



NOTICE OF FUNDING OPPORTUNITY

Hubs for Energy Resilient Operations (HERO): Integrated Community Energy Planning

for the

Louisiana Department of Energy and
Natural Resources, Office of Energy

NOFO #: LADENR-HERO-ICEP

Response Due Date/Time: July 31, 2025, 5 PM CDT

Release Date: June 2, 2025

The Louisiana Department of Energy and Natural Resources (LDENR), Office of Energy invites interested entities to respond to this Notice of Funding Opportunity for funding under the State of Louisiana's Hubs for Energy Resilient Operations (HERO) Program.

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1. GENERAL INFORMATION

1.1. Background

Located along the coast, Louisiana is susceptible to major hurricanes each season. Other extreme weather events (e.g., flooding, winter storms, heat waves) have negatively impacted Louisiana over the past decades. Since 2000, Louisiana has experienced 57 distinct billion-dollar disasters. Along with Texas and Florida, Louisiana is among the top three states in terms of weather risk. Beyond extreme weather events, vulnerabilities in the electric system impact residents and businesses in Louisiana on a regular basis. In 2018, the average Louisiana electric customer experienced 2.1 service interruptions that lasted an average of 4.6 hours.

The Louisiana Hubs for Energy Resilient Operations (HERO) Program, administered by the Louisiana Department of Energy and Natural Resources (LDENR), is designed to accelerate the growth of more secure, affordable, reliable, and abundant energy for greater power resilience. Funded under the U.S. Department of Energy's Grid Resilience and Innovative Partnerships (GRIP) program, HERO builds upon Louisiana's diversified energy portfolio and positions the State as a leader in grid innovation. The HERO Program will focus on three main elements: (1) the launch of a new integrated community energy planning process (ICEP); (2) the deployment of a network of HERO Hubs consisting of microgrids comprised of power generation, long-duration energy storage (LDES) technologies, and grid interactive technologies serving critical infrastructure across Louisiana; and (3) the connection of the HERO Hubs to strengthen state emergency response operations.

As part of this effort, the State is launching an **Integrated Community Energy Planning ("ICEP")** process. The ICEP process will bring together utility, community, state, and federal level data to identify hotspots of greatest energy burden, disaster and hazard risks, threats to security and systems, long-duration outages, and grid congestion. The effort will be a replicable pilot and scalable model for viable and innovative energy planning that meets local communities' needs.

The ICEP process uses data-driven studies, combined with a community-informed approach, to enhance community resilience by planning for a network of HERO Hubs. The ICEP planning effort will help communities identify and prioritize ways to best support community energy needs during times of distress. **The output of the process will yield a prioritization strategy based on community and stakeholder input, as well as a community-developed list of potential projects that could apply for LDENR's future funding rounds for HERO Hubs.**

The first Phase of the ICEP process will be the **Community Planning Phase**. The Community Planning Phase will consist of the following core elements:

- Needs Identification. Support communities in identifying their set of prioritized resilience needs.
- Coordinated Planning. Engage local governments, utilities, and key stakeholders at the local level to coordinate electric grid resilience planning.

The community plans developed in the Community Planning Phase will serve as direct input into the Statewide Planning Phase of the ICEP process, which is expected to launch in 2026. The Statewide Planning Phase will incorporate those inputs and support a statewide stakeholder process to develop a statewide grid resilience plan, develop a set of minimum requirements and a selection process for HERO Hubs, and other critical activities.

This Notice of Funding Opportunity launches the first round of solicitations for community planning awards to support the Community Planning Phase of the ICEP process. Awards will be made to proposals that best support collaborative planning by local governments, utilities, community organizations, emergency responders, and critical infrastructure operators, and other key stakeholders.

1.2. Federal Program Requirements

All projects under the Hubs for Energy Resilient Operations (HERO) Program must comply with all applicable federal requirements and cost principles and with requirements of the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) Funding Opportunity Announcement Number: DE-FOA-0002740, Amendment 00000 (FOA). The applicants must be able to provide information required under the award subrecipient obligations and must comply with the applicable subrecipient requirements.

