

Transcript – Communities LEAP Informational Webinar

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Via Zoom

Johanna Zetterberg: Hello, and welcome to today's informational webinar about the opportunity announcement for the US Department of Energy's Communities LEAP Local Energy Action Program. Thank you for your interest in this pilot initiative, I am Johanna Zetterberg from the Office of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy. Together with my colleague Alyse Taylor-Anyikire from DOE's Office of Policy will walk through highlights of this opportunity announcement with you during today's presentation.

Also, here with us are Rebecca Asch from the Department of Energy and Melissa Monk from Allegheny Science and Technology, who will be helping us field your questions today. Stacey Young from The Building People is running today's webinar on Zoom. Thank you, Stacey.

Before we begin, a few housekeeping matters. First, please use the question feature to let us know if you cannot hear us. If you can hear us, there's no need to share that note with us, and because we have a large group today, we will keep attendees muted, so please do use that questions feature to ask any questions you may have or let us know of any technical issues you might be experiencing today.

We are recording this webinar which we will post on the Communities LEAP website, if you do not wish to have your image recorded, please turn off your camera or participate by phone. If you use a video connection, you are presumed to consent to the recording and use of your image.

We will only be discussing information today provided in the Communities LEAP opportunity announcement. We will be providing a summary, but there are additional and important details in the opportunity announcement, so please read it and read it carefully. There are no advantages or disadvantages to participating in the webinar with respect to the application evaluation process.

And finally, if there are any inconsistencies between the opportunity announcement and this presentation or statements made by DOE personnel, the opportunity announcement is the controlling document and applicants should rely on its language and seek clarification by submitting a question to our email address, which is listed here at the bottom of the slide, its communitiesleapinfo@hq.doe.gov, this is the same email that will be presenting throughout this presentation to get in touch with us. And I'll turn it over to Alyse. Alyse you are muted.

Alyse Taylor-Anyikire: Thank you. Here is today's agenda again, this webinar summarizes the Communities LEAP opportunity announcement and will basically following that document, and we encourage you to open it and walk along through the document with that. We will begin with the description of the competitive technical assistance opportunities and provide some background information. We will cover the technical assistance and the structure of the opportunity, as well as communities of interest and eligibility. Then we'll move into submission information in the application,

dates, deadlines, the process timeline of how to apply, the evaluation criteria and other selection factors, and then we will close out the webinar with Q&A.

The one thing to note is that please use the question feature that Johanna said to ask your questions as they come up. We're going to do our best to reply during the webinar as we can, and at the end of the presentation will answer some of those common questions. We may not get to all the questions today, as some of them require us to do a consult before we can answer, so keep an eye on the Communities FAQ. We will post the questions there after this if there's something we couldn't answer. You can find our FAQ at our website, which will be listed at the end of this presentation and if you have any questions that aren't answered feel free to email us at communitiesLEAPinfo@hq.doe.gov.

So before we get into the details about Communities LEAP I want to provide a little background about the opportunity and its focus on equity and energy transition. Communities LEAP is specifically for low income, energy burdened communities, that are also experiencing either direct environmental justice impacts or direct economic impacts and the shift away from historical reliance on fossil fuels.

The opportunities and potential benefits from the transition to net zero energy are compelling:

- Lower local air pollution
- Lower utility costs and energy burdens,
- Improved access to reliable energy
- Enhanced economic productivity
- New clean energy supply chain demonstration and manufacturing opportunities.

Many of these opportunities will create and sustain high quality jobs, especially when coupled with strong labor standards.

This Pilot Initiative reflects several Administration priorities, which are laid out in a number of executive orders and initiatives. I'm going to go over those briefly. First, Executive Order 13985: Advancing Racial Equity and Support for Under-served Communities Through the Federal Government. This executive order emphasizes the importance of prioritizing underserved communities using federal funds.

Communities LEAP is also consistent with the President's commitment to environmental justice and energy transition communities. As the Justice40 Initiative continues to evolve, DOE will continue to assess the programs and investments to which Justice40 applies.

Next, Executive Order 14008: Tackling the Climate Crisis at Home and Abroad. This particular order reaffirms the Administration's commitment to combatting climate change, including through increased deployment of clean energy technologies.

