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DOE_Grid Resilience Innovation and Partnerships Program Webinar

WHITNEY BELL: Hello and welcome to the Grid Resilience and Innovation Partnerships Program Applicant Informational Webinar. I'm Whitney Bell with ICF and I will be your host today. First, a few housekeeping items before today's webinar. This WebEx meeting is being recorded and may be used by the U.S. Department of Energy. If you do not wish to have your voice recorded, please do not speak during the call. If you do not wish to have your image recorded, please turn off your camera or participate by phone. If you speak during the call or use a video connection, you are presumed consent to recording and use of your voice or image. All participants are in listen only mode. If you have any technical issues or questions, you may type them in the chat box and select send to host.

We are not taking any questions today. All questions related to the program must be submitted directly through the follow up process at Fed Connect the link to it will appear in the chat now. Additionally, if you need to view the live captioning, please refer to the link that is in the chat as well. Finally, we

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will post a copy of today's presentation on the Grid Resilience and Innovation Partnerships Program Applicant Informational Webinar webpage by this coming Friday. The recording of today's webinar will be available in about two weeks and we will notify you when that is ready. I would now like to introduce you to Pat Hoffman, Principal Deputy Director of the Grid Deployment Office, who will provide our opening remarks. Pat, welcome.

PAT HOFFMAN: Thank you, Whitney and the ICF team, I really appreciate all the work you've done here. So welcome, everybody. I appreciate your participation. Good morning to those folks on the West Coast and good afternoon to the folks on the East Coast. My name is Pat Hoffman. I am the Principal Deputy Director for the Grid Deployment Office at the Department of Energy. And the Department of Energy has the leadership for the Grid Deployment Office is under the direction of Rhea Robinson. I want to welcome everybody to today's webinar with the Grid Resilience and Innovation Partnership Program, the GRIP Program.

I want to welcome the applicants because we are here today to discuss the next steps to the full application phase. As all the program applicants know, the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law provided \$10.5 billion in funding for competitive infrastructure grants and federal financial assistance under this program, which is the Grid Resilience and Innovation Partnerships Program.

While we are here today to discuss the GRIP program, I did want to take a minute to provide an overview of the Grid Deployment Office, for those that are not familiar with our organization. In addition to this work that we will be discussing today, the Grid Deployment Office is responsible for overseeing \$2.3 billion in Grid Resilience Formula Grants for states, tribal nations and territories. We encourage those interested in the GRIP funding also to coordinate with states, tribes and territories on potential collaboration opportunities for infrastructure investments with applications due from them on March 31st.

The Grid Deployment Office also administers several transmission financing and facilitation programs available also through the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law and the Inflation Reduction Act. This includes \$2.5 billion for a revolving fund program called the Transmission Facilitation Program. The request for the proposals just closed for this program for capacity contracts and we are currently reviewing these transmission applications. We are also accepting comments on our Transmission Siting and Economic Development Grant Program through February 28th, which is a \$760 million dollar investment through the Inflation Reduction Act to support States and local communities in the siting and permitting of interstate and offshore electricity transmission lines.

Lastly, but equally important, our organization GDOs Power Generation Assistance Division runs a \$6 billion dollar Civil Nuclear Credit Program and also a \$760 million dollar Hydroelectric Incentives Program. If those engaged in this webinar are

interested in any of these programs, please go to GDO's website to learn more. One thing that I would like to highlight is our program conductor materials on the website that includes a more detailed information on various grid and transmission financing opportunities available through GDO and at DOE writ large.

For the context of today's webinar, President Biden has set ambitious goals of reducing U.S. emissions at least 50% below 2005 levels by 2030 and reaching net zero emissions by 2050. To reach these goals, we need to make our country's power sector 100% clean by 2035. In January we launched the Building a Better Grid initiative to catalyze the nationwide development of new and upgraded high capacity electricity transmission lines and support investments to modernize the flexibility and resilience of the distribution system and create a more resilient electric grid.

We know that engaging states, local governments, tribes and community and the private sector is

critical to the success of all our programs. The GRIP Program is an important tool for DOE to support meaningful engagement and investment that includes Justice40, such that 40% of the overall benefits of federal investments flow to disadvantaged communities. So with that high level overview, I now will turn it up either back to Wendy, back to Whitney, sorry, and to Colin Meehan who will lead today's webinar on the next steps for GRIP.