2. ELIGIBILITY AND PRIORITIZATION

2.1. Eligible Activities

This Notice of Funding Opportunity solicits proposals only for “**Integrated Community Energy Planning Grants.**”

Integrated Community Energy Planning Grants are funds from LDENR to support local efforts to conduct a community-driven planning process in coordination with local utilities and stakeholders. Local governments, utilities, and stakeholder partnerships will be expected to convene local workshops and working groups of stakeholders in a community planning process to:

- Identify localized hazards and resilience needs, with a lens on community members and impact;
- Identify critical facilities that support community needs, particularly during grid disruptions and other hazards, organized by the impact of outages on such facilities;
- Develop a portfolio of ideas and strategies that can increase electric grid and community resilience for the identified community needs;
- Incorporate community goals and plans into the process; and
- Compile relevant information, including a prioritized set of possible HERO Hub projects, from the community planning process into a standard report template to serve as inputs into the statewide planning process, which will support statewide resilience planning and the development of HERO Hubs.

Awarded proposals will receive training and technical assistance for leading and supporting community planning efforts. LDENR will assign a program liaison to provide technical assistance

throughout the planning process. The program liaison will provide guidance, facilitation support for convenings, and supplemental data and resources to support the planning process.

Grant funding will be available for a 12-month period, beginning as soon as October 2025. Funded recipients must participate in and meet the timeline milestones described in Section 2.7.

Planning activities eligible under this Notice of Funding Opportunity must meet the following criteria:

- Are led by a unit of local government, small utility, or critical facility as described in Section 2.4; and
- Include a partnership or collaboration as described in Section 2.4;

2.2. State Funding Objectives

Proposals under this Notice of Funding Opportunity will be evaluated based on their ability to best meet the Objectives of the Program as follows:

1. **Community Need.** All proposals will be evaluated based on a demonstration of community need, including grid safety, reliability, security, affordability, and economic needs. Proposals will be prioritized based on need as described in Section 2.3.
2. **Lead Applicant Capability.** Proposals will be evaluated on the projected ability of the lead applicant to execute and lead the effort, including through a review of previous efforts.
3. **Strong Partnerships.** Proposals will be evaluated based on the proposed partnerships, including the participation and commitment of required partners, and the contribution of other optional partners. Proposed partnerships will be evaluated holistically based on their ability, experience, and commitment to the tasks.
4. **Deep Community Input.** Proposals will be evaluated based on the expected level of engagement with community members and key stakeholders during the community planning process using the applicant's proposed approach and metrics.
5. **Geographic Representation.** LDENR is seeking community data and input from a wide range of physical and demographic geographies from across the state to ensure a robust set of data inputs to the statewide planning process.

All proposals will be evaluated based on the reasonableness of costs within proposed budgets to achieve the program objectives.

2.3. Priority Applications

In reviewing proposals, the State will evaluate whether the proposed applicants and their partners intend to focus their grid and community resilience planning efforts on investment in priority areas. LDENR will prioritize proposals based on a comprehensive set of data-driven factors impacting grid reliability and security, economic needs, and geography, through an independent methodology developed by LSU Center for Energy Studies (LSU CES).

Through the evaluation process, LDENR will consider (a) the amount of funds available under this program, (b) the quality and alignment of proposals, and (c) geographic distribution that can best meet the objectives and metrics of the program.

2.4. Eligible Entities and Eligible Partnerships

“Eligible Lead Entities” that can be lead applicants under this funding include:

- A unit of local government,
- An electric grid operator that is a small utility,
- An electric grid operator that is a large utility, or
- A critical facility;

Priority will be given to lead applicants that are a unit of local government or a small utility.

All responses are required to include eligible partnerships as part of their proposal. **“Eligible Partnerships”** under this funding include a partnership, collaboration, or other coordination effort by more than one of the following entities:

- A unit of local government (REQUIRED),
- An electric grid operator that is a small utility or a large utility (REQUIRED),
- A critical facility (REQUIRED IF LEAD APPLICANT, OTHERWISE OPTIONAL)
- An association or membership organization of municipal or cooperative utilities (OPTIONAL),
- An association or membership organization of units of local governments (OPTIONAL), or
- A local planning organization or non-profit organization serving the identified geographic community (OPTIONAL).

A “small utility” is an entity selling not more than 4,000,000 megawatt hours of electricity per year.

A “large utility” is an entity selling more than 4,000,000 megawatt hours of electricity per year.

A “critical facility” is a building or infrastructure element that is vital for a community’s well-being, especially during and in the wake of a disaster, extreme weather event, or energy disruption. These facilities may include, but are not limited to, public safety, emergency response, healthcare, and essential utilities.

2.5. Cost Match

Each applicant must commit to providing a cost match as indicated below.

