this scenario, that project will be ineligible for the PACT initiative. So again, we're looking for training programs to be hosted at a two-year institution of higher ed, which, again, we define here as vocational schools, trade schools, technical colleges, community colleges, and tribal colleges and universities.

Alright, now to review the process for awards through the PACT Initiative. At a high level, awarded projects in both topic areas will begin in Phase 1, the planning phase. During Phase 1, the awarded consortia will develop an action plan to enhance or establish their training programs. This could last between 2 and 12 months, as proposed by the applicants. After successfully meeting go-no-go metrics, projects will move on to Phase 2,

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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. Awarded consortia will be responsible for submitting semi-annual reports of student work placement rates for two years after the initiation of courses.

Now that we want to dig in a little bit more into some details about each of these phases. Within Phase 1, there are several activities that consortium must complete, including, design the curriculum and stackable credentials using evidence-based training strategies, recruit prospective trainees, establish work placement pathways with industry partners, plan for the provision of supportive services for the training program, and outline a program sustainment plan. Beyond that, proposals can involve additional work as the applicants see fit. A non-exhaustive list here could include providing training opportunities for the instructors or administrative staff, acquire equipment for hands-on training, identify and connect with stakeholders as additional consortium members, develop MOUs, or even work within your state to progress towards adopting the energy and natural resources career cluster for your state's CTE programs. By the end of this first phase, consortia are expected to deliver an action plan with specific quantitative milestones to the DOE. They're also expected to participate in the working group meetings.

Now to transition from Phase 1 to Phase 2, you have to successfully complete some go-no-go criteria, which are shown here on the screen. You need to submit the action plan that consists of clear milestones and metrics that will lead to your successful project completion in Phase 2. You also have to successfully complete the Phase 1 milestones that you're going to set in your application in the initial work plan. And, you know, for selected projects, you know, we'll work those out through negotiations as well when we're getting you the award. And then thirdly, you have to retain the required entities as consortium members at the completion of Phase 1. So, to go to Phase 2, we want to see that you still have that two-year institution, the two industry employers, and the workforce development entity. At least one of the, you know, those four members still are a part of your consortium.

In Phase 2, consortia must carry out the action plan, deliver the courses to at least the first cohort of enrollees, administer supportive services to program participants, which includes support for job placement and track key metrics for 2 years after the training program is first implemented. So, these metrics, again these include the rates of enrollment, retention, graduation, and work placement. Additional activities might include, offering comprehensive career navigation services, or continuing student recruitment, or any other activities that you initiated in Phase 1, or anything else that we'd love to see on proposals.

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Deliverables for this phase include delivering that training program that awards at least one industry-recognized stackable credential to participants upon completion. Also, deliverables are continuing to participate in working group meetings and providing that semi-annual report of key metrics. Alright, so those are details about what the PACT awards will entail. Now let's review how you're going to submit an application.

So, the eligibility criteria here, as stated, repeating again, each consortium must conclude, at a minimum, one two-year institution of higher education, two industry employers, and one workforce development entity. Other entities may also be involved, and DOE certainly welcomes larger consortia. The application should involve signed documentation of commitment from each consortium member. 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. Proposals will be based on, will be rated and reviewed based on 5 separate criteria: demonstration of regional need, workforce strategies and metrics, participant support services, consortium team quality, and the work plan and budget. We encourage you to review the full details of the review criteria on the opportunity page.

Now, with the budget, each application must include a budget spreadsheet using the template provided on the TechWerx Opportunity page. The budget spreadsheet is also where you'll outline your quantitative milestones. These milestones should be specific, measurable, and relevant to the goals of the PACT initiative. The budget template includes a budget and set of milestones for each organization involved in the project. This should also include a budget subtotal for both Phase 1 and Phase 2. So, as you see on the screen here, as an example, for one organization, you have milestones within Phase 1 and Phase 2. Each of them have a subtotal for each of those phases that adds up to the full subtotal for that first organization. And then at the top of the screen, you see that all of the organization's budget has been added to the total proposed budget.

Now I'll pass it back off to Meg to talk about how you're going to submit your application.

Meghan Camello, TechWerx

Awesome. Thanks, Caleb. To submit an application for the PACT Initiative, applicants must fill out the application form that is on the TechWorks website. There's a save progress box at the bottom of the page, and also... the application automatically saves every 60 seconds.

