

2016 DOE EPSCoR Implementation Grants Program

West Virginia EPSCoR

Pre-Proposal Solicitation Announcement

Letter of Intent Due Date – Monday, January 11, 2016

Pre-Proposal Due Date – Friday, January 29, 2016

December 21, 2015

Background

The expected DOE EPSCoR Implementation Grants solicitation announcement for 2016 has not yet been released. Now that Congress and the President approved the federal budget this past week, DOE EPSCoR will be able to finalize its program plans for FY 2016 funds. We are anticipating that a competition will be held this year since DOE did not have an open competition in 2015.

Recent solicitations for the DOE EPSCoR Implementation Grants program have not changed significantly over the past several years. Interested researchers can obtain a copy of the most recent solicitation (2014) for additional information about the Implementation Grants program at the following web site:

http://science.energy.gov/~media/grants/pdf/foas/2014/SC_FOA_0001087.pdf.

The purpose of this announcement is to outline the process to be taken by WV EPSCoR to prepare for a 2016 DOE EPSCoR Implementation Grants competition.

WV EPSCoR Schedule

Under the DOE EPSCoR Implementation Grants program, an EPSCoR jurisdiction has previously been allowed to submit only one proposal for the competition. WV EPSCoR will again conduct a state-wide down-selection process to identify the research team to be designated to submit a proposal through WV EPSCoR. Under this process, we are soliciting pre-proposal expressions of interest from research teams (i.e., Letters of Intent) and the submission of short pre-proposals that will undergo evaluation by external reviewers and the WV EPSCoR program committee.

Due dates for action by research teams are as follows:

Submission of Letter of Intent: Monday, January 11, 2016 at 5 PM EST
Pre-Proposal Submission: Friday, January 29, 2016 at 5 PM EST

Letters of Intent and Pre-Proposals should be submitted electronically to:

jan.taylor@wvresearch.org

WV EPSCoR will complete its review before the end of February, 2016.

Letters of Intent will be used to assist WV EPSCoR in identifying appropriate reviewers for the preproposals. Sufficient information should be provided in the Letter of Intent to describe the topical area of research, the general goals of the program, and the area of focus for the research. The Letter of Intent information will not be factored into the review of Pre-Proposals.

Pre-Proposals should be prepared according to the format described in the Attachment.

Contact Information

For additional discussion related to this announcement, please contact:

Dr. Jan Taylor
Project Director, WV EPSCoR
Director
Division of Science and Research
WV Higher Education Policy Commission
304-558-4128 Ext. 3
Jan.Taylor@wvresearch.org

Dr. Richard Bajura
WV DOE EPSCoR Program Coordinator
Director
National Res. Cen. for Coal & Energy
West Virginia University
304-293-6034
Richard.Bajura@mail.wvu.edu

Attachment

Instructions for Preparation of Pre-Proposals

General Comments

Pre-Proposals submitted to WV EPSCoR will consist of the following sections:

- Cover Page - Template provided
- Four-Page Narrative/Budget section consisting of three pages of text (open format) and one page of budget information (template provided)
- Roster of Investigators – Template provided
- Communication from DOE Program Office regarding interest in cost sharing with DOE EPSCoR

Narrative / Budget Section

The Pre-Proposal is limited to a total of four pages related to discussion of the research to be proposed. This limit includes three pages that can be devoted to text, figures, and references. The form of the Narrative is left to the discretion of the research team. Information is provided here and in other documents that provide guidance as to the kind of information that should be in the narrative text. The fourth page is a budget summary that is prepared at a high level to provide an estimate of the number of researchers and to identify any cost share that may be proposed on behalf of the investigative team. WV EPSCoR will be unable to provide cost share for proposals.

TEXT OF NARRATIVE SECTION

The first three pages of the Pre-Proposal Narrative / Budget section should address these DOE EPSCoR-specific issues:

- Applications must present opportunities for enhanced academic research and development competitiveness for the jurisdiction, and, if appropriate, industrial or economic competitiveness for the jurisdiction; applicants should outline plans for acquisition of sustained non-EPSCoR support resulting from completion of the Implementation Grants program.