The eligible applicant who receives a sub-award must demonstrate a cost match of **20% of the subaward amount**.

Example 1: If you request the maximum \$125,000 in grant funding for your proposal, you must provide a non-federal cost match of at least \$25,000, but you can provide more.

Example 2: If you request only \$100,000 in grant funding for your proposal, you must provide a non-federal cost match of at least \$20,000, but you can provide more.

There are no restrictions on exceeding the minimum required cost match under the award. Only costs associated with the Eligible Activities indicated in this Notice of Funding Opportunity can be counted towards the cost match.

2.6. Eligible Activities

This Notice of Funding Opportunity is intended to fund efforts by local communities, utilities and other partners to conduct an Integrated Community Energy Planning process and develop a community resilience plan, which includes efforts to identify, design, plan, and coordinate for grid resilience needs that make a demonstrable impact on improving power resiliency and reliability.

Eligible activities under this Notice of Funding Opportunity include:

- community energy and resilience planning,
- local outreach and coordination,
- data analysis, engineering, and design activities,
- financial analysis,
- modeling, and
- other activities as necessary and as evidenced to conduct Integrated Community Energy Planning and develop a community plan.

The anticipated outcome of all activities will be the compilation of findings into a standard community plan report template provided by LDENR that will be incorporated into the statewide planning process.

2.7. Timelines

Applicants funded under this Notice of Funding Opportunity are expected to conduct activities that meet the following program timeline:

- Notice of Award: September 2025
- Finalization of Grant Agreement with LDENR: October 2025
- Begin Training on Integrated Community Energy Planning Process: November 2025 – January 2026
- Commence community energy planning within the identified geography: December 2025 – February 2026.
- Conclude community energy planning within the identified geography and compile final report: August 2026.

3. AVAILABLE FUNDING

The target funding distribution for this round of funding under the program is as follows:

Table 1. Funding Available:

	Amount
Total funding available	\$1,875,000
Award Maximum	Up to \$125,000
Intended number of awards	15 awards

The ultimate allocations may differ from the target allocations in the table above, based on the finalized amounts of awarded proposals.

4. APPLICATION PROCESS

This Notice of Funding Opportunity is a competitive process that is being used to solicit proposals from interested entities to meet the funding objectives of this program. This Notice of Funding Opportunity is intended to solicit proposals that comply with the eligibility requirements indicated above.

The application process has been designed to reduce the burden on entities seeking to apply for funding, ensure alignment on funding objectives with respondents, identify needs for technical assistance, and create a collaborative process for implementation. The competitive process will be divided into stages:

1. **Pre-application.** This NOFO outlines the pre-application process and provides respondents with an accessible, easy-to-navigate application for outlining their proposed activities to LDENR for selection. The pre-application process will provide the opportunity for entities with limited bandwidth to describe their approach to the planning process, demonstrate the ability of their activities to meet program objectives, and receive rapid feedback on their activities. LDENR will evaluate the eligibility of the proposals submitted under the pre-application process and their likelihood and ability to meet program objectives.
2. **Submit final application.** Based on a pre-application review, an applicant may be identified as a candidate for funding and would enter into negotiations with LDENR for further development. During that stage, the selected applicant will be invited to submit a full application along with additional forms and materials required under the federal program requirements and Louisiana's laws and regulations. At that stage, the applicants will also be required to register with SAM.gov as noted in this Notice of Funding Opportunity.
3. **Competitive, rolling applications.** After the initial pre-application deadline, the LDENR reserves the option to open a competitive, rolling application window for proposal selection. LDENR anticipates that if it opens a competitive rolling application process, based on the availability of program funds, applications will be accepted on a monthly basis and evaluated competitively as a batch, based on the ability of a proposal to meet program objectives.

4.1. Pre-Application Content

The pre-application must contain the following information about the proposed approach to the ICEP planning process:

- A. Applicant's Information (up to 1 page, Word or a readable PDF file);
- B. Proposal Narrative (up to 5 pages, Word or a readable PDF file);
- C. Budget Narrative, Metrics and Timelines (Excel spreadsheet in Attachment A);
- D. Applicant's Certifications (Word or a readable PDF file).