WHITNEY BELL: Thank you, Pat. As Pat said, we now welcome Colin Meehan, Project Manager for the GRIP Program with GDO, for his remarks on the Grid Resilience and Innovation Partnerships Program, the full application phase. Colin, I'll go ahead and. Turn it over to you. Colin, we're having a hard time hearing you.

COLIN MEEHAN: Oh, that's because I had muted my speaker. Thank you, Wendy, and thank you, Pat, for the introduction and thank you everyone who's joining us today, really excited for this update on the GRIP Program. And I'm just gonna go ahead and jump into it

with just a first and foremost, the notice that we've had on our webinars before and we'll continue to have, I want to recognize that none of the information discussed here is legally binding and strongly encourage everyone who is attending this webinar and who is considering applying to review the materials in the FOA itself, that in the event of any conflict between what I say in this meeting and what is written in the FOA, the FOA is the document of record and will win the day, so to speak.

So moving in, I want to just lay out the agenda for today's discussion. First and foremost, we want to provide everyone with a very high level summary of what we've seen so far from the concept papers. I think we've learned some lessons that we want to share with the potential applicant pool with the intent to help you all as you consider the full application process and to help guide you and give you some additional feedback. We also want to provide a few important updates and considerations for the full application process as you prepare for those.

And as I believe Wendy noted, there will be no Q&A for this webinar. We again encourage everyone to submit any questions that you have through the Fed Connect Portal. We are doing our best and I think we've now updated and responded to every question that we can. I think we've got over 120 responses up there right now. So really encourage you to send any questions there that you might have.

First, I do want to spend a little bit of time on an overview of the program itself, the Grid Resilience and Innovation Partnerships Program. We do have three topic areas, the Grid Resilience Grants, the Smart Grid Grants and the Grid Innovation Program.

Hopefully you're all at least familiar with one of these topic areas and I'll spend a little more time talking about each of them. I actually want to really emphasize the Department of Energy goals for the GRIP Program, because we're going to be talking about that a lot today. They do ultimately inform both the review criteria for the concept paper as well as the technical review criteria for the full applications

and so those goals are important for you all to be aware of and ideally integrate into your application process.

They are listed here: to transform community, regional, interregional and national resilience, importantly, including a consideration of future shifts in generation and load as we continue to see transformation in the electric grid, both on the demand and supply side. To catalyze and leverage private sector and non-federal public capital for impactful technology and infrastructure deployment. And finally, but equally important, to advance community benefits, and we'll be talking about all of those in more detail throughout today's discussion.

The deadlines for all of the concept papers have passed, and as we'll discuss, we're starting to see some results as we've begun the review process. Some of you, for topic areas one and two in particular, should have received, in fact, all of you for topic areas one and two should have received notification letters and I'll talk about that shortly.

Again, by way of background, I think this is a helpful and informative table for you all to take a look at. And just as a reminder, this information is in the FOA. And for each of the topic areas we have an anticipated number of awards for this funding cycle, and I think that's really important to keep in mind as we go through the information that we've seen from the concept paper so far, as well as the approximate total federal funding for all of the awards in each topic area. This is a really, really helpful summary table for anyone who has trouble keeping the topic areas separate. I have myself from time to time, especially as I was learning the ins and outs of this program, so I feel like this is a really useful reference table.

And finally, I think this wraps up our background slides, just giving you the timeline at this point for the application process. As I said before, everyone who submitted a compliant paper to Topic Area 1 and 2, sorry, a concept paper to Topic Area 1 and 2 should have received a notification letter

within the last week or so with encourage or discourage notification, and I'll talk about that a little bit more in a few minutes. If you have not received that letter, please do send a note to the e-mail address that's found in the FOA and we will resolve that as quickly we can.

For those of you that submitted concept papers for Topic Area 3, we still anticipate responding to those by early March. We're going to try and beat that deadline, but we've got a lot of work cut out for us. And then of course, the full applications deadlines are coming up fairly quickly. We've got March 17th for Topic Area 2, April 6th for Topic Area 1, and then for Topic Area 3, with a little more time, with May 19th just to give us all some breathing room for that topic area.

