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Community Benefits Plan Training- 2023.02.27

WHITNEY BELL: Hello and welcome to the Grid Resilience and Innovation Partnerships Program Community Benefit Planning Training. I'm Whitney Bell with ICF and I'll be your host today. First, a few housekeeping items for today's webinar. This WebEx meeting is being recorded and may be used by the 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're presumed consent to recording and use of your voice or image. Lucky for you, all participants are in listen only mode. If you have technical issues or questions, you may type them into the chat box and select send to host.

There will be a Q&A after today's presentation and any question that is not answered will be used to inform an FAQ. Please submit all questions in the chat box to the right, and if you've not already submitted them during registration. If you need to view the live captioning, please refer to the link

ICF Transcription
Grid Resilience and Innovation Partnerships (GRIP) Program
Community Benefits Plan Training- 2023.02.27

that will appear in the chat now. Finally, and an important question that everybody asks, we will post a copy of today's presentation on the GRIP Program webpage by tomorrow and then the recording of today's webinar will be available in about two weeks and we will send an e-mail to you letting you know when it is live.

With all of that said, now I would like to introduce Colin Meehan, Program manager of the GRIP Program with the Grid Deployment Office. He's going to provide training on the community benefit plans. Colin, welcome. I'll go ahead and turn this over to you.

COLIN MEEHAN: Thank you, Whitney, and thank you everyone for being here today, excited to talk with you all about our Community Benefits Plan as part of the GRIP Program. This is something we've gotten a lot of questions from potential applicants on and so we wanted to spend some specific time here today dedicated to walking you through the various elements

ICF Transcription
Grid Resilience and Innovation Partnerships (GRIP) Program
Community Benefits Plan Training- 2023.02.27

and requirements of the Community Benefits Plan in the GRIP program.

As always, just my standard webinar notice, none of the information in this presentation is legally binding to the extent that any of the content I present to you today disagrees with the information that is in the FOA 2740, the FOA is the superseding document. And lastly, I just want to say the purpose of this training is to provide an overview of the Community Benefits Plan requirements. It is critical that all applicants write your applications based on the detailed information in the FOA itself. We as a program want to help all of you as much as possible, but ultimately the documentation and information in the FOA is what you really need to write your application.

For today's agenda, we do again want to prepare you for the full applications and in doing so, we're going to walk through a few background items. I want to provide you with an overview of the Community Benefits Plan framework and then walk you through the

ICF Transcription
Grid Resilience and Innovation Partnerships (GRIP) Program
Community Benefits Plan Training- 2023.02.27

four different priority areas within the Community Benefits Plan, so we're going to go through all of that in detail today and hopefully have some time for Q&A at the end of the training.

As a reminder for everyone, we outlined in our FOA the program goals for the GRIP program. Those are to transform community, regional and interregional and national resilience to catalyze and leverage private sector and non-federal public capital, to modernize the electric grid and reduce the impacts due to extreme weather and natural disasters, and finally, to advance Community benefits through meeting our four priority goals. And again as a reminder, those four priorities are to support meaningful community and labor engagement, to invest in the American workforce, to advance diversity, equity, inclusion and accessibility, and to contribute to the goal that 40% of the overall benefits flow to disadvantaged communities, I will refer to that throughout this document as the Justice40 Initiative, hopefully you're familiar with it by now.

ICF Transcription
Grid Resilience and Innovation Partnerships (GRIP) Program
Community Benefits Plan Training- 2023.02.27

This slide is really intended as a reference for all of you who are considering applying to our program. This provides the specific sections within the FOA and the page numbers that discuss the Community Benefits Plan and the various requirements for form and content as well as the technical review criteria. So hopefully you'll find this slide helpful. But this is going to be posted along with the slide deck, I'm not going to linger on this any further, other than to remind you again that the purpose of this training is to provide an overview of the plan. It is critical that you write your applications based on the detailed information in the FOA, and that's why we've laid out the page numbers and the sections here for you to be able to find them easily as you're developing your Community Benefits Plan.

A few weeks ago we had a webinar where we talked about the current state of the GRIP program and shared some information regarding the concept papers that we've received so far and also took the time to identify some areas for improvement for full

ICF Transcription
Grid Resilience and Innovation Partnerships (GRIP) Program
Community Benefits Plan Training- 2023.02.27

applications and that included some areas for improvement that we noted in the Community Benefits Plan discussions in the concept papers. I want to walk through those again as a reminder for you all, but before I do that, I just want to reiterate in the concept paper stage, we received over 700 concept papers across the entire suite of three programs. Which just to remind everyone, means that the application process is going to be very competitive. And as we'll talk about later, the Community Benefits Plan is an important portion of the review criteria. This is why we want to take the time today to give you whatever information we can to help you improve your Community Benefits Plans.

Specifically, we'd like to see Community Benefits Plans that identify the communities that your application impacts and includes a clear demonstration of engagement with those communities throughout all stages of the proposed project. We want to see a plan that incorporates community input, especially from historically underrepresented communities, into both the project and the community

ICF Transcription
Grid Resilience and Innovation Partnerships (GRIP) Program
Community Benefits Plan Training- 2023.02.27

benefits planning process. And this is a really important element. It is critical that the input is included in the project planning phase as well and not just as an afterthought. We want this to be in all stages of the project planning and implementation process.