- Applications must exhibit a coherent focus on one energy-related research area bringing together multiple researchers. The DOE EPSCoR program highlights workforce development through the use of students, postdocs and junior faculty on projects. Proposals that only support senior, well-funded investigators will be at a disadvantage in the review process. Multi-institutional proposals are encouraged.
- Applications must present a management plan for coordinating multiple investigators working on a common theme. This must include performance milestones and a timetable for achieving project goals and deliverables. Previous experience indicates that strong external advisory boards are a useful tool for managing Implementation Grant awards. DOE EPSCoR strongly encourages their regular use.

BUDGET SECTION

The fourth page should describe the budget in terms of dollars in categories of expenditures rather than listing each person supported or each piece of equipment to be purchased. The referenced DOE EPSCoR Implementation Grants solicitation for 2014 was structured with award ranges from \$1 million as the minimum award and \$2.5 million as the maximum award, per year, for projects to be funded under the 2014 solicitation. You may use this information as an estimate of what DOE might advertise for funding limits in the 2016 solicitation. A template for the budget in Excel format is provided and should be used for preparing the budget section.

Roster of Investigators

WV EPSCoR has prepared an Excel template on which research teams are requested to provide information about their team members. This section allows each team to identify their staff members and the team's expertise without taking up space in the Narrative section. This information is needed by WV EPSCoR for reference and will be useful for contacting team members. Each team is asked to identify an alternative point of contact who may be reached if the Principal Investigator is unavailable. This person would serve in the role as the associate principal investigator.

DOE Program Office Expression of Interest

On the cover page, the application must identify the relevant DOE Program Office pertinent to the proposed research. DOE EPSCoR internal policies are such that DOE EPSCoR's budget only provides 90% of the funds awarded to an applicant. The remaining 10% of the awarded funding must come from another DOE Program Office, for example the Office of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy, or, the Office of Fossil Energy. The Pre-Proposal must provide evidence that a/the relevant Program Office within DOE is willing to provide the required 10% co-funding for the EPSCoR proposal. Note that a national laboratory (other than NETL) is not a DOE Program Office.

Investigators should communicate with an appropriate DOE Office to obtain an indication of interest/commitment by the January 29 deadline. An email from the DoE program manager is sufficient to document the commitment. Please include a discussion related to the support of a DOE Office in this section of your proposal, including any written communications you received from your Program Officer contact. Note that a firm commitment from the Program Officer is not likely – the officer may be willing to say that if the program is ranked highly after review, then the officer would consider provide funding. Such an expression of interest from the Officer regarding your project will be sufficient.

Submission Packet

Please assemble your Pre-Proposal submission packet into one PDF file in the order described in this section. Submit the packet to Jan Taylor as noted above.

Other Comments

Technical advice is available from Dr. Richard Bajura, the State DOE EPSCoR Coordinator (rbajura@mail.wvu.edu). Check the www.wvresearch.org website for additional helpful information that may be posted. A web site for posting additional and updated information will also be accessible on or after January 5, 2016 at the National Research Center for Coal and Energy (www.nrcce.wvu.edu) under the title “2016 DOE EPSCoR Implementation Grants Program.” Researchers interested in attending a plenary session with other investigators to discuss the DOE EPSCoR

Implementation Grants program should contact R. Bajura regarding scheduling a meeting.

The accompanying attachment called Observations on DOE Merit Review Criteria for the DOE EPSCoR Implementation Grants Program provides detailed information about DOE's requirements for successful proposals and copies of the templates referenced in the present document. Downloadable files will be available at the WV EPSCoR and the NRCCE websites shortly. Note that templates provided in the documents referenced here are in PDF format and not in MS Word or Excel formats that can be edited. You will be able to download these files from the WV EPSCoR and NRCCE web sites in sufficient time for you to complete your Pre-Proposal packet.

R. Bajura
304-293-6034
Richard.Bajura@mail.wvu.edu