Again, I want to emphasize the program goals. These are the goals that I've already discussed, but you're going to, if I've done my job, you'll get sick of them by the end of this, but hopefully they'll be etched into your brain as you consider the full

applications. We are really focused on proposals that transform resilience, keeping in mind future generation and load shifts. We want to see proposals that are catalyzing and leveraging private sector funding as well as non-federal public sector funding. We are looking for proposals that are modernizing the electric grid and preparing us for the future growth that we expect to see in the electric grid and the future changes that we expect to see in the grid infrastructure and ultimately in a way that reduces the impacts of extreme weather and natural disasters, which we know continue to grow. And again, very important emphasis for us is to see proposals that advance community benefits. We'll talk about each of these in more detail throughout the discussion.

So this is the big reveal, I guess you could say, we have received a tremendous amount of interest for all three of our programs, over 700 concept papers across the entire program. You can see for Topic Area 1 and 2 roughly 50% of the papers that we received we sent notices to encourage them to apply with the full application, that was not by design. We did not set a

threshold of 50%, it was simply the on balance after reviewing the concept papers, the ones that we felt warranted an encouragement notification. I do want to emphasize here and I'll say it again throughout the discussion, you are welcome to apply if you received a discourage notification and all of the notifications should have included detail on any areas in the review process that reviewers, any of the criteria, I apologize, that the reviewers felt were deficient in your concept paper as indication where you may need to spend some more time in the full application.

I do want to note, I'm very, very, very happy to see that we saw submissions from all 50 states, not more than 50 states and in several territories. So really happy to see that there's clear interest across the country, a clear need, I shouldn't just say interest, but a really strong need for these programs across the country, from both large and small utilities. We saw in particular for Topic Area 1, where we have a 30% essentially carve out for small utilities required in statute, we saw, I believe it was 110,

possibly a little bit more concept paper submissions from small utilities. So I was very encouraged to see that. There's clearly a need for the different programs that we have here and we want to make sure that they succeed. And our goal here is to help guide you as you move into the full application process and help you succeed, because that's the way this program is going to work best.

Again, because we've seen such strong numbers, and if you'll recall from a few slides back, our anticipated number of awards for each topic area ranges from about 10 to about 40, we expect these to be very competitive and we want to help all of you develop the most competitive applications that you can and really a key guiding light for all of that is going to be our strategic goals, transforming resilience, catalyzing investment, and impactful and advanced community benefits.

To spend a little more time on the response letters, if you've received one, they would have been sent to the registered businesses point of contact, so

whoever submitted the application should have received the response letter. We did have a few problems with just, you know, e-mail address typos and things like that. So it's possible if you did not receive response letter that there's an issue there. Please do reach out and we want to resolve that as quickly as possible so that you can get any feedback that you need as you consider a full application. Again, they included an encourage or a discourage notice. In both cases, they should include guidance in terms of what criteria, there were five review criteria in the concept paper stage and what, if any, of those criteria reviewers felt that your concept papers fell short in.

Unfortunately, just due to the number of applicants, we're not able to provide more detailed review information at this stage. We certainly will in the full application stage and really part of the purpose for this webinar is ultimately to provide all of you with some feedback on the trends, both the encouraging trends and some of the trends that are a

little more concerning that we'd like to see everyone keep in mind as we go to the full application stage.

Regardless of whether you submitted or received a discourage or encourage notice, you can submit a full application. I'm going to continue to emphasize that, I want to make sure that folks understand that. I do want to note that our review process at this stage did not include a determination of whether a particular entity was eligible. So I would say we highly recommend, not just highly recommend, it's essentially required that you review all of the FOA eligibility requirements to determine that whether or not your entity is eligible, that's not something we did at this point in the process.

So I want to talk a little bit about some promising things that we saw in the concept paper responses. First, again, there's just a very clear need for these kinds of projects throughout the country, whether it's a, you know, a small utility that has been trying to upgrade their system for a long time to modernize and move into the 21st century or, you

know, the larger proposals that are creating, you know, a completely new program or something that we've never seen before. We're seeing a lot of need for these opportunities to move us into a modernized and a better grid. We've seen I think, across the proposals, very strong technical grounding in general. That's not to say that every proposal had strong technical grounding, but that seemed to be an area where most concept papers excelled.