To the extent that your project provides Justice40 benefits or J40 benefits, we'd like to see details that demonstrate a flow of benefits back to those disadvantaged communities. And I should note here that we use the term disadvantaged communities and Justice40 communities somewhat interchangeably, as we discussed in the FOA, they're specific, as I'll detail further here, there are some specific resources available that identify Justice40 communities which again are the same as disadvantaged communities for the purposes of this program.

Community Benefits Plan documentation that demonstrates the applicant's ability to achieve their goals. So specifically things like union and labor agreements, community agreements, letters of support,

ICF Transcription
Grid Resilience and Innovation Partnerships (GRIP) Program
Community Benefits Plan Training- 2023.02.27

other documentation that can show us that the applicant is going to be able to achieve the goals laid out in the Community Benefits Plan. And finally, we require a Community Benefits Plan that includes smart metrics and milestones that are supported, that are, again, smart being specific, measurable, assignable, realistic and time-related. This is a critical element that's required in the Community Benefits Plan.

For the bulk of the presentation, I want to spend some time providing an overview of the Community Benefits Plan framework and again walking through in detail each of the four priority areas in the Community Benefits Plan. First, I want to mention that the Community Benefits Plan is a new requirement. We recognize that as part of the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law and it's going to be added to all FOAs within the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law framework. The Community Benefits Plan, specifically for the GRIP program, for all three GRIP programs, I should say, is valued at 20% of the overall score of the application. So in an

ICF Transcription
Grid Resilience and Innovation Partnerships (GRIP) Program
Community Benefits Plan Training- 2023.02.27

environment where we expect to see a lot of competition for GRIP funding, we do expect the Community Benefits Plan to be an important part of the of the review process and the overall scoring for applications.

The Community Benefits Plan needs to outline how the applicant intends to achieve our priority areas. Again, those are the Justice40 Initiative, diversity, equity, access and inclusion, quality jobs and having a smart milestone. At least one smart milestone per budget period to measure progress on the proposed Community Benefits Plan actions. If your project is selected, the DOE will incorporate the Community Benefits Plan into the award and the recipient will be required to implement the plan as proposed during the life of the award, the Department of Energy will evaluate the progress, including as part of a go, no go review process. So this is a really important thing to consider as you're developing the Community Benefits Plan. We do want to make sure that these are plans with goals and timelines that you're confident you can meet as part of your overall project.

ICF Transcription
Grid Resilience and Innovation Partnerships (GRIP) Program
Community Benefits Plan Training- 2023.02.27

To spend a little bit of time on the four priority goals, the first one, and this is the same order that they appear in the FOA, is community and labor engagement. And this involves meaningful engagement with community and labor partners, leading to formal agreements with accountability to affected stakeholders. And again, this is throughout the entire process of the project. So from project initiation and planning through to project construction and operation. The second priority goal is investing in the American workforce. That's creating quality jobs and attracting and retaining skilled workers to ensure that they have a voice in the job and over decisions that affect them.

The third priority goal is diversity, equity, inclusion and accessibility. This is to provide communities with access to wealth building opportunities, things like teaming partners, access to quality jobs and business and contracting opportunities can all be a part of creating diversity, equity, inclusion and accessibility in

ICF Transcription
Grid Resilience and Innovation Partnerships (GRIP) Program
Community Benefits Plan Training- 2023.02.27

your Community Benefits Plan. And finally, the Justice40 Initiative, which is to meet or exceed objectives of the Justice40 Initiative, that 40% of overall benefits of certain federal investments flow to disadvantaged communities.

As I mentioned earlier, a key part of the Community Benefits Plan is accountability. We want to make sure that these plans are actionable and that all participants in the project are able to be accountable for the plans that have been laid out. As I mentioned, the plans will make up 20% of the overall application score and based on the applicant's specific commitments to the four priority areas. Negotiation of enforceable community and workforce agreements such as community benefits agreements and collective bargaining agreements. Ensure accountability to affected stakeholders. DOE is not a party to these agreements, however, they are of course, a part of the Community Benefits Plan and a part of the review process.

ICF Transcription
Grid Resilience and Innovation Partnerships (GRIP) Program
Community Benefits Plan Training- 2023.02.27

Again, if the project is selected, we will be incorporating relevant elements of the Community Benefits Plan into the award as part of the project requirements. During the life of the award, the DOE will evaluate the recipient's progress in formatting and implementing this plan. This is going to be an important part of our relationship with any selected awards going forward. And finally, in terms of public transparency for funded projects, recipients are expected to publicly share non-procurement sensitive elements of Community Benefits Plans. This will enable community and labor stakeholders to engage proactively with recipients rather than waiting to be contacted, and this is a key element to Community Benefits Plans.

Now I'm going to spend some time walking through each of the four areas, the four priority goals within the Community Benefits Plan, and this is with the intent to give all potential applicants an opportunity to better understand each of those four elements. We've received some questions and we want to try and clarify wherever possible. And as Whitney noted at

ICF Transcription
Grid Resilience and Innovation Partnerships (GRIP) Program
Community Benefits Plan Training- 2023.02.27

the beginning of this, any questions that we're not able to get to in this session, we will answer in the Q&A that is publicly posted both on the FedConnect website and on our GRIP Program website.