A. Applicant's Information

Please describe the lead applicant and each entity involved in the proposal. Describe how each entity meets the eligibility requirements and indicate if any entity falls into the following category: small utility, large utility, unit of local government, community-based non-profit, critical infrastructure facility, an association or membership organization of municipal or cooperative utilities, an association or membership organization of units of local governments, or a local planning organization or non-profit organization serving the identified geographic community:

(1) Lead Applicant:

- i. Lead applicant's name, type, eligibility category, contact info, and contact person (name, title, phone, email, and address).
- ii. A brief description of the lead applicant's background and any relevant experience, including with similar efforts and/or working with other federal and state awards.

(2) Entities included in the proposed Eligible Partnership:

- i. Describe each entity involved in the proposed eligible partnership and provide the name and contact information for each entity's project lead. Identify each entity within the "eligible partnerships" category defined in this Notice of Funding Opportunity. For each Small Utility, please describe why the entity qualifies as such.

B. Proposal Narrative

The Proposal Narrative must be in Microsoft Word or a readable PDF format, of up to 5 pages, in 11- or 12-point font. The narrative must describe the proposed approach to the ICEP planning process in sufficient detail, providing the following information:

1. **Executive summary** (no more than 1/2 page).
 - a. Describe your planning objectives, activities, and outcomes, indicating how your approach fits within the eligibility requirements, funding objectives, and prioritization described in this Notice of Funding Opportunity.
 - b. Indicate if the same proposal was also submitted under the IIJA Section 40101(d), 40101(c), FOA 2740 (GRIP), and describe the differences between your applications, if applicable.
2. **Location.** Indicate the boundaries of the planning area proposed by the applicant, including specifically local government, utility, or other geographical boundaries, to be the focus of the planning efforts.
3. **Anticipated Community Participation.** Describe anticipated community stakeholders in the planning effort and how they will be engaged. Indicate which communities will be engaged as part of the planning process (including census tracts) and provide an overview of any anticipated quantifiable goals and targets for engagement and participation. Provide an overview of whether and how the planning effort can reach historically underserved populations. Applicants are encouraged to share maps, spreadsheets, or other detailed data to support their narrative.
4. **Funding Objectives.** Describe the planning process that is proposed to be conducted, including the activities to be completed, the roles and responsibilities of each entity in the eligible partnership, additional partners to be engaged, analyses expected to be performed, and professional services needed. The outcome of the community planning process is expected to be captured in a standard Integrated Community Energy Plan template that will be shared as part of the technical assistance.
5. **Timeline.** Please provide a brief description of the ability of the applicant to meet the required planning timelines of the community planning phase identified in this Notice of Funding Opportunity.
6. **Requested funding.** Please provide a brief description of the requested funding for the planning effort by cost item, including the federal funds requested and proposed sources of cost match.

C. Budget Narrative, Metrics, and Timelines

Please fill out the accompanying Excel table in Attachment A to describe the following:

1. **Costs breakdown.** Respondents should fill out the accompanying table in Attachment A (using the tab labeled “Part I – Cost”).
2. **Performance measurement.** Respondents should fill out the metrics checklist in Attachment A (using the tab labeled “Part II – Metrics”) with anticipated or projected numbers.

D. Applicants’ Certifications of Funding Requirements Compliance

In responding to this Notice of Funding Opportunity, applicants must acknowledge compliance with the requirements related to this US DOE subaward by certifying the following for each entity receiving funds as part of the project:

- a. **Non-debarment or Suspension.** Certify that project funding recipients are not suspended, debarred, or otherwise excluded or disqualified in accordance with 2 CFR 180.300.
- b. **Corporate Felony Conviction and Federal Tax Liability Representations.** Certify that any project funding recipient is not a corporation that has been convicted of a felony criminal violation under any federal law within the preceding 24 months. It is not a corporation that has any unpaid federal tax liability that has been assessed, for which all judicial and administrative remedies have been exhausted or have lapsed, and that is not being paid in a timely manner pursuant to an agreement with the authority responsible for collecting the tax liability.
- c. **Reasonable, Allowable, and Allocable Costs.** All expenditures must be allowable, allocable, and reasonable in accordance with the applicable federal cost principles.
- d. **Conflict of Interest.** Certify that no planned, actual, or apparent conflicts of interest exist between the Subaward/Subcontract and LDENR and that the Subaward/Subcontract will follow any applicable LDENR written standards of conduct. Certify that it is, or will be within 180 days of the award, compliant with all requirements in the DOE interim Conflict of Interest Policy for Financial Assistance.
- e. **Foreign Entity Participation and Foreign Work.** Certify that it understands that all subrecipients and contractors who anticipate involving foreign nationals in the performance of an award will be required to provide LDENR with specific information about each foreign national to satisfy requirements for foreign national participation. A “foreign national” is defined as any person who is not a United States citizen by birth or naturalization. The volume and type of information collected may depend on various factors associated with the award. DOE concurrence may be required before a foreign national can participate in the performance of any work under an award. Approval for foreign nationals from countries identified on the U.S. Department of State’s list of State Sponsors of Terrorism must be obtained from DOE before they can participate in the performance of any work under an award.
- f. **Davis-Bacon Act compliance.** Certify that the project will comply with the requirements of the “Davis-Bacon Act” and will pay all of the laborers and mechanics performing construction, alteration, or repair work in excess of \$2,000 on projects