Within the application form on the website, there are three uploads required. First is the project narrative. This should include information relevant to the review criteria that Caleb just went over, and that are outlined clearly in the opportunity announcement. We encourage you to use the project narrative template that is on the opportunity page that

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you can download. There's a 7-page limit for the project narrative, including cover page. The second upload is the budget template. As well as the project narrative template, there's also a budget template for download on the opportunity page that we encourage you to leverage. The budget template upload must be uploaded as an Excel XLS file or an XLSX file. The third and final upload is any supporting documentation. You can upload supporting documentation, for the letters of commitment from partners in this section.

Before we wrap up the presentation portion of today's webinar, I want to quickly highlight some of the tips that we have for submitting a strong application. On the opportunity page, we have listed the review criteria and program policy factors that will be used during the application review process, and we encourage you to pay close attention to these as you develop your proposal. Like I mentioned on the previous slide, we provide templates for both the project narrative and the budget to provide detailed guidance on what is expected in each of these uploads, and we encourage you to follow the guidance that is provided. This initiative is focused on developing the next generation of workforce in the oil, natural gas, coal, or geothermal energy industries, and strong applications will align to these priorities. Strong applications will also clearly outline the need for jobs in their selected technology area, and identify how their proposed program will fill that need or that gap. And lastly, don't wait to the last minute to submit. Applications must be submitted by July 17th by 5 p.m. Eastern, though we encourage you to submit it early in case you run into any technical issues.

So today we have the webinar. We'll also be hosting two office hour sessions, one on June 3rd from 3 to 4 p.m. Eastern, and one on July 9th from 3 to 4 p.m. Eastern. And these are an opportunity to answer your questions, as they come up as you're preparing your application. As I mentioned, applications close July 17th and must be submitted by 5 p.m. Eastern. Applications will be reviewed during the fall, and we expect that the activities for selected performers will begin in and around the new year.

All right, so now we're going to move into the Q&A. If you have not found the Q&A button, it should be on your Zoom dashboard. You can type your questions whenever you would like, and we'll go through the ones based on the number of upvotes they have.

It looks like we have a few questions in the queue already, so I'll just go with the first question for Caleb.

Could a four-year liberal arts school launch a two-year trades program with these funds, especially if the trades support the PACT initiative?

Caleb Woodall, DOE HGEO

Yeah, thanks for that question, and I think it also ties into a question later of, is an R1 four-year institution eligible to submit to this opportunity?

Any institution of higher education can be the lead applicant on the PACT initiative. However, the actual training program where students enroll and receive credentials upon completion must be at a two-year institution of higher education, which we define as a technical college, a community college, trade or vocational school, or tribal school or university. So there can certainly be partnerships and be multiple institutions of higher ed involved. University or four-year liberal arts college can help lead the organization of it and work with a two-year institution, but the two-year institution, should be the primary host of the training program.

Meghan Camello, TechWerx

Awesome. Thanks, Caleb. And just to kind of put forward. We do have a teaming list available on the opportunity page, so if you are looking for partners, I encourage you to use that and connect with the folks that have, started, using that already.

We'll move on to the next question.

Can an organization apply for both tracks simultaneously?

Caleb Woodall, DOE HGEO

Yeah, we have a similar question answered in the chat. One institution can only submit one application as the lead applicant. However, they can be involved in multiple other applications as a partner, but they can only submit one as the lead.

Meghan Camello, TechWerx

Awesome, thanks, Caleb. And for the next question, would an energy project development finance course qualify for this opportunity?

Caleb Woodall, DOE HGEO

Yeah, thanks for that question. Would encourage you to look at the, the eligible technology areas. We do have an area that, includes enabling technologies and that sounds like it could potentially be in that category, but, you know, I would encourage you to just adhere to the merit review criteria as well, and evaluate how that project aligns with the merit review criteria, what we're really looking for with the PACT initiative.

Meghan Camello, TechWerx

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And the next question, can there be two two-year institutions of higher education in the same call? And if so, does that mean that training would be offered at both institutes?