Community and labor engagement within the Community Benefits Plan. This is one of the four priority areas within Community Benefits Plans and it is critically important that successful applicants consider proactively and meaningfully engaging with stakeholders to ensure that community perspectives are incorporated into the project plan. I want to emphasize this, I've said this a few times already, but it is very important that stakeholders are engaged as a part of the project planning and development process. We do not want to see Community Benefits Plans that simply have outreach to communities once the project has already been established. We want to understand how you intend to incorporate their perspectives into the planning process as well.

ICF Transcription
Grid Resilience and Innovation Partnerships (GRIP) Program
Community Benefits Plan Training- 2023.02.27

Engagement is an opportunity for project proponents to hear from these stakeholders about their concerns and desires. And stakeholder engagement is a relatively small cost that delivers a significantly high value. I think a lot of us that have been involved in developing these kinds of infrastructure projects can recognize that. We recognize that that it's not always easy to do this process, but it provides incredibly high value and we've seen over the last several years instances where infrastructure projects have been delayed or even canceled due to a lack of community engagement. We want to avoid that outcome, if at all possible, to ensure the success of the GRIP Program.

Ongoing engagement and responsiveness to the issues raised is important for reducing or eliminating certain risks associated with the project. Again, as I just said, we want to ensure that we have successful projects and a successful program and an important part of that is ensuring that the communities are engaged throughout the process so that we can see the projects move forward and build

ICF Transcription
Grid Resilience and Innovation Partnerships (GRIP) Program
Community Benefits Plan Training- 2023.02.27

the infrastructure that we need to have for a reliable grid. Certain stakeholders are more vulnerable to and affected by project implementation than others. In particular, frontline communities and workers can be some of the most impacted and we want to see Community Benefits Plans that address those concerns that those communities and workers may have.

For community and labor engagement, applicants are required to describe plans to engage with labor unions and worker organizations with tribal governments and community-based organizations representing local stakeholders and, again, including disadvantaged communities. We want to see applicants describe plans to negotiate formal workforce and community agreements to detail benefits, partner obligations and remedies, and to ensure overall project accountability. This is how we would like to see our community and labor engagement elements within the Community Benefits Plan.

Now we're going to move on to investing in the American workforce and what the requirements are for

ICF Transcription
Grid Resilience and Innovation Partnerships (GRIP) Program
Community Benefits Plan Training- 2023.02.27

that within the Community Benefits Plan. Funding applicants have to detail commitments to exceed the local prevailing wage, and I should note that within the FOA there are specific details on what those requirements look like. It includes both wages and benefits in both the construction and ongoing operations jobs. I should note that for all of this information, it is drawn from the FOA. And ultimately again, the FOA is the guiding document for your applications.

The applicants must also detail their commitments to ensure workers have a free and fair chance to join a union. They must show how they're going to invest in workforce training to support a skilled workforce and provide pathways to advancement. And finally, they must foster a safe, healthy and inclusive workplaces and communities free from harassment and discrimination. These are critical areas to invest in the American workforce. We have a unique opportunity within this funding opportunity announcement to make sure that we're building up a workforce that is sustainable as part of our grid infrastructure.

ICF Transcription
Grid Resilience and Innovation Partnerships (GRIP) Program
Community Benefits Plan Training- 2023.02.27

Part of the reason that we're taking this approach in our Community Benefits Plan is because we see compounding effects from investing in the American workforce, and these are very beneficial. Ultimately, this infrastructure bill, the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, is a tremendous opportunity to grow American jobs. We haven't had an opportunity like this in generations. And specifically within the Community Benefits Plan, we want to understand how applicants propose that they're going to improve the quality of energy jobs. So it's not just about bringing jobs, bringing new jobs, that is simply a part of the need for the infrastructure build out, but we want to take advantage of this opportunity to improve the quality of energy jobs. And again, that's by supporting responsible employers and adopting and ensuring accountability with strong labor standards and encouraging collective bargaining.

And finally, ultimately, we want to facilitate equitable access to good jobs and training opportunities, and this is by focusing on workforce

ICF Transcription
Grid Resilience and Innovation Partnerships (GRIP) Program
Community Benefits Plan Training- 2023.02.27

development efforts on removing barriers to career track training, quality jobs and career advancement. All of these elements are going to be important in your Community Benefits Plan and ultimately we want to see how your plan will improve the quality of energy jobs.

Next, I want to talk about diversity, equity, inclusion and accessibility. So the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law creates wealth building opportunities, including new jobs and business opportunities. Barriers to access are systemic and institutional and we want to take advantage of this opportunity to ensure they're equitable, that the opportunities are equitable, and that requires intentionally reducing barriers to access. So again, as you consider the diversity, equity and inclusion, inclusion and accessibility portion, we'd like to see the work that you're doing to intentionally reduce barriers to access from historically disadvantaged communities and workers.