And lastly, Executive Order 14017: America's Supply Chains. This executive order emphasizes the importance of resilient supply chains, including those for high-capacity batteries

The aim of this pilot is to really facilitate sustained Community wide economic empowerment through clean energy. And where we are focusing on improving and local environmental conditions and open the way for other benefits, primarily through DOE's clean energy deployment work. We're going to do this by recognizing each community's specific energy-related challenges and opportunities, really focusing on supporting community and stakeholder leadership and creating solutions to address the challenges and opportunities. And lastly, focusing on building long term economic and environmental change to

hopefully build a more sustainable resilient and equitable future. I'm going to hand it back to you Johanna to discuss the technical assistance structure.

Johanna Zetterberg: Thank you Alyse.

First off, as the provider of technical assistance, DOE views its relationship with selected communities receiving the technical assistance as a committed and collaborative partnership. Technical Assistance, for the purposes of the Communities LEAP pilot initiative, refers to expertise and resources provided by DOE to selected communities which can take the form of deliverables - for example, an action plan - and services - for example, expert consultation, DOE will make additional expertise available as needed to support the success of selected communities, depending on the specific skills and capabilities required for success. Technical assistance provided under this opportunity will focus on the development of community-driven clean energy plans with economic, environmental and other benefits based on each community's unique combination of energy related resources assets or potential; social, institutional and economic strengths and opportunities; and the specific clean energy focus areas which we call 'pathways' the community hopes to pursue.

DOE will connect selected communities to technical assistance providers. Selected communities will work with them to develop a scope of work for technical assistance, based on community-led needs, technical feasibility, and the level of effort supported by this opportunity. DOE anticipates providing limited-duration technical assistance to selected communities for approximately 12–18 months after the start date.

I do want to clarify that funding will not be provided directly to the selected communities, this is not a funding opportunity announcement, this is a competitive technical assistance opportunity.

And wrapping up the slides about the structure of this technical assistance - at the end of the technical assistance period, each participating community will have an action plan that prepares the community to take further steps toward realizing the community goals, including leveraging federal state and local funding or financing opportunities, participating in programs offered by philanthropic organizations and/or partnering for private sector investment. This is all to realize the benefits from the pathways and the solutions that the Community is implementing.

Alyse will now tell you more about the focus areas of technical assistance, which we call pathways.

Alyse Taylor-Anyikire: Thanks Johanna. There are two tracks for technical assistance. You can see on the left, you have the Launch Track. This track is for communities that are ready to commit to one or more policy or program goals to incentivize clean energy economic development. Communities should be ready to convene community stakeholders to envision and assess opportunities to achieve that goal and document the way forward in a community clean energy economic development Roadmap.

On the right, you have the Accelerate Track. This track is for communities that already an existing clean energy economic development Roadmap, strategic plan, or similar document that demonstrates a commitment to clean energy economic development.

At the end of the technical assistance period, each participating community will have an action plan that prepares it to take further steps toward realizing its goals, including leveraging federal, state, and local

funding or financing opportunities, participating in other programs offered by philanthropic organizations, and/or partnering for private investment.

So, in total, we're highlighting seven clean energy pathways in the opportunity announcement. First, renewable energy planning and development, energy efficient buildings and beneficial electrification, next clean transportation, carbon capture and storage, energy site reclamation and critical material processing, community resilience microgrids, and new or enhanced manufacturing.

One thing we want to say is that launch and accelerate tracks communities may choose to pursue one or more pathways for energy and economic development and communities are encouraged to explore integrated opportunities. There's even an opportunity for collective community, together with their technical assistance providers, to explore opportunities beyond these examples, as long as they are in line with the objective of this opportunity. Each pathway will include an emphasis on developing energy jobs and workforce skills, as well as promoting minority-owned businesses and small- to mid-size businesses.

One thing to note is that launch track communities will not start out in one of these defined pathways but may end up pursuing one or more of them after working with a technical assistance provider. For those communities, the goal of technical assistance is to create a clean energy economic development Roadmap based on one or more of the following pathways, after a determination of which offer the best fit to the community. You should read Appendix A for additional details about each of the pathways—including background, candidate communities, and next steps for implementation.

We really want to reinforce that the objective of the technical assistance for communities to really work together as a community to identify local clean energy objectives and identify core community assets, and data and resource requirements, and then use that information to create a plan built on those objectives, strengths, and resources to bring economic and other benefits to the community.