Caleb Woodall, DOE HGEO

We require there to be at least one two-year institution that is the host of the training program. Beyond that, if you want to include multiple two-year institutions where training is offered at both or more than two, that's, that's up to you. We have a defined budget and defined merit review criteria, and we just want to make sure that you can adhere to everything that we're looking for, kind of at a minimum, and anything beyond that, we love to see creative applications.

Meghan Camello, TechWerx

Meghan Camello: Great. We have a question here around if we could expand on what we mean by technologies that enable any of the above technology areas, including but not limited to construction related to the building out of facilities or infrastructure.

Caleb Woodall, DOE HGEO

Yes, so if there's a significant construction, especially around the facilities or infrastructure for, coal, oil and gas, geothermal industries and facilities, then if you have a training program that's going to train people and prepare them for those construction careers, and they're supporting our target energy industries, then that is what we're looking for here.

Meghan Camello, TechWerx

Thanks, Caleb.

We have a question here about what type of student participant should be recruited. Are they high school graduates, no high school degree, Bachelor-seeking students.

Caleb Woodall, DOE HGEO

That's not defined in our opportunity. So it's any type of student that would want to pursue the training program that you're developing. So we defer to where you are in the country, what location you are, what your demographics are locally, and who would be best suited to apply. That's one of the key roles we see, is including the workforce development entities, like state and local workforce development boards, to be able to help with identifying who's best suited for your training programs.

Meghan Camello, TechWerx

Great, thanks, Caleb.

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And for the next question, are for-profit companies qualified to provide services and receive funding for this opportunity?

Caleb Woodall, DOE HGEO

The lead applicant must be an institution of higher education. Past that, if you are, say, a for-profit industry employer, that is required to be involved in the project, you are qualified to provide funding, kind of as a sub-awardee. Meg, do you have, I guess, like, I don't want to mess up the technical jargon here, but all of the money from the award goes to the institution of higher education, and past that, it's up to the prime awardee to distribute to team members, is that correct?

Meghan Camello, TechWerx

Yes, I believe so, yeah.

And then we have another question here around industry partners. What kind of commitment industry partners need to make during the proposal submission? Imagine the company committed that they will recruit students from the cohort of the students, but they couldn't do that for some reason. What happened? What would happen with that project?

Caleb Woodall, DOE HGEO

Yeah, that's a good question. As we kind of outlined in the opportunity page, as far as the intended roles of the consortium members, we want those consortium members, those industry employers to really be helping, especially in that planning phase, linking the training program you're going to have to the needs of the industry, and being able to prepare the students there. We also are wanting there to be at least two industry entities who are kind of committing to being able to recognize whatever credentials that are going to be offered in the training program. We do, you know, ideally, at the beginning, want the industry employers to be able to have the capacity to hire those students. We understand things happen, and they might not be able to hire at the certain time, for whatever reason. But that part, you'll see, is not included in the go-no-go criteria. But yeah, we are looking for someone who's capable of hiring students, to be involved in this initiative.

Meghan Camello, TechWerx

Great, thank you.

We have a question here around the, like, technology area for geothermal energy. Is the focus on deep geothermal energy, or does it include shallow geothermal energy?

Caleb Woodall, DOE HGEO

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We do not discriminate there. It can be either, we're just supporting the production, maintenance, and use of, geothermal energy, and related technologies.

Meghan Camello, TechWerx

Another technology area question, I saw power generation for data centers or remote operations. Could you provide more guidance around what this should look like?

Caleb Woodall, DOE HGEO

Yeah, again, I'm thinking of a natural gas combined cycle, a coal-fired power plant that is specifically tied to data centers and remote operations. So, if you've got these power generation facilities that are involving hydrocarbons or geothermal energy, and we need a workforce to operate those facilities, and you want to create a training program to train that workforce, that is something that's applicable to this opportunity.

Meghan Camello, TechWerx

And can you have institutions and organizations across different states working together as part of a consortium?

Caleb Woodall, DOE HGEO

Certainly that's not ineligible for this opportunity. We say regional consortia, kind of broadly, that might mean a few counties, or maybe, a few states, like, say a tri-state area. It's, up to you. One of the merit review criteria is about, demonstration of regional need, so you would need to be demonstrating that there is a regional need for those occupations in whatever institutions of higher ed that are involved, or where students are being trained, and where the industry employers exist.