ICF Transcription
Grid Resilience and Innovation Partnerships (GRIP) Program
Community Benefits Plan Training- 2023.02.27

Opportunities to enhance DEIA include business partnering opportunities, access to new good paying or quality jobs, creative partnerships between community members, career track training and other workforce development, and ensuring that there's equitable access to those workforce development opportunities, apprentice utilization for construction, and again, ensuring that there's equitable access to apprentice utilization is going to be important, and finally, recruitment for operations jobs. These are all very important areas for DEIA and opportunities for applicants to identify how they plan to approach this portion of the Community Benefits Plan.

When we think about DEIA in Community Benefits Plans, it's important to keep in mind that they have to describe, they are required to describe how DEIA objectives will be incorporated into the project and they should detail how the applicant will partner with groups like underrepresented businesses, minority serving institutions, training organizations that serve workers who face barriers to accessing

ICF Transcription
Grid Resilience and Innovation Partnerships (GRIP) Program
Community Benefits Plan Training- 2023.02.27

quality jobs and/or other partners, other project partners to help include DEIA in energy jobs. So I want to be clear here, this is not an exhaustive list. You know, we encourage applicants to detail specifically what partners they think will bring the best DEIA combination to their project. We don't want you to feel bound in particular by this list, but we want to provide some examples to try and be helpful.

Finally, I want to talk about the Justice40 Initiative. This is really the initiative that underpins a lot of the Community Benefits Plan requirements and it's a critical element of any project proposal, any successful project's proposal I should say. First and foremost, the Justice40 Initiative was created under Executive Order 14008, Section 223, detailing how federal investments might be made toward a goal that 40% of the overall benefits flow to disadvantaged communities. So again, that's the focus is that the overall benefits, it doesn't necessarily need to be specifically federal funding or private sector funding, but some combination of those two, as well as the benefits of

ICF Transcription
Grid Resilience and Innovation Partnerships (GRIP) Program
Community Benefits Plan Training- 2023.02.27

the project itself that need to flow to disadvantaged communities. And we want to see detailed information about how that will flow to disadvantaged communities and what types of metrics and goals and timelines project proposals are expecting, I'll talk about that more over the next few slides.

So the Justice40 initiative section must include identification of applicable disadvantaged communities where the anticipated project benefits will flow. I want to spend some time here. We were very encouraged to see a lot of concept papers that identified a variety of disadvantaged communities that may be affected by proposed projects. We're looking for more information and more detail on specifically on where and how those benefits will flow to disadvantaged communities. Identification of applicable benefits that are quantifiable, measurable, and trackable, including at a minimum, a discussion of the relevance of each of the eight DOE Justice40 benefits. And I'll be talking about those eight in the next slide.

ICF Transcription
Grid Resilience and Innovation Partnerships (GRIP) Program
Community Benefits Plan Training- 2023.02.27

So again, I want to spend a little bit of time here because it's very important that applicants identify quantifiable, measurable, and trackable metrics for specific disadvantaged communities. I think one of the things that became clear to us in the concept paper phase is, and obviously this was an early phase where project proposals were still being developed and detailed, but it was clear to us that there was some challenge in identifying, with any specificity, which disadvantaged communities benefits might flow to. Our expectation is that as we move into the full application stage and proposals become more specific with more detail on the locations of the projects, that we should be able to match that detail with detail on the disadvantaged communities that are going to be affected and how benefits will flow to those communities specifically, how we can quantify them, measure and track them. This is going to be very important for the Community Benefits Plan portion of the application.

ICF Transcription
Grid Resilience and Innovation Partnerships (GRIP) Program
Community Benefits Plan Training- 2023.02.27

So I do want to talk about the eight policy priorities within the Justice40 Initiative. So these are all very important and what we would like to see in your Community Benefits Plan is how your work on Justice40 priorities as well as the other three policy areas that we've been discussing, how your work within the Community Benefits Plan will impact each of these areas. It may be that it impacts some of these areas more than others, and that's perfectly acceptable, but we would like to see applicants spend some time detailing how it will accomplish these eight objectives and how, again, how it will measure that accomplishment and in a way that is quantifiable and trackable.

So just to walk through these, each of these, the first priority is to decrease the energy burden in disadvantaged communities. Again, the energy burden is the amounts of cost that those disadvantaged communities bear to pay for energy that they need to live in their communities. The second policy priority is to decrease environmental exposure and burden for disadvantaged communities. So that's something that

ICF Transcription
Grid Resilience and Innovation Partnerships (GRIP) Program
Community Benefits Plan Training- 2023.02.27

we may see throughout the GRIP Program opportunities to decrease environmental exposure, possibly by reducing pollution or developing infrastructure in disadvantaged communities that better protects them against environmental exposure.

The third policy priority is to increase parity clean energy technology access and adoption in disadvantaged communities. So we would like to see proposals that, and with specific details that can help us identify how they will increase parity and clean energy technology access, whether it's by interconnecting communities or developing clean energy projects, specifically outside of the GRIP Program where access is improved by GRIP deployment. So maybe it's a transmission or distribution deployment.

The fourth policy priority is to increase access to low cost capital in disadvantaged communities. Again, we'd like to see from applicants what they can do to help disadvantaged communities have access to low cost capital. This may be achievable through some of

ICF Transcription
Grid Resilience and Innovation Partnerships (GRIP) Program
Community Benefits Plan Training- 2023.02.27

the GRIP programs. And we'd like to see any information you can provide on that.