And now we're going to go ahead and dive into the actual pathways.

First, you have the renewable energy planning and development pathway. The goal of the Renewable Energy Planning and Development pathway is to support communities in developing design, implementation, and/or investment strategies for renewable energy projects. Among other activities, DOE anticipates providing selected communities with an analysis of clean energy planning and development opportunities based on current infrastructure, workforce availability, energy resource potential, utility regulatory structure, and other aspects of the community relevant to this pathway.

A few examples of what that might include, you know, the community wanted to set a community wide Climate Action Plan. Something like we want to reduce emissions by 25% in our community or set of clean energy pathways. Or maybe they want a certain percentage of electricity provided by renewables. This is a good pathway to do those kinds of things, as well as if your community is interested in deploying actual real energy assets, whether that be solar or wind or geothermal. This pathway is made to assist in those kinds of things.

Next, we have the energy efficient buildings and beneficial electrification planning and investment pathway. The goal of this pathway is to develop a customized plan to comprehensively approach energy-related building upgrade programs in support of community objectives. DOE's technical assistance

providers will work with community stakeholders to assess the current building stock and power supply, identify building-related load management needs and opportunities for energy and cost savings.

Examples that you might focus on would be building efficiency, how to incorporate demand flexibility, where you might be able to incorporate distributed energy resources, and what electrification might look like in residential homes and neighborhoods or multifamily commercial public building.

The third pathway is clean transportation planning and investment. The goal of this pathway is to assist communities with developing a clean energy transportation plan to meet community objectives. DOE's technical assistance providers will work with community stakeholders to assess the local transportation system, identify community transportation needs, and determine plan objectives. So that'd be decarbonization, improving air quality, increasing the number of electric vehicles, increasing electric vehicle charging availability, or assessing grid capacity for transportation electrification. Those are all things that would be engaged here, so plans and new products that implement alternative fuel, more fuel saving technologies and practices, or considers new mobility choices.

Now I'm going to hand it over to Johanna to discuss carbon capture and storage.

Johanna Zetterberg: Thank you Alyse. Carbon Capture and Storage is regarded as a key pathway for combating the climate crisis, by reducing CO₂ emissions from industries that together vent billions of tons every year, which accumulate and stay in the atmosphere for decades, unless they can be avoided or captured and stored. This pathway can help to decarbonize power or industrial emissions that could have a positive impact on human health and economic outcomes in the region.

Examples of this pathway's goal may include projects that assist communities with evaluating whether carbon capture and storage could be included in their long term clean energy and clean manufacturing plans or develop a pre-feasibility study and roadmap of a potential carbon capture and storage project that would fulfill or partially fulfill that community's interest in transitioning to a clean energy economy with consideration of job creation and transitions and environmental justice issues and opportunities. DOE's technical assistance providers under this pathway will provide a high-level assessment of the potential community benefits of a commercial scale CO₂ storage project from an energy, environmental and economic standpoint and evaluate opportunities for federal and state incentives that can generate revenue, based on the carbon capture and storage project.

Energy site reclamation and critical minerals processing. Energy related activities have left a legacy of environmental impact in thousands of communities. In many, these sites have not been fully remediated and, in some cases, the waste materials can become a valuable resource, because they contain critical minerals, including rare earth elements that could help pay for remediation while producing valuable domestic resources to support the clean energy transition.

Examples of this pathway's goal may include projects that assist communities with evaluating whether there is a significant concentration of rare earth elements or other critical minerals within their community or region to justify building a minerals processing facility to remediate the waste, while separating and concentrating the valuable critical minerals. DOE's technical assistance providers will work with selected communities under this pathway to develop a pre-feasibility study for a potential critical minerals processing facility that evaluates the scale of the remediation and critical minerals

extraction opportunity, assesses the potential economic prospects of such a facility and related remediation activities, and identifies specific workforce needs and opportunities in pursuing this pathway.

Community resilience microgrids. A microgrid is a local energy grid with control capability, which means it can disconnect from the traditional grid and operate autonomously. A microgrid not only provides backup power in case of emergencies, it can also allow communities to be more energy independent and, in some cases, more environmentally friendly. Microgrids can support economic development and or community resilience efforts by reducing the number and duration of outages, increasing power reliability and quality, supporting cost effective growth in a timely manner, and reducing energy costs.