Meghan Camello, TechWerx

Would a program housed at a two-year institution of higher education that offers pathways into four-year-plus degrees be considered for this opportunity?

Caleb Woodall, DOE HGEO

Yes, that would be something that is beyond the minimum requirements here. But yeah, the articulation agreements and things like that between institutions is fine.

Meghan Camello, TechWerx

We have a question here around eligibility. Must the school be accredited to be the lead applicant?

Caleb Woodall, DOE HGEO

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That's a good question. Typically, yes, and I want to follow up, because I want to make sure that I word it exactly how we have it in the opportunity page, so we'll follow up with you on that question.

Meghan Camello, TechWerx

We have another one here.

Are community-based training organizations considered the same as community college for the purpose of this opportunity?

Caleb Woodall, DOE HGEO

Yeah, that is similar to the previous question, and we'll need to have a discussion and evaluate exactly how to answer that question, but we'll have that to you as soon as we can.

Meghan Camello, TechWerx

Okay, we have another here around scope, can you include possible pathways to BS degrees should the trainee demonstrate aptitude or interest in that career pathway?

Caleb Woodall, DOE HGEO

Yeah, that would fall under the umbrella of additional things to be involved, but are not required. We are specifically looking to support credentials that can be obtained without a four-year BS degree, and that can send people to work without a four-year degree. But if they want to be exposed to other pathways during their training program that's certainly okay.

Meghan Camello, TechWerx

We have a question here. Can the four-year institution resources be utilized toward training completion, provided the students are enrolled at the two-year institution of higher education?

Caleb Woodall, DOE HGEO

Yes. I want to emphasize that the enrollment and the graduation is at the two-year institution, but any other partners that have opportunities for hands-on experiential training or expertise to add to the training program is certainly welcome.

Meghan Camello, TechWerx

It looks like we have a follow-up question to one that we answered previously. This individual had a conversation about launching a two-year trade school as a wholly owned

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subsidiary of the Liberal Arts College. If that program is established, would it qualify for this program?

Caleb Woodall, DOE HGEO

Let's let's follow up on that one, and we'll have an answer in writing for that question. Thank you.

Meghan Camello, TechWerx

Thanks

Okay, we have another question here. My institution is in an area with many displaced oil and gas workers. Can the program focus on repurposing their skill sets for other industries?

Caleb Woodall, DOE HGEO

We want the training program to be, sending people who finish the training program into one of the four industries that we've listed as the main focus. So if they're being repurposed into the oil, coal, natural gas, or geothermal industries, then that is okay.

Meghan Camello, TechWerx

We have a question here. If part of a larger plan with the consortium team, would K-12 outreach and HGEO topics be supported?

Caleb Woodall, DOE HGEO

That sounds like something that could be part of additional activities that we included in the Phase 1 and Phase 2, and it certainly sounds like it could be part of, that recruitment efforts.

Meghan Camello, TechWerx

We have another question around scope. Is there any requirement of how many courses or how many credits the training program needs to be?

Caleb Woodall, DOE HGEO

Yeah, so we have written in the topic area B, the established topic area, that we're creating a new training program that doesn't already exist at the host institution, and with that, we should be adding at least 3 new courses that don't already exist at the institution. So, we're not really looking to just kind of piece together a bunch of classes that already exist and call that a new training program. That can be done to an extent, but we want at least 3 new courses. In the topic area A, the enhance, we do not have a prescription on how many new courses should be in there. In general, there is not a requirement of how many credits the

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training program needs to be. We just want this to be leading to a credential that is recognized by the relevant industry partners.

Meghan Camello, TechWerx

Great, thanks, Caleb.

We have a question here. With the R1 university being the lead, can they apply for Topic A?

Caleb Woodall, DOE HGEO

Yes, an R1 university is able to be the lead and apply for either topic area. They are eligible for that \$9 million that's available to all institutions of higher education. They just need to be paired with a two-year institution of higher education who would be the primary host of the training program.

Meghan Camello, TechWerx

We have a question here. If a four-year institution also offers two-year degrees in credit-bearing certificate programs, could they be considered the two-year provider?