We did see a fair amount of creative and transformative projects. And transforming the grid is again one of our overarching goals and so it's really important to see that and to understand what in your proposal you feel it's transformative. And I do want to take a moment to say transformative depends on what you're transforming from as well. We recognize that different utilities are in different parts of their life cycles, and I shouldn't just say utilities, but also service territories and other infrastructure are in different parts of their life cycle and may need to be, you know, transformed into something that's a bit more modern and others that

are farther along may be able to take further steps and we recognize that.

It was encouraging to see that in general, this industry has a strong track record with diversity, equity and inclusion and accessibility initiatives within their workforce. In general, we're seeing a lot of positive feedback on relationships with local labor and workforce groups, whether it's labor unions or economic development groups. And very, very encouraged to see a lot of use of the Climate and Economic Justice Screening Tool to identify Justice40 communities. As Pat noted, that's a really critical part of not just our program, but the entire administration's objectives to ensure that 40% of the benefits from the infrastructure bill accrue to disadvantaged communities and Justice40 communities. So it's really encouraging to see that folks are using that tool, that's why it's there. We want to talk about next steps and what you can do with that tool beyond simply identifying the communities because that's important as well.

I do want to highlight a few areas of concern and where we see room for improvement in general. I recognize that this is the concept paper stage, we all recognize that. And you know the concept paper page limit was relatively short and that was done with good reason, so that might have made it challenging to provide some of the details that you might have otherwise provided. That being said, even within the space provided, I think it's fair to say that we saw a lot of lack of clarity on the impact of funding from these programs. So I'll talk about that more later, but ultimately we want to see a much more clear demonstration of how our funding will affect a particular project, again, one of our strategic goals being to catalyze private sector and non-federal public sector funding.

Community engagement and Community benefits is an area where I think a lot of applicants are still trying to develop their responses there and that we're actually going to have a training on that, I'll talk about that towards the end of this presentation.

Similarly for cyber security and security in general, we're going to offer a training for that as well because we want you all to be as well prepared as we can. I want to be clear on this bullet for initiatives that have not yet begun and by not yet begun, I really mean for initiatives that have not yet been detailed, I don't mean that steel in the ground has to have begun or anything like that. For initiatives that have not yet been fully detailed or applicants maybe have not identified a specific location or some other important details of the project, we would like to see a rationale and a reasonable timeline with goals for implementing those projects.

We recognize that part of what we're looking for, our cutting edge proposals, are proposals that that maybe have not been fully built out, we've seen a lot of proposals that are fully built out. To the extent that you haven't been able to do that, we just want to understand why and understand what your timeline is for implementing the proposal so that we can get a better sense of it. Again, always going to refer you

back to the FOA itself, please see Section 5 for the full review criteria for both the concept paper and as well as for the full application, which is really what's relevant now.

A couple of important eligibility considerations that I really do want to emphasize. And I want to pause for a minute here and say for folks, I recognize this is a long webinar. There's a lot of detail to get through. This is an important time to pay attention. We're going to start talking about in detail some of the things that for those of you that are going to be submitting full applications, you will need to know in the process of submitting your application.

First, in Topic Area 1, an important clarification that we actually issued in a FOA amendment earlier this week, in Topic Area 1, that's the Grid Resilience Program, new transmission lines at or above 69 kilovolts are not an eligible use. We've made this determination for that program in general, on the Resilience Program. There are several other transmission facilitation programs. Well, there's the

Transmission Facilitation Program, several other programs in the Transmission Division, as Pat highlighted, that are intended to support transmission development, as well as our Topic Area 3 Program, which supports larger transmission development as well. So I want to emphasize that.

Also, construction of a new generating facility is not an eligible use of funding in Topic Area 1. That is not a change, that's been in the FOA really since the start, and I believe it's actually in statute. For Topic Area 2, these are some really important things, this is the Smart Grid Grants Program. Investments or expenditures for smart grid technologies that use specific tax credits or deductions under the Internal Revenue Code are not a qualifying investment, so that's important for folks to be aware of. If any of the investments that you're proposing are also expecting to leverage any tax credits or deductions under federal Internal Revenue Code, they're not going to be eligible for funding under this program.