Examples of this pathways goal may include projects that assist communities with evaluating the suitability of microgrids for the community, including regulatory technical and financial barriers and opportunities, the potential location, size, and composition of a new microgrid, how best to match renewable energy and storage alongside conventional generation to meet a community's most important loads at the lowest lifecycle cost, and the potential for a microgrid to provide power during outages.

DOE's technical assistance providers will work with the selected community under this pathway to develop a plan that outlines a series of investments to meet a community-wide resilience goal or locally developed parameters for microgrid projects that provide environmental, economic and or social benefits to the community.

New or enhanced manufacturing. The goal of technical assistance for new or enhanced manufacturing is to assist communities in developing and implementing a strategy to foster a strong, clean, and resilient local manufacturing ecosystem, including assessing the potential for clean energy supply chain manufacturing. Opportunities for evaluation under this pathway include assessing competitiveness opportunities by identifying natural resources existing local capabilities and industrial infrastructure that would make communities well suited for a role in the manufacturing supply chain. Also, evaluating education and workforce development resources to train a skilled local workforce and engaging with existing local manufacturing facilities on energy performance to lower emissions and reduce waste and lower costs.

This concludes our overview of the pathways and now Alyse will tell you a bit more about who is eligible to apply for communities Lee.

Alyse Taylor-Anyikire: Thanks Johanna. For the purposes of this pilot initiative, a community is defined as a group of individuals or households living in geographic proximity to one another. Communities in the United States—including tribal nations and territories—are eligible to apply to Communities LEAP if they meet the criteria here: 30% of its Community population is classified as low income AND that community has high or severe energy burden - the median spending of household income and energy bills being greater than or equal to 6%.

As well as one of the following criteria: historical economic dependence on fossil fuel industry facilities including extraction processing or refining, OR have a high exposure to energy related environmental hazard pollution and toxicity from the siting of large scale energy or industrial facilities, such as

communities rated as moderate or high susceptibility on the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's EJSCREEN tool.

To assist communities to better understand their eligibility, we recently, as of today, revised our opportunity announcement. The revisions adds information and a link to data on each of the eligibility criteria. One thing to note about this data, while it is provided at the census tract level, we are aware that census tracts do not necessarily have the same physical boundaries as the community, but they provide the closest proxy based on publicly available information collected using an empirically robust method. So, the data may not be completely near your community, but it can assist communities to consider their eligibility. US territories are not listed but are eligible to apply to LEAP. As stated in the opportunity announcement, applying communities should describe how they meet the eligibility criteria in the application, even if the data provided does not specifically show that you are eligible. The real focus here is on portraying how you are eligible.

For eligible entities, we are looking for multi-stakeholder teams representing communities. These teams are eligible for this competitive technical assistance opportunity. Community applicants in the form of multi-stakeholder teams must identify a lead organization to represent the team. The team should include a community-based organization with a demonstrated track record of working with community stakeholders. This can be the same as lead organization. They must also include at least one local, tribal, or territorial government entity. It can also be the same as the lead organization. It must also include entities or organizations that, together, have sufficient authority and influence to ensure overall success and applying to the DOE-provided technical assistance within the community towards the community's goals and objectives. Community multi-stakeholder teams are also strongly encouraged to include a local economic development official.

For ineligible entities and applications specifically not of interest, we are not accepting individual persons, foreign entities, or federally funded research and development centers or FFRDCs.

Members of the technical assistance provider network supported by DOE under this initiative are prohibited from applying or being members of an applying team. Those providers that are already in the network are aware of who they are, and what the limitations are. For applications specifically not of interest, we have technology R&D or commercialization projects or programs, applications for capital projects including the purchase or installation of infrastructure or equipment, public education lobbying for advocacy campaign applications that are not focused on community-scale impacts, and applications for teams that do not represent the applying community.

And I'm going to hand it back to Johanna to walk through our process online.

Johanna Zetterberg: Thank you Alyse. This slide has important information about dates and deadlines, and if you look for the red outline those dates indicate important dates for prospective applicants, whereas the blue outline indicates milestone dates.

We'll start in the top left corner with September 15. This was the date that the Communities LEAP opportunity announcement was issued. This date is also when we opened the comment period, and I saw a question come into the Q&A chat about this comment period. We are now in the comment period, DOE invites your comments during this comment period on the contents of the opportunity

announcement. Comments must be sent to the email CommunitiesLEAPinfo@hq.doe.gov, the same email that we're repeating throughout this presentation. The comment period closes on October 12. You can continue to submit questions to that same email address after the comment period closes.