The fifth policy priority is to increase clean energy enterprise creation and contracting in disadvantaged communities. And this is an area where we think there's a lot of opportunity throughout infrastructure deployment throughout the country to create new enterprises and contracting opportunities for disadvantaged communities because we know there's a need for infrastructure in those communities and where there's a need for infrastructure, there's an opportunity for jobs.

The sixth policy priority is to increase clean energy jobs, the job pipeline, the job training for individuals in disadvantaged communities. Again, this is an area where we think there's a lot of opportunity for project proposals and the overall GRIP programs to create new opportunities for disadvantaged communities to grow quality jobs in those areas.

ICF Transcription
Grid Resilience and Innovation Partnerships (GRIP) Program
Community Benefits Plan Training- 2023.02.27

The seventh policy priorities to increase energy resilience in disadvantaged communities. And the eighth policy priority is to increase energy democracy, including community ownership in disadvantaged communities. So again, when you're developing your Community Benefits Plan and your overall project proposal, demonstrating exactly how energy resilience is going to be impacted in disadvantaged communities is going to be a critical, quantifiable element. There are a number of different metrics that can be used to demonstrate that, and we would really like to see project proposals provide us with those details.

And finally, again, if there are opportunities to increase energy democracy and specifically including community ownership in disadvantaged communities of different types of energy infrastructure and energy resources, that's information that would be very helpful in developing your Community Benefits Plan.

ICF Transcription
Grid Resilience and Innovation Partnerships (GRIP) Program
Community Benefits Plan Training- 2023.02.27

As I'm wrapping up and getting ready to move to the Q&A portion of our webinar, I just want to one last time note that to the extent that any of the information I presented here is in contrast with the language from the FOA, and that FOA is 2740, any of the language here is fully superseded by the FOA language. The FOA is what you will need to develop your Community Benefits Plan and your full application. The purpose of this training is really to provide an overview and a resource for applicants who are developing their Community Benefits Plan so that they can better understand those requirements. But it is ultimately critical and the responsibility of the applicants that you write your applications based on the detailed information that's provided in the FOA itself. Now I think we're ready to move on to the Q&A portion of the discussion.

WHITNEY BELL: Great, thank you, Colin. That was really insightful, we really appreciate it. So as Colin did mention, we do have some time for Q&A. So please submit your questions to the host using the chat box. So let's go ahead and get started with our first

ICF Transcription
Grid Resilience and Innovation Partnerships (GRIP) Program
Community Benefits Plan Training- 2023.02.27

question. How can applicants identify disadvantaged communities?

COLIN MEEHAN: That's a great question and a really important one. We provide that information in the FOA. Specifically, applicants can identify disadvantaged communities by using the White House Council on Environmental Qualities, Climate and Economic Justice Screening Tool or CJST for short. We have the link to it provided in the FOA and you can see a footnote in Section I.B.I of the FOA for additional information. We also discussed in the FOA document, there is Justice40 interim guidance that provides a broad definition of disadvantaged communities that is linked to in the same section and it was developed by the Department of Energy, the Office of Management and Budget.

Sorry, I apologize, I'm just looking through my notes here. But ultimately, the resources for identifying disadvantaged communities can be found in Section I.B.I of the FOA document and I encourage you all to take a look at that section specifically. We've seen

ICF Transcription
Grid Resilience and Innovation Partnerships (GRIP) Program
Community Benefits Plan Training- 2023.02.27

a lot of really helpful information from the concept papers where applicants or concept paper submissions included using the CJST Screening Tool, which seems like a very useful tool, so I really encourage you all to take a look at that.

WHITNEY BELL: Great, great resources there. Thank you. What should community and project labor agreements look like and can you provide examples?

COLIN MEEHAN: Sure. Thanks for that question.

Ultimately, this is discussed again in the FOA in Section 4D, and I can't do the Roman numerals in my head, so it's XVI, Subsection XVI. The Community Benefits Plan has to set forth the applicants prior actions and your future plans to engage with different groups, whether it's labor unions, local governments, tribal entities. Ultimately, we want to see, to the extent possible, an inclusive collection of local stakeholders. So it can include things like community-based organizations that support or work directly with disadvantaged communities.

ICF Transcription
Grid Resilience and Innovation Partnerships (GRIP) Program
Community Benefits Plan Training- 2023.02.27

So community and project labor agreements can take the form of negotiated agreements with those communities, those labor unions, ideally a different and diverse group of stakeholders. They can be things that include registered apprenticeship programs, labor management, training partnerships, quality pre apprenticeship programs, and local and targeted hiring goals. Those are all examples that workforce and community agreements could cover that would increase the success of DOE funded projects. Ultimately, applicants should also provide community and labor partnership documentation from the representative organizations, reflecting substantive engagement and feedback on applicant's approach to community benefits, including quality job and workforce continuity, DEIA, and the Justice40 Initiative that we've been talking about.