Caleb Woodall, DOE HGEO

If the four-year institution has an affiliate college that operates as a separate entity then that would be eligible, but if you still operate as a four-year university, then that wouldn't be eligible as the primary host of the training program.

Meghan Camello, TechWerx

We have a question here around, cost share. Is there any cost share or match requirement?

Caleb Woodall, DOE HGEO

Caleb Woodall: No. The UTR program has a cost share waiver of 0%. However, if your industry or any other, entities want to provide cost share, either financial or in-kind, that is welcome, but is not required.

Meghan Camello, TechWerx

We have a question around definitions. Are there definitions for vocational trade... or trade schools?

Caleb Woodall, DOE HGEO

Yeah, that's a good question. We don't have that, in writing and defined on the opportunity page, and that's something that we'll follow up on in writing after this.

Meghan Camello, TechWerx

Thanks, Caleb.

Can an institution of higher education partner with industrial partners that are not geographically close to the institution of higher education to form this consortium? I think we kind of touched on this, but...

Caleb Woodall, DOE HGEO

So can... essentially, can partners be from different regions or different states?

Yeah, like we said, that's okay. You just need to ensure that you're still hitting on, regional needs for certain occupations and you're addressing what we're looking for in the merit review.

Meghan Camello, TechWerx

We have a question here around guidance for letters of commitment, or templates available. We have the templates for the budget and the project narrative, I think the letters of commitment are gonna come from your regional consortia partners. Caleb, do you have anything else to add there?

Caleb Woodall, DOE HGEO

Yeah, we don't have a template available. Typically in other DOE funding opportunities, we get a range of letters of commitment that, simply it's something from maybe an executive or someone with a leadership position from the organization, stating that they are committed to being involved in the application and potential award through the PACT initiative. It should, probably not be something so generic, it should mention the lead institution and others involved, so we can tell that this is genuinely connected to, the specific application, and and it should be signed.

Meghan Camello, TechWerx

I see another question in the same vein. Can the signed documentation of commitment be a letter of commitment for each consortium member, or does it need to be a signed MOU between all members for the application?

Caleb Woodall, DOE HGEO

It doesn't need to be an MOU. We know that that can take some more time to establish, and that's actually why we include that in a potential Phase 1 activity, if you want to go that route and get something more formal between your organizations. And for the application

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phase, we're looking for a signed document, a signed letter, that says that the organization is committed.

Meghan Camello, TechWerx

I see a question here. Can the lead university co-host the program with a two-year degree institution?

Caleb Woodall, DOE HGEO

Yes, so the two-year institution needs to be the primary place where students are enrolling and getting credentials. If they are also taking courses concurrently at a four-year institution or a university that is okay if there's reasons to be doing that. But we're looking for students to be enrolling and graduating from a two-year institution.

Meghan Camello, TechWerx

Will industrial partners or industry partners allow to take funding from this project? Is there a cost share requirement?

This is all in one... we already addressed there is no cost share requirement. Is there limitations on the percentage of funding that must be used by a two-year college?

Caleb Woodall, DOE HGEO

We don't have any prescriptions on where funding goes and what percentage is there. Needs to be something that all the members of the consortium agree upon and is commensurate with the level of involvement and the level of work being done by each of those members. But yeah, it just has to be submitted by that institution of higher education, and they will be the primary person receiving the funds, but as they distribute it to their partners, that is their call.

Meghan Camello, TechWerx

Would the development of qualified apprenticeship associated with the geothermal programs qualify?

Caleb Woodall, DOE HGEO

Yeah, that's a type of program that fits under the merit review.

Meghan Camello, TechWerx

With 9 minutes left, I'm trying to see if we can knock a few of these out.

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For A1 type, which I'm assuming is, Phase 1, would adding modules to existing courses at two-year college qualify as training, or does it have to be a new course?

Caleb Woodall, DOE HGEO

Yeah, to ensure that we're understanding right, there's topic area A and topic area B. Both of these topic areas go through Phase 1 and Phase 2, so there's not really an A1. But yes, adding things to existing courses and enhancing existing courses in different ways that are defined in the opportunity page, does qualify. We do not say that there has to be a brand new course in the, opportunity page.

Meghan Camello, TechWerx

I see another question around the letters of collaboration.

Is a letter of collaboration required from the two-year Institute of Higher Education? The website addresses employers and the workforce development entity, but not the Institute of Higher Education.