On October 25th, DOE will release the final opportunity announcement, which may contain amendments in response to comments we get between now and October 12. Any and all changes will be listed at the beginning of the document, and the final opportunity announcement will be posted to the website, in the same place where it is right now.

Also on October 25, the registration period opens. The link to the registration page will go live on the website at that time and I'll speak more about this on the next slide.

The main takeaway is that registration is required, as the first step to submitting an application. The registration period closes on December 15 at 5pm Eastern time, and the application deadline is two days later on December 17 at 5pm Eastern time.

DOE anticipates announcing selections in late March of 2022 and I'll just note here that all dates are subject to change.

Let's talk about registration for a moment again. Applicants must register in order to apply, but you do not need to register to submit comments or questions, as mentioned previously, those can just be sent to the Communities LEAP email. What we're showing you here is what the registration page looks like. It looks different from the DOE website, because it is hosted by the National Energy Technology Laboratory, who is a partner with us and Communities LEAP. This registration site is not yet accessible. When the registration period opens, the registration portal can be accessed from the Communities LEAP website.

The registration site or portal will be open from October 25 to December 15 at 5pm Eastern time, as we just reviewed on the previous slide. Because DOE needs time to process registrations, this registration deadline is a hard deadline, the registration site will not be accessible before or after the registration period. Entities intending to apply must successfully complete registration. If you think you might apply, please register. If you register and then decide later that you don't want to apply that's fine, but in order to apply, you must register.

Applicants are strongly encouraged to register at least 48 hours in advance of the registration deadline, and in fact we encourage you to register well in advance of that deadline, as soon as you can after the registration site opens. Once the registration is complete, the registering entity will receive confirmation from DOE with further instructions regarding how to apply.

I'll go over some information now about the application for Communities LEAP. When applying you'll need to upload a single file containing the application information to the application website. As a reminder, after registering successfully you'll receive an email response with information on how to access the application website. The application must not be more than 15 pages long. This page count does not include resumes or letters of commitment, and for communities applying under the accelerate track, documentation of the existing community-wide roadmap or equivalent plan that is required for communities applying under the accelerate track.

Please see the opportunity announcement document for the application questions and required information that must be included in this 15 page application submission, but at a high level the application must include some summary information, information describing the applicants, energy and economic challenges and opportunities, a description of the transformative impact of the requested technical assistance and impacts to the community, information about the composition of the applying team, and team member letters of commitment.

Applications may also include some optional documentation that I just discussed that is not included in the page count, including letters of support and up to five resumes from key team members.

Evaluation criteria. Applications will be screened for compliance with the submission requirements which are laid out in the opportunity announcement. Applications that do not meet the submission requirements will be notified. These applications will not be considered. Applications that meet the submission requirements will be evaluated by DOE and scored using the evaluation criteria that you see here. Applicants should be sure that they cover all evaluation criteria when putting their application package together. Successful applicants will be those that fully address each criteria in sufficient detail and make a compelling case for technical assistance.

The weights of each criteria are in parentheses here on the slide. Each criterion actually contains more detailed descriptions in the opportunity announcement, so please review that document and the evaluation criteria section there to see that full level of detail.

And back over to Alyse to talk about other selection factors.

Alyse Taylor-Anyikire: In addition to the evaluation criteria, there are unweighted program policy factors that may be applied in determining final selection. These will include things like geographic and demographic diversity, making sure we have a good number of differences between the number of rural and urban communities, or communities from the southeast or northwest, also the extent to which the community represents a minority population. Also the presence of additional compounding stressors like lack of access to clean energy resources, electricity, or reliable energy, vulnerability to severe weather and climate events, or a shrinking or slow growing economy, especially within manufacturing dominant communities.

We are also looking for diversity of pathways represented across selections and community challenges addressed. We potentially won't choose, you know, 36 applications all focused on one of the selected pathways, we have to have some diversity there, as well.

And with that I want to say thank you all for your time today and for your interest in Communities LEAP. There are ways to get in touch with us. As we said before, visit the website and sign up for updates to stay on top of Communities LEAP. You can email us at CommunitiesLEAPinfo@hq.doe.gov. Please register for upcoming office hour sessions. The registration link will be coming soon on the upcoming events page on the Communities LEAP website.