Additionally, expenditures for electric generation transmission or distribution that are not directly related to enabling smart grid functions are not a qualifying investment, so that's an important thing as well. Finally, projects that do not meet topic area objectives or are not ready for timely deployment or do not adhere program criteria will likely not be competitive. Again, as we look to the significant number of submissions that we've seen, this is, you know, an important thing to be aware of, and I think it's going to be a really highly competitive process.

As you all prepare for full application submission, a few things that I want to note before we get into some of the details and feedback and guidance, again, our reviews and response letters do not determine entity eligibility. Every potential applicant must review the full guidelines thoroughly before application submission, this is really critically important. All of the programs, we know this now, based on the number of applicants we've seen, sorry,

the number of concept papers we've seen, we're confident that all of the programs and the selections will be competitive. So we just are really strongly encouraging you to put your best foot forward. We want to see strong applications. We encourage all of you to apply, if you've got a proposal that you think merits an award in one of these programs, and we just want to help you improve or get together the best application that we can because that will help the program succeed.

I also do want to remind everyone on this call, there is an upcoming award cycle for fiscal year 2024. We don't have a specific date for the beginning of that yet, but we anticipate Q1 fiscal year of 2024, and we recognize that some of you may need more time to develop your full application. So we encourage you to look towards that as well towards that cycle. We anticipate further funding cycles as well, these are not the only two funding cycle. So we've gotten a lot of concern from folks that this might be the only opportunity and I just want to put that completely to rest. There are going to be additional funding

cycles. You know, we're very excited about having this program be able to, you know, be around for the relatively long haul. There's clearly a strong need for this, so we know we're going to continue to see applications throughout the other funding cycles. So just encourage you, if you feel like you need more time to pull together a full application, keep in mind that you will have more opportunities in the future.

One last slide, before I get into to the details of providing some feedback to you all, this is really critically important for everyone. The registration requirements that are laid out on pages three through five of the FOA are very important for you to take a look at, to review thoroughly and ensure that you've begun this process. You have to be registered for SAM. You have to have a UEI number and register with grants.gov before you can submit an application. This is simply a requirement. If you have not begun that process, you need to start it immediately if you're planning to submit an application again. Again, just please ensure that you've reviewed and completed the

registration requirements, this is critically important, so I just want to emphasize. I know for a lot of our applicants this is a new process and we understand and recognize that, we want to give you as much time as we can, you know, and we've tried to signal that throughout this program that this is the process that you're gonna be required to go through. Now is the time to begin registering, if you have not already started.

So now I want to spend some time talking about some considerations that you might take into account for the full applications. And before I jump into this, I do just want to take a moment to recognize, again, with over 700 concept papers submitted throughout the program, we had a tremendous amount of work to get through and I just want to thank the staff both on the GRIP team and on the NETL team who did just incredible work in getting through all of these applications, assessing them, providing us with useful feedback that we now want to provide with you, provide you all with. I think we just had incredible support. Everyone did a wonderful job and it was a

lot to get through and we're continuing to do that. Yeah, a lot of really wonderful people put a lot of time and effort into this, just as we know all of you as applicants put a lot of time and effort into your concept paper. So I just want to take a moment to thank everyone on the GRIP team, at NETL, and also in the broader GDO because we had a lot of support from GDO team members as well and it just really helped us get through this in a timely fashion and we hope to continue moving along on schedule with all of that support.

So like in the first strategic goal, catalyzing and leveraging private sector and non-federal public capital for impactful technology and infrastructure deployment. We need applications to demonstrate why and how the Department of Energy funding is going to catalyze and leverage additional capital to support deployment. I think this is a really important thing for applicants to understand. We have seen, you know, a fair amount of concept papers that are very clear on this and clearly demonstrate how the Department of Energy funding is going to impact the project, how

it's going to lead to additional or accelerated deployment of whatever it is that they're proposing, but we've also seen a fair amount of concept papers that did not include that kind of detail and that that were really very, if they touched on this issue at all, did not give it much time or much detail. This is going to be a very important part of our evaluation because ultimately we want this program to lead to additional investment and additional deployment that's critically important. So we want to make sure that in your full application you have enough detail for us to have a confidence that our investment is going to make a difference, that's really what it comes down to there.