If in the full application phase, if those agreements are not completed or formalized, that is OK. What we would like to see, if you're not able to provide those agreements directly, is specific details on

ICF Transcription
Grid Resilience and Innovation Partnerships (GRIP) Program
Community Benefits Plan Training- 2023.02.27

timing and who those agreements are going to be with and if at all possible, you know a letter from those potential stakeholders and those other partners indicating that they are working with you on the project and on an agreement and agree with your expected details and timelines. So we want to be clear, we would like to see those kinds of agreements, and to the extent you're able to develop them during the full application phase, that will be helpful, but to the extent that it's going to happen after the submission deadline for the full application, we simply ask that you detail what you expect to do, including a timeline and the stakeholders and counterparts that you expect to partner with. And again, it's very important that you also include letters from those stakeholders or counterparts as well.

WHITNEY BELL: Great. Our next question, where can applicants find additional details for content and form of the CBPs including letters for support?

ICF Transcription
Grid Resilience and Innovation Partnerships (GRIP) Program
Community Benefits Plan Training- 2023.02.27

COLIN MEEHAN: That's a great question. As always, you can find that detail in the FOA, and I would point you back to, and actually I'm going to go ahead and just go back to that early slide that has the different sections of the FOA. So you can find that information specifically in the, I think it's the third bullet here where you've got full application content and form requirements. So again, I can't do the room and numeral counting in my head, but it's Section 4D XVI and in the current FOA, it's pages 63 through 68, but check the section number to the extent that we have any minor FOA amendments. Sometimes the page numbers change a little bit.

WHITNEY BELL: Great. I think this is a good one to keep up while we ask them these other questions. How are Community Benefit Plans assessed?

COLIN MEEHAN: So fundamentally, the Community Benefits Plans are assessed by considering those four policy areas, so community labor engagement, quality jobs, diversity, equity inclusion and accessibility, and the Justice40 initiative. You can look at the final

ICF Transcription
Grid Resilience and Innovation Partnerships (GRIP) Program
Community Benefits Plan Training- 2023.02.27

bullet here, Section 5.A.I.I, and that details specifically the criterion. So it's criterion 4, which is the same across all topic areas, and those are the criterion for the Community Benefits Plan, which ultimately will govern how we evaluate and assess the Community Benefits Plans. So that is the most detailed information that we have at this point for assessing the Community Benefits Plans and that's how our review process will be run.

WHITNEY BELL: Great. How could Community Benefit Plans that involve multiple communities be handled?

COLIN MEEHAN: Well, there is a page limit for the Community Benefits Plan and we recognize that. However, to the extent that Community Benefits Plans cover multiple communities, we would like to see the information that you can provide for each of those communities within the page limits that you're allowed and I believe it's 10 pages, I'll have to double check that and we'll post the corrected information after the webinar. But ultimately, what we would like to see is for proposals to detail the

ICF Transcription
Grid Resilience and Innovation Partnerships (GRIP) Program
Community Benefits Plan Training- 2023.02.27

different communities that are affected and the work within each of those communities that is included in the Community Benefits Plan.

So you may have partnerships across multiple communities with individual community organizations in each one and we would like to see lists of those, if it's necessary to save page count. And we would also like to see specific goals and timelines related to each community and how they're going to be impacted. We recognize that you may run into page limitations and to the extent that that is a confining factor, you can always note that we can contact and reach out to you if we need more information beyond the bounds of this application.

WHITNEY BELL: This person asked, should smart milestones be exclusively quantitative? How many should I identify?

COLIN MEEHAN: First of all, I'll point you to the full application content and form requirements, so I think that will be helpful for you. And they stipulate that

ICF Transcription
Grid Resilience and Innovation Partnerships (GRIP) Program
Community Benefits Plan Training- 2023.02.27

the Community Benefits Plan must include at least one smart milestone per budget period, supported by metrics to measure the success of the proposed actions. And again, a smart milestone has to be specific, it has to be measurable, which typically means quantifiable or quantitative, but not exclusively. I guess I would say if it's not quantitative in nature, we would like to understand how you propose to measure it, assign it and set deadlines for that.

So the smart milestone requirements, again, are to be specific, measurable, assignable, realistic, and time related. And if for some reason there's a smart metric that fits into that grouping that an applicant feels is not quantifiable but fits into the smart metrics, we would just like to understand how you propose to measure it and assign it. I think that's going to be a little bit challenging, but we are open to considering that

WHITNEY BELL: So this one I think we need to go back to slide 26. This person asks, are all of these

ICF Transcription
Grid Resilience and Innovation Partnerships (GRIP) Program
Community Benefits Plan Training- 2023.02.27

priorities equally weighted or are they numbered on this slide in terms of importance?

COLIN MEEHAN: That's a really good question. These priorities are equally weighted. They're not numbered in terms of priority, this is simply the order that they're organized in I think for logical flow, if anything, but they're equally weighted. That's an important question. Thanks for asking that.

WHITNEY BELL: What are some examples of low cost capital access in DACs?

COLIN MEEHAN: Low cost capital access in disadvantaged communities, that's an important question. These are opportunities like providing financing opportunities for disadvantaged communities potentially to develop and own some of their own clean energy infrastructure. You know, that's probably the thing that most quickly comes to mind, but also, you know, developing proposals that include giving disadvantaged communities access to clean energy infrastructure that they otherwise might not be able

ICF Transcription
Grid Resilience and Innovation Partnerships (GRIP) Program
Community Benefits Plan Training- 2023.02.27

to access, for example, third party ownership models and things like that. So we are we are looking for proposals that can create novel approaches to help disadvantaged communities own their own clean energy infrastructure when it makes sense, but also benefit from the development of transmission and distribution infrastructure.