We've covered a lot of information and now it's time for your questions. Once again we may not be able to take all your questions today, as some may require some additional thought, we'll do the best that we can. Rebecca, let's go ahead and get started.

Rebecca Asch: Sounds good, can you hear and see me OK?

Alyse Taylor-Anyikire: Yes.

Rebecca Asch: Excellent. We had a question about the comment period which is open until October 12, and I believe you answered that during the webinar, but if you want to say a little bit more about that, since that period is only open until October 12, that'd be great.

Johanna Zetterberg: Sure, I'd be happy to take that one. As I mentioned earlier, we are in the middle of the comment period now for Communities LEAP. DOE invites your comments on the content of the opportunity announcement and so please be sure to read that document and review it. If you have questions on it, you can contact us at our email address communitiesLEAPinfo@hq.doe.gov. You can also check the FAQ page on the Communities LEAP website, which we will update regularly based on questions that we receive. If you do have any comments for DOE's consideration, please also do go ahead and send those to the Communities LEAP email address. We may or may not respond to comments, but we will take them into consideration as we prepare our final opportunity announcement, which we will issue on October 25. We do look forward to hearing from you, thank you.

Rebecca Asch: Thanks Johanna. Here's a question that we got, for the launch track, it sounds like the fundamental quality an applicant needs to have is the ability to convene community stakeholders around the clean energy goal. Can you comment on/confirm that what other capacities might be helpful?

Johanna Zetterberg: I can take that one as well, Alyse. I think it would be helpful to review the application questions for a sense of what DOE is looking for, as well as the evaluation criteria, but that is largely correct. I will note there is a section on the launch track specifically within the opportunity announcement on page three of that document, and here we say that communities that are in the launch phase of an energy transmission may apply for technical assistance under the LEAP opportunity to support actions that they see as necessary to the development of a community roadmap. These activities may include convening community stakeholders, compiling a list of energy related risks and resilience opportunities, identifying key decision makers and resources, developing clean energy options materials relevant to the community, documenting the community's commitment to an energy transition, assessing strengths of the community relative to possible clean energy transitions, developing a governing framework to equitably manage a community-wide clean energy transition, drafting an energy transition vision statement, and setting a transition timeline. So these are just some examples.

Rebecca Asch: Thank you, another attendee asks: I see my community reflected in all three pathways. Can we combine? Focus on one and then the other? Any advice?

Alyse Taylor-Anyikire: I can take this one. We do realize that many of these pathways are complimentary, so if you envision your community putting together more than one pathway, we encourage that. You can work with your technical assistance provider to figure out what is the best way to make that work and what makes sense for your community.

Rebecca Asch: Another attendee asks: how many communities can one region propose working with. Alyse, you're muted if you're speaking.

Alyse Taylor-Anyikire: No, I wasn't speaking out loud. It does need a little bit more explanation unless Johanna has an answer.

Johanna Zetterberg: Yes, I'd be happy to. This opportunity announcement is focused on communities and we are seeking applications from communities. If there is a question regarding communities, working together within one region, we would appreciate you sending that question to our email address, and we can formulate an FAQ and post that on the website, thank you.

Rebecca Asch: Another attendee asks: if our community meets the low income and historical dependence criteria, but not the high energy burden, are we eligible?

Alyse Taylor-Anyikire: I will take this one. Though our application is very clear about the importance of a community being 30% or more low income, as well as having historical dependence on fossil fuels and the high energy burden, so it is a requirement that you have all three of those. You're welcome to look at the data that we published on the website today and kind of affect that, and if you still feel like there's a strong argument for your community to be eligible, we encourage you to write that into your application.

Rebecca Asch: And stemming off of that another attendee asks whether it's required that 30% of the community be low income.

Alyse Taylor-Anyikire: One more time, Rebecca.

Rebecca Asch: Is it required that 30% of the community be low income?

Alyse Taylor-Anyikire: Yes.

Rebecca Asch: Another attendee asks can a city or school district or other local government entity serve as the lead applicant or just part of the multi-stakeholder team?