Our next strategic goal is transforming community, regional, interregional and national resilience, including a consideration of future shifts in generation and load and the operative word here is transform. Just like the last word was catalyzed, I feel like we're gonna have a word of the day or something or three words of the day. But transforming resilience is really critical here. We want to see

proposals that are making a transformational change. There are lots of different words you could throw in there, but ultimately we're not looking for just kind of a, I don't know what you would call it, more of an incremental change, we're looking for something that really, you know, transforms, whether it's a local, community or regional or national level project, we want to see something that is having an impact that is more than just a kind of incremental or business as usual approach.

In particular, we'd like to see applicants talking more about the alignment, or in some cases potentially the tensions between state, regional and interregional goals around both resilience and decarbonization. That's an important thing and in the concept paper criteria, it will be an important thing and in the full application criteria as well. We would like to see applicants highlighting where more interregional cooperation is possible and how they intend to achieve that. And again, we want to see applicants spend more time on existing and planned local resilience and decarbonization efforts. So

those are areas where we didn't see a tremendous amount of detail that we were hoping to see more.

As always, refer you back to the FOA and the section here, 1A.II for further information on the strategic goals. So I'll just continue to say, if you have a question, the FOA is the guiding document and I recognize that there's a lot to get through in the FOA, but we've highlighted the specific sections here that are relevant to this discussion and really encourage you to spend some time looking at that.

And last but, but certainly not least, actually critically important is advancing community benefits. So we have, you know, we want to see catalyzing investments, we want to see transforming resilience and ultimately advancing community benefits. We recognize that resilience and, you know, electric grid innovation and deployment in general creates benefits for the community naturally. It can improve electric service, it can create jobs. We want to see proposals that do more than that, that advance benefits and, you know, in particular I want to,

first I'll just say we do not need to see a community benefits plan that is currently being implemented in the full application, we recognize that before the project or the proposal is underway, you're going to need to do some work, some groundwork, some outreach. It does not need to be a completely implemented for the proposal to demonstrate that that you have a thoughtful community benefits plan. What we're really looking for are some tangible goals, defined stages, and accountability, and that's really critically important.

In terms of what we were seeing from concept papers where we'd like to see some improvement, we would like to see a little more specificity with regards to the communities that your proposal impacts and a clear demonstration of engagement with the communities throughout all stages of the project. So to our minds, to be successful both in the Justice40 mission, but also in overall providing community benefits, you have to work with the communities, you have to engage with them and engagement goes beyond simply briefing them on the proposal, it really

includes incorporating them into the project, into all stages of the project process, including the planning stage.

So incorporating community input is really critical. And to the extent that your project does provide Justice40 benefits, we would like to see details beyond the fact that the project impacts areas that are identified as Justice40 communities. We recognize that that creates some natural benefits, but we need to go beyond that and advance this entire process, so. We've seen proposals that have discussed union and labor agreements and community agreements and letters of support. Those are all really good and helpful things that we appreciate, including even in the concept paper stage. We would really like to see that kind of work happening in the full application stage. And to the extent that that work hasn't been able to begin yet, all we ask for is an explanation and a recognition that that work, you know, when that work is going to begin and a commitment and a manner to hold yourselves accountable.

I want to spend a little while talking about the cybersecurity plan. This is an area where, oh, actually, I'm going to go back to community benefits plan really briefly for a moment, and we'll talk about this more shortly. This is an area because we felt applications were really not putting forward the level of detail we were hoping to see in the concept paper stage, we think it's worthwhile to spend some time and have a specific dedicated training to help people develop community benefits plan. So we will be offering a training for community benefits plans as well as for cybersecurity plans because that's another area where we've heard some feedback and from industry that would like more detail on what is asked for out of that.