WHITNEY BELL: If one or more of the J40 priorities are not applicable to the project, how should an applicant address that?

COLIN MEEHAN: If one or more of the J40 policy priorities are not applicable, that's a very good question. First and foremost, I would say it is critical for the applicant to note which policy priorities are applicable and how, specifically the project proposal is going to meet those policy priorities, ideally in a in a quantifiable and measurable and trackable way. To the extent that a proposal is not impacting all eight of those policy priorities, it would be helpful to include an

ICF Transcription
Grid Resilience and Innovation Partnerships (GRIP) Program
Community Benefits Plan Training- 2023.02.27

explanation of why a particular priority is not directly impacted by this proposal.

Because it's not impacted, we're not looking necessarily for metrics or details on that, but just an explanation of why that's not being impacted so that we can understand that the applicant has thought through the process and tried at least to identify ways in which they could impact that policy priority. But the most important thing is going to be identifying those policy priorities that the project is going to impact and developing a trackable, measurable plan for impacting those that we can work with the applicant on.

WHITNEY BELL: Thanks for clarifying. So this person says, how can we ensure the greatest impact through Justice40 investment?

COLIN MEEHAN: That is a wonderful question. I think the ultimate answer is we're looking for you as the applicants to tell us that so that we can evaluate your proposal and our goals in developing this

ICF Transcription
Grid Resilience and Innovation Partnerships (GRIP) Program
Community Benefits Plan Training- 2023.02.27

training and holding this period for you all is to help you ensure that. And I don't mean to be kind of intentionally vague with that answer, but ultimately we have to see what the proposals look like, what the full applications look like to do our best to ensure it, and ultimately the best way that we as a kind of I guess a community of energy infrastructure deployment can best ensure it by being responsive to the Community Benefits Plan and developing one that is both robust and that is ultimately accountable to the communities.

WHITNEY BELL: They keep coming in. You got a couple more questions coming your way so.

COLIN MEEHAN: I do better with Q and A anyway, so thanks.

WHITNEY BELL: Does DOE require GRIP funded projects to be located within J40 communities? If not, what recommendations do you have for aligning benefits with J40 communities that are not within a designated GRIP project?

ICF Transcription
Grid Resilience and Innovation Partnerships (GRIP) Program
Community Benefits Plan Training- 2023.02.27

COLIN MEEHAN: That's a really important question and distinction. What we want to see is that the overall benefits flow, 40% of the overall benefits of federal investments flow to disadvantaged communities, so that does not require that an individual project be located in a disadvantaged community, to be clear. What we would like to see is how a particular project will impact disadvantaged communities. And to be as clear as I can, our goal that 40% of the overall benefits of federal investments flow to disadvantaged communities. And the way that we interpret that is that it is not up to each individual project to do that, but to the entire portfolio. So that's how we're approaching this. It is very important for each proposal to identify exactly how and how much a particular proposal is impacting disadvantaged communities, and ideally both in terms of the benefits and any potential negative impacts as well.

WHITNEY BELL: This question is in regard to workforce training. Is it mandatory that the training apply to the specific jobs needed for the GRIP project or can

ICF Transcription
Grid Resilience and Innovation Partnerships (GRIP) Program
Community Benefits Plan Training- 2023.02.27

the training include other types of energy jobs, for example, line worker training?

COLIN MEEHAN: That's a good question. I think that's a question that we're going to have to answer after this presentation, because I'm going to need to consult with our workforce development experts.

WHITNEY BELL: That makes sense. We'll make sure whomever asks that, that we will loop back with you on that.

COLIN MEEHAN: Yeah. And we'll also, just to be clear, we'll post any questions publicly as well on our website, questions and answers.

WHITNEY BELL: Does community engagement need to lead formal agreements or is engagement -- Hang on, I'm trying to read this one again. Let me try again. Does community engagement need to lead to formal agreements, or is engagement, including the community in the process, also an important exercise? You know, such as roundtables, things like that.

ICF Transcription
Grid Resilience and Innovation Partnerships (GRIP) Program
Community Benefits Plan Training- 2023.02.27

COLIN MEEHAN: Yeah, I think both are important exercises. There's no easy answer here or bright line, I want to emphasize, again for folks, that we expect all of the applications in all three of the topic areas to be very competitive. And ultimately what we're going to look for are the most robust proposals, and that includes Community Benefit Plans. But specifically to answer that question, there is no requirement that Community Benefits Plans specifically include a workforce or community agreement, however, we do encourage it and make it clear in the proposal that that is something that we would like to see. I apologize, Whitney, what was the other part of the question? There were agreements and then what was the other, including them as part of the process?

WHITNEY BELL: Yeah, or is engagement, including the community in the process, also an important exercise?