Johanna Zetterberg: I can take that one. We have not specified which type of organization must be the lead organization, so please go ahead and take a look at the opportunity announcement. Language around the multi-stakeholder team composition and our requirements and suggestions for who might be included on that team, as well as our requirement that the applying team identify who is the lead organization for that team.

Rebecca Asch: May consultant serve as the organization representing eligible communities?

Alyse Taylor-Anyikire: We express in the opportunity announcement the need for a multi stakeholder team, so whoever is applying must represent the community and the lead applicant will be the person who submits the application. You can definitely work with consultants, but the members of the team must be satisfy the requirements laid out in the opportunity announcement.

Rebecca Asch: Thanks. Someone else would like to know who will be providing the technical assistance to communities? Is it DOE only? Labs? Contractors?

Johanna Zetterberg: I can take that one. DOE is actively building the technical assistance provider network for Communities LEAP, so stay tuned for more information to come on who the teams will be coming from and providing that technical assistance. If you have any very specific questions, please send them to the Communities LEAP email inbox. Thank you.

Rebecca Asch: What is the anticipated range of the awards? I assume that means in terms of funding.

Johanna Zetterberg: I can take that one again. DOE is committing to provide 12 to 18 months of technical assistance available to certain communities at no cost to them. We are not making financial awards available under Communities LEAP, this is not a financial assistance opportunity, this is a technical assistance opportunity, and the individual work scope will be developed in partnership with the selected community.

Rebecca Asch: Could you please say a little bit more about how the technical assistance will be delivered if a community is selected? Will the community have regular access to the TA provider? How much bandwidth will be needed by staff?

Alyse Taylor-Anyikire: I can take that question. Yes, the community would have regular access to that TA provider or the TA provider team, it will be set up to serve specifically that community and we envision them working together to develop the appropriate statement of work and figuring out what that community trying to achieve and laying out a plan for over the next 12 to 18 months, what do we need to accomplish and how we do that.

Rebecca Asch: Thank you. Another question which I'll paraphrase a little bit, a community has already put together a group of rural community stakeholders and has a project plan for rural agricultural electrification and they would like to pursue the acceleration track but haven't identified a program funding source. Can DOE help identify a funding source once the TA is completed?

Alyse Taylor-Anyikire: I can take that one. Johanna do you want to chime in there?

Johanna Zetterberg: I was just going to say, this could be a specific question that would be best presented to the email inbox, but if you have a general statement to make based on message, please go ahead.

Alyse Taylor-Anyikire: Yes, so we stated throughout the presentation and the application that we would like to help communities at the end of this process be able to find appropriate funding to help move their project forward, so does sound in alignment with what this effort is trying to provide.

Rebecca Asch: Another attendee would like us to define 'community' for this opportunity.

Alyse Taylor-Anyikire: I can take that one. We referenced this earlier in the slides, a community is defined as a group of individuals or households living in geographic proximity to one another, that's how we're defining community for this application.

Johanna Zetterberg: Yes, and that is on page nine of the opportunity announcement.

Rebecca Asch: On a similar note, how does DOE define a high energy burden community or low-income community?

Alyse Taylor-Anyikire: You can find a detailed explanation of each of those criteria in the links that we provided today in terms of what data is behind that and the detailed explanation. For high energy burden, it means that communities spend on average greater than 6% of income on utility bills, that is how we're defining high energy burden. For low income, greater than 30% of the community is considered low income, the definition of that is also provided today in the links.

Johanna Zetterberg: And if I could just add on to that, the data that we're providing at the census tract level is publicly available information, as Alyse mentioned earlier today, census tracts do not necessarily have the same physical boundaries as a community, depending on the how the Community defines itself. But the census tract level data sets were used because they provide the closest proxy based on publicly available information that is collected using an empirically robust method. Applying communities should describe how they meet the eligibility criteria in their application, even if these data do not specifically show that they're eligible.

Rebecca Asch: Thank you. Another question, I will paraphrase, if an organization is interested in becoming a technical assistance provider, how should they reach out to DOE?

Johanna Zetterberg: We are not soliciting that information at this time, but you can feel free to get in touch with us with any comments or questions through the email inbox that we've been providing today.

Rebecca Asch: Great. I'm just looking through some of the other questions that we have not yet answered.

Johanna Zetterberg: Rebecca, while you're looking through that there's one that I wanted to answer, regarding being registered on grants.gov. You want to read that one, or do you want me to just to answer it now?