funded directly by or assisted in whole or in part by and through funding under the award, wages at rates not less than those prevailing on projects of a character similar in the locality as determined by subchapter IV of Chapter 1 of Title 40, United State Code commonly referred to as the “Davis-Bacon Act.”

- g. Lobbying.** Certify that the project costs or cost match will not include any lobbying costs or costs/expenditures to influence or attempt to influence, directly or indirectly, Congressional action on any legislative or appropriation matters.
- h. Flow-Down.** Certify that it understands that all applicable terms and conditions of the Federal award shall flow down to any Subawards issued under this agreement, in accordance with 2 CFR 200.101(b)(1) and 2 CFR 200.332(b), unless specifically waived by the DOE Project Officer.

4.2. Schedule of Events

LDENR reserves the right to deviate from this Schedule of Events at any time and without notice.

ACTIVITY/EVENT	DATE
Issue of Notice of Funding Opportunity:	June 2, 2025
Deadline for Receipt of Pre-Applications:	July 31, 2025, by 5pm CDT
Anticipated initial proposal selections:	September 2025

4.3. Submission Instructions

Pre-applications must be submitted by email only to **lahero@la.gov** on or before the date and time specified in the Schedule of Events. Please include “ICEP Community Planning NOFO” in the subject line of the email.

Responses must be provided as a Microsoft Word (.docx) attachment or a readable PDF attachment to the email.

Email submission is the only acceptable method of delivery. Fax, mail, and courier delivery shall not be accepted. Responses misdirected or otherwise received late, or corrupted files, may not be reviewed.

4.4. Unique Entity Identifier and SAM.gov Registration

Selected pre-applications invited to submit an application must register with the federal SAM.gov portal and have a Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) assigned in SAM.gov.

Applicants included in the SAM.gov Exclusion List will not be eligible for an award. Inclusion on the SAM.gov Exclusion List cannot be remediated.

5. REVIEW AND EVALUATION

5.1 Minimum Requirements

To be eligible for funding, the proposal must, at a minimum, comply with the US DOE minimum requirements and must:

- a) Be an eligible lead applicant;
- b) Include an eligible partnership;
- c) Be located in Louisiana; and
- c) Include the required Cost Match.

5.2. Engagement Assessment

A successful proposal must score at least 30 points out of a maximum of 50, with 10 maximum points in each of the five State Funding Objectives categories indicated in Section 2.2:

- 1. Community Need.
- 2. Lead Applicant Capability.
- 3. Strong Partnerships.
- 4. Deep Community Input.
- 5. Geographic Representation.

Each category will be evaluated in the following three brackets: Poor (1-3 points), Fair (4-6 points), Strong (7-10 points), based on the description of the capabilities and impact in the pre-application and the likelihood of the applicant's ability to achieve the objectives as a direct (or substantial) consequence of the proposed activities as well as to successfully measure these benefits.

6. ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION

6.1 Addendum(s)/Cancellation

LDENR reserves the right to revise any part of this Notice of Funding Opportunity by issuing an addendum(s) to the Notice of Funding Opportunity at any time. Issuance of this Notice of Funding Opportunity, or subsequent addendum(s), if any, does not constitute a commitment by LDENR to fund any project. In addition, LDENR may cancel this Notice of Funding Opportunity at any time, without incurring any liability from responders or potential responders.

6.2. Ownership of Response

The materials submitted in response to this Notice of Funding Opportunity shall become the property of the State.

6.3. Cost of Preparation

LDENR shall not be liable to any responders or potential responders for any costs incurred in developing a response, preparing for discussions (if any are held), or any other costs that a responder or potential responder may incur in responding to this Notice of Funding Opportunity.