COLIN MEEHAN: Yeah. So engaging and involving the community in the process is an important exercise. I

ICF Transcription
Grid Resilience and Innovation Partnerships (GRIP) Program
Community Benefits Plan Training- 2023.02.27

would say it's important for us to understand the depth of that engagement. So if it's a matter of simply holding open houses and roundtables where community input is kind of taken at large, that is maybe not as detailed of engagement and not giving community an opportunity to really be a part of the project plan development as maybe we would like to see. I'm going to try and give a clear answer and ultimately this is one I think we'll have to develop a more robust answer for and a more clear answer. But both agreements and engaging the community as part of the process are very important. I think it is, in both cases, we want to be able to review the details of those plans and be able to ultimately hold the project proponent accountable for meeting those details and metrics.

WHITNEY BELL: Thank you. That was a very thorough answer. Could you please provide examples of energy democracy?

COLIN MEEHAN: So energy democracy in terms of examples. I don't want to give -- I'm not trying to be

ICF Transcription
Grid Resilience and Innovation Partnerships (GRIP) Program
Community Benefits Plan Training- 2023.02.27

intentionally vague, but I want to stay vague because I don't want to indicate any particular specific example is one that would be considered, you know, better or worse in this application process. So really in terms of community ownership and disadvantaged communities, that is one kind of as specific as I can get in terms of an example for energy democracy right now. I think also another example would be providing disadvantaged communities with a more meaningful opportunity to have an impact on infrastructure development and deployment within their communities. So finding new ways to give them opportunities for input and feedback in a way that really impacts how infrastructure deployment is done in their communities would be another example.

WHITNEY BELL: Does failure to meet any of the Community Benefits Plan requirements result in disqualification of the full application, or would it just impact the 20% scoring?

COLIN MEEHAN: That is a good question, and actually that's one that I'm going to want to check with

ICF Transcription
Grid Resilience and Innovation Partnerships (GRIP) Program
Community Benefits Plan Training- 2023.02.27

general counsel on just to be certain. So we'll have to get an answer to you as quickly as possible on that. Ultimately, I do, again, want to strongly encourage everyone on this call, everyone who is submitting an application to do their best to address each of the four priority areas in the Community Benefit Plan. So I'm just gonna go back to those real quick. And I would strongly, I would really urge everyone to do their best to address each of these four elements, community and labor engagement, investing in the American workforce, diversity, equity, inclusion and accessibility, and the Justice40 Initiative.

To the extent that you feel your proposal may fall short in one area or another, we would love to hear why and why you think it's still a valuable proposal. But ultimately we would like to see Community Benefits Plans that speaks to each of these four elements. With regards to the specific question as to whether it would be disqualified, I need to check with general counsel on that and we'll post an answer as soon as we can.

ICF Transcription
Grid Resilience and Innovation Partnerships (GRIP) Program
Community Benefits Plan Training- 2023.02.27

WHITNEY BELL: And just so you know, we will send out a note to everybody once the questions, the FAQ has been updated with these answers. So you will be notified when that is ready, so you don't have to reach out and ask, when will we know that? So our next question, can you define what the budget period is? Is it every year the project is proposed to last, a fiscal year, or something else?

COLIN MEEHAN: So the budget cycle is on a fiscal year and the information for that is in the FOA. I don't have it at my fingertips or on the tip of my tongue right now, so we'll have to answer that in the Q&A. I don't want to give any details that are incorrect. It is multiple years and it is ultimately the amount of years for the funding. And for each topic area it's a little bit different and I just don't want to give the wrong number of years for different topic areas.

WHITNEY BELL: All right. And I think we've got time for about one more question. This one says the community partnership documentations has a page limitation of

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Grid Resilience and Innovation Partnerships (GRIP) Program
Community Benefits Plan Training- 2023.02.27

10 pages. Our memorandum of understanding or similar agreements also to be one page. If these documents are to be one page, what if we exceed 10 community partnerships?

COLIN MEEHAN: So that is a good and important question.

We do ultimately need applicants to stick to the page limitation of 10 pages. If for some reason -- Well, first of all, I want to be clear, as with all of our page limitations, these are limitations, not goals. You shouldn't try to max out the page limitation. So certainly you could develop documentation that is less than one page for each community agreement or partnership and that would be one way to address it. If for some reason you're not able to keep it within the 10 pages, then we would ask that you submit an application that is within the 10 pages and note within this documentation that you have additional documentation if the reviewers need it and that we can contact you for that. But I would, yeah, I would say ultimately, I would really encourage you well, not encourage you. I think you will need to not exceed the 10 pages for your full application and

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Grid Resilience and Innovation Partnerships (GRIP) Program
Community Benefits Plan Training- 2023.02.27

encourage you to find ways to keep the documentation to even less than one page per partnership, I think that's easily attainable.

WHITNEY BELL: Great. Thank you, Colin. That final answer wraps up today's training. A copy of today's slides will be available on the GRIP program webpage by tomorrow and the recording will be available in about two weeks. We will send you an e-mail so you will know when it is available, as well as note when the FAQ is updated as well. To find more information about the GRIP program, please visit the program webpage, there's a link now in the chat for you. And then Colin, thank you so much for facilitating this today and thank you to all of our attendees for participating. Take care everyone and we will see you next time.

COLIN MEEHAN: Thank you.

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