Rebecca Asch: Let me pull it up. If you have it up, can you go ahead and answer it?

Alyse Taylor-Anyikire: I'll read it. This is from an applicant: I'm assuming I need to be registered on SAM.gov and grants.gov. This is a multi-stakeholder application - do you recommend a community nonprofit organization apply or the actual municipal government?

Johanna Zetterberg: Let me answer the first part of that question and then Alyse if you could answer the second part of that question. Regarding the assumption that applicants need to be registered on sam.gov and grants.gov, you do not need to be registered on those websites in order to apply. Please take a look at the opportunity announcement, especially the section that lays out the application submission process and requirements. We are asking applicants to submit a single file that answers the questions in the opportunity announcement, which makes up the application itself. You will upload that single file to the application website once that is available, you do not need to go through grants.gov or sam.gov in order to apply.

Alyse Taylor-Anyikire: For the second part of the question, in terms of the multi-stakeholder team, the lead applicant should be the person that registers and submits the application. We don't need each person as part of the team to submit an application, only the lead applicant.

Rebecca Asch: Thanks for pulling up that question. We got a couple of questions asking whether there will be future rounds of LEAP announcements or opportunities? Could either of you speak a little bit to that?

Johanna Zetterberg: Sure. I would say possibly. LEAP is a pilot initiative that DOE is very excited to implement and work with selected communities as partners. We do expect to learn a lot from LEAP, as well as other efforts that are ongoing right now across the department, so we can't answer that question definitively at this time, but thank you for the question.

Rebecca Asch: We also got a couple of questions back to the definition of community. Is there a maximum size of the community that can apply to this program? Can it be a citywide proposal? Can it be for all school districts, several neighborhoods? Do we have specific parameters around that?

Alyse Taylor-Anyikire: We do not limit the parameters around the size of the community. We do envision that communities can obviously come in different sizes based on the community, so there are not limits there, but the community has to be at least 35 people. They are welcome to apply as multi-stakeholder teams that are representing the community.

Rebecca Asch: Okay, I'm looking through our questions I think most of these, we have already covered in one way or another. As a reminder to our attendees if you don't have your question answered today or if you have a specific question, please feel free to reach out to the Communities LEAP info email, and we will take your question there.

Okay here's another question: what type of entities would you suggest that a grassroots organization that is focused on environmental justice and clean energy partner with or make a lead agency for this pilot program? So, what kind of organizations are we looking for to serve as a lead for the multi-stakeholder team?

Alyse Taylor-Anyikire: Go ahead, Johanna.

Johanna Zetterberg: I think we largely answered this question, DOE is not specifying who the lead must be, but we do lay out a lot of detailed information on the fact that this is a community-based initiative, and so we are looking for applications from multi stakeholder teams to apply together representing the community. I'm looking for the page number of where this information is in the opportunity announcement, so you can go there and read it. Anyone on my team has that handy?

Yes, it is on page 10 of the opportunity announcement, so that is the place to look.

Rebecca Asch: Thanks Johanna. Another question: are all pathways intended to receive funding? If there are no applicants, or only a small number of applicants for certain pathway, will it still be implemented?

Johanna Zetterberg: DOE will evaluate applications and make selections based on how those applications score. We are looking for communities to identify their interests in terms of the specific pathway or pathways that they want to pursue, so at this time we can't definitively say what pathways

will ultimately end up being pursued by the selected communities.

Rebecca Asch: Great, thank you. I don't have any questions in my queue right now that we have not yet already answered or not specific to a particular community or application. As a reminder to everyone, if you didn't catch the answer to a question or something covered in the webinar this presentation will be posted on the website for you to view later.

We have another question which I'm not sure if we have an answer to, but I will ask it anyway: what kind of agreement will the entity need to enter into to accept the Technical Assistance service?

Johanna Zetterberg: That information is not available at this time. We can provide an FAQ in response to that question, if you want to submit that to our email.

Rebecca Asch: Thanks. Okay, I think that's all the questions that we have for today.

Alyse Taylor-Anyikire: If that is all the questions I want to go ahead and say again, thank you for your time today and for your interest and Communities LEAP. There are several ways to get in touch with us, and we encourage you all to follow up if you have any questions or comments, and if you have any general questions that is also the same email address that you use and thank you for coming today.