

The Lab-Embedded Entrepreneurship Program (LEEP)

Supporting the next generation of clean tech entrepreneurs to move science innovations from lab to market

Addressing climate change, sustainability, and social justice cannot be based solely on deployment of existing technologies. New innovations, derived from massive U.S. investments in basic and applied energy research at universities and the national labs, are critically needed to achieve net-zero carbon emissions by 2050.

Successfully maturing a clean tech innovation into deployment at scale is notoriously hard. The process is arduous and expensive, with many technical, business, and manufacturing hurdles to overcome. Direct participation by the scientists and engineers who made the initial discovery increases the likelihood of translating these innovations into impact. However, the traditional STEM career path often does not prepare scientists to be successful entrepreneurs.

LEEP

The Lab-Embedded Entrepreneurship Program (LEEP) was developed in 2015 by the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) and the national labs to address all these challenges. LEEP is managed by the DOE [Office of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy](#) (EERE) and sponsored by its [Advanced Manufacturing Office](#) (AMO).



Leveraging national labs to accelerate cleantech to market

LEEP nodes are currently located at four of the 17 National Laboratories operated by the DOE: [Chain Reaction Innovations](#) (CRI) located at Argonne National Laboratory, [Innovation Crossroads](#) (IC) located at Oak Ridge National Laboratory, [Cyclotron Road/Activate](#) (CR) located at Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory and [West Gate](#) (WG), located at the National Renewable Energy Laboratory.

LEEP's mission is to train the next generation of clean tech entrepreneurs to develop game-changing technologies for a clean energy future. LEEP taps into the many unique resources, facilities, and personnel in the national labs. LEEP nodes also leverage the vast business and manufacturing acumen present in innovation ecosystems locally, regionally, and nationally. The program seeks to move innovations into deployment at scale far more quickly and efficiently than is typical.

How LEEP works

Each LEEP node recruits clean energy's best and brightest minds through a national call for a two-year funded fellowship that will move their startup technology into the market.



LEEP alumni, like CRI's ClearFlame Engine Technologies, developed their technologies at national labs and are currently running successful clean energy businesses.

Image by Argonne National Laboratory.

Early-stage startups embed at their respective national lab and are mentored by a lab scientist. The programs also provide local/regional/national ecosystem support including business-entrepreneurship training to eliminate the hurdles traditionally faced by early-stage clean tech startups.

These innovators are our future. The LEEP program supports the revolutionary technologies that may quite literally, save the planet.

Current support

To optimize the innovator's success and compete with high-profile incubators, the program offers unprecedented assistance.

- Paid two-year Fellowship of up to \$110,000 per year
- \$100,000 – \$280,000 to support technical work at a national lab
- Healthcare benefits
- Access to equipment and scientists at national laboratories
- \$12,000 yearly travel allowance
- Mentorship, programming, ecosystem networking
- Annual Demo Day introduces ecosystem partners and investors to startups
- All support is non-dilutive

Success stories

- [Read about successful CRI innovators](#)
- [Browse IC stories](#)
- [Read more about Cyclotron Road/Activate](#)

Our future

Given the remarkable success of LEEP, the goal is to provide opportunities to diverse applicants, grow the number of fellows in the program while assuring the benefits of climate investments reach disadvantaged communities and inform equitable research, development and deployment. LEEP will broaden its technology reach while collaborating with public and private industry to assure that by 2050, a carbon-neutral future is secured.

We need a transformative community of clean energy entrepreneurs. LEEP has a proven track record of addressing the challenges early-stage clean tech startups face, supporting the visionary technologies that are changing the world. ■

Lab-Embedded Entrepreneurship Program



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Impact by the numbers

101 Total LEEP
Fellows

\$623M Follow-on
Funding

660 Jobs
Created

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF
ENERGY

Office of
**ENERGY EFFICIENCY &
RENEWABLE ENERGY**

For more information, visit:
energy.gov/eere/amo/lab-embedded-entrepreneurship-program