Caleb Woodall, DOE HGEO

Yeah, the primary applicant should have letters of commitment from each of the other organizations involved, just to show that they're actually committed, and we're not just listing random organizations that don't know about this. So again, we don't have a template, it does not have to be something incredibly long, but we do want a signed letter of commitment from all the organizations involved. The primary applicant does not need to have a letter that they themselves are involved.

Meghan Camello, TechWerx

I see, would training to reskill to place workers be considered acceptable? I think as long as they align with the review criteria and the technology areas that are listed in the opportunity page.

Caleb Woodall, DOE HGEO

That's right.

Meghan Camello, TechWerx

Does power generation for data centers include facility systems such as commercial, HVAC, boiler, chiller technicians?

Caleb Woodall, DOE HGEO

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Yes.

I see a question under that the should students be required to pay a fee for the course?
That is not a requirement.

Meghan Camello, TechWerx

Okay, can there be more than 4 members in the consortium?

Caleb Woodall, DOE HGEO

Yes, there's no maximum limit. We've only set minimum.

Meghan Camello, TechWerx

Are course micro-credentials and certifications considered to be the same?

Caleb Woodall, DOE HGEO

Micro-credentials and certifications for this purpose are the same. A course is something a part of a program that leads to getting a micro-credential or a certification.

Meghan Camello, TechWerx

If there is a need for geothermal employment in one state, can the students' participants be from another state?

Caleb Woodall, DOE HGEO

Certainly.

Meghan Camello, TechWerx

Could the training program be virtual or online offering?

Caleb Woodall, DOE HGEO

Yes...We don't have anything against that, but we are looking for people to be getting hands-on experience, so I just encourage you to look at everything that we've prescribed and see that you're meeting those needs.

Meghan Camello, TechWerx

I think, well, we have time for a few more.

How many students are expected to be hired, and how large should the industry partners be in terms of personnel?

Caleb Woodall, DOE HGEO

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Caleb Woodall: That's a good question. We didn't prescribe that. We really want to be responsive to any needs that exist across the country in our target industries. So, I'm aware that some colleges in some regions are quite large and might be able to graduate dozens of students in a cohort, and I am aware that others, when they're starting out, you might be looking for two or three students in your first cohort. We haven't set anything... we haven't set any requirements there. We do have the reporting phase, though, because we do want to be able to assess, see your goals and see that you're meeting your goals for how we get students through them, and we just want to hold everyone accountable. Maybe if you don't meet your goals the first time around, we want to try to keep progressing towards that, and ultimately see a good return on, investment of taxpayer dollars.

Meghan Camello, TechWerx

Thanks, Caleb.

Let's do one more.

There's a question here around project budget duration. I don't think we've touched on that yet, so that might be a good place to wrap up with.

Caleb Woodall, DOE HGEO

Yeah, so we outline each of the phases. We anticipate that each phase, like, phase one would be 2 to 12 months, and Phase 2 would be 1 to 2 years. That's a range that we allow. If you think you can, jump through that planning phase in 2 months, and jump to running the program, that's completely fine. If you think it needs to take a little longer, that's fine as well. So we've set these guardrails, but we're looking for you in the proposal to say what is reasonable and accomplishable by you and your collaborators.

Meghan Camello, TechWerx

Great, thanks, Caleb.

With that, we're going to wrap up. Like I mentioned at the beginning of the webinar, all the webinar materials, the recording, the transcript, the slides will be available on the TechWerx website in the next few business days, along with the answers to the questions that we answered live today, and any questions that we did not get to yet. So, all questions will be answered in the next few business days. You will receive an email that provides a recap of the webinar, and lets you know that all these materials are on the website, so once you receive that email, you can go and find these materials.

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If any other questions come up between now and the next office hours, feel free to send an email at info@techwerx.org. Reminders that applications close July 17th and must be submitted by 5 p.m. Eastern.

We will host office hours on June 3rd and July 9th at 3 p.m. Eastern. Most of the information that we covered today is on the opportunity page, including the dates, registration links, so that's the best place to go for the latest information. We appreciate you taking the time out of your Wednesday to attend, and we look forward to receiving your applications.

Thanks, everyone.