First, I want to say the cybersecurity plan requirements apply only to Topic Areas 2 and 3. Topic Area 1, we certainly expect all proposals to incorporate best practices as it relates to physical and cybersecurity and other means of security, but specifically, there is no funding for Cybersecurity,

it's not eligible under Topic Area 1. We certainly expect everyone to still continue with their best practices, but for Topic Areas 2 and 3 specifically, we are requiring a cybersecurity plan.

And as described in the FOA, these investments are intended to benefit the resilience and the reliability of the U.S. grid. Cybersecurity is a core element of that reliability and I think it's important to understand the staging of the cybersecurity plan. It is going to be submitted during the award negotiations process. However, we are asking folks to join this training to help you prepare for that because we recognize that the cybersecurity plan is a rigorous process and also really critically, we want to make sure that an applicant's commitment to security, risk evaluation and mitigation measures is an active component throughout the project life cycle. We don't just want to add a cybersecurity plan on after the proposal has been brought into the award negotiation. So we want you to be thinking of this as you're developing the proposal. It should be an integrated part of your

proposal planning because we expect to move very quickly towards the cybersecurity plan discussion during award negotiations.

Just a little more detail on that part of the process. We will work closely with awardees to assist in the development. We're going to provide technical assistance from subject matter experts. We want to make sure that it is done correctly, that we have projects and proposals that maintain the integrity and the resilience of the grid, without that, our program will not be successful. So we see it as a shared responsibility among all the different partners that are involved in the proposal, and it's critically important that we work together with DOE staff, subject matter experts to build a strong relationship, because this is going to be an iterative process. The initial cybersecurity plan will continue to be updated throughout the course of a project's life cycle.

A few additional program updates and we're actually just about at the end of our presentation. I just

want to highlight that again, we have a community benefits plan training opportunity on February 27th, and a cybersecurity training on February 28th. These are not required, but they're certainly highly recommended. They're great opportunities to learn more about both of these requirements in the full application process. We recognize that this is unfortunately closer than we would like to see to the March 17th deadline for Topic Area 2 submissions under the smart grid grants. Unfortunately, the compressed timeframes are just something that we have to work with in this cycle, so the best I can say is that we recognize that for those applications in particular, there may not be as much time as we would like to incorporate all of the lessons from those trainings, but we strongly encourage everyone to do their best for the Topic Area 2 proposals, as well as of course, Topic Area 1 and 3, when those come around.

And lastly, I do want to mention, again, there will be another funding cycle, we're anticipating it for Q1 of fiscal year 2024. We're looking forward to that

part in the process, but right now, we're squarely focused on bringing in the full applications and working with you all to move this program forward and to ultimately, to build a better grid.

I do want to, just as I close this out, I'll provide you all with another reminder. I hope I've provided useful information. I hope everything I've said is fully in line with the FOA, but to the extent that it is not, the FOA is the governing document. So please, if there are any questions in your mind, go back to the FOA. If there's anything that I've said here that for some reason seems in conflict with the FOA itself, the FOA is the correct document. If you have any questions after this meeting, again, I urge you to submit them through the Fed Connect process. That is, I think Whitney provided a link to that in the chat, but it's also linked to in the FOA itself.

I just want to close out with a just a real expression, a sincere expression of gratitude for all of you. I know it was a lot of time to put in to pull these concept papers together. I'm so encouraged to

see all of these great proposals. It is, frankly, it's a little bit surprising to me just to see the level of interest and the level of need really around the country, but we really appreciate the time that you've put into this. We hope that this webinar has been helpful in guiding you towards the next step in the proposal because ultimately we want to give you the feedback that we can, in the most effective way possible, but thank you all for your time and with that I think that concludes my part of the presentation. So I'll go ahead and wrap up, but thank you again, and we really appreciate your working with us.

WHITNEY BELL: Thank you, Colin. As Colin had said, I want to reiterate, if you have any questions related to the GRIP program, it can be submitted through the link that is in the chat for everyone. Additionally, a copy of today's slides will be available on the webinar's webpage by Friday, and the recording will be available in about two weeks, we will send you an e-mail when it is available. If you have any questions about the GRIP program, you can find

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additional details including answers to frequently asked questions at the link in the chat now. Thank you, again, to Pat and Colin for joining us and thank you to everyone for listening in. Take care and we'll see you next time.

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