

Summary of March 16, 2016 RACEE Call

- The goal of the RACEE Competition is to develop and implement strategies to help communities meet their goal of a 15% energy use reduction. This does not require identifying a single project that will achieve that reduction alone. The Phase 2 TA is intended to develop a strategy to reach the reduction. This could be achieved in many ways, such as a number of projects that each reduce energy use by a small amount, or only a few projects that will result in large energy reductions.
- DOE has created a RACEE Technical Resource Guide for Pledgees. The resource guide has the following sections:
 - How to Use this Guide
 - Technical Assistance Provider Network
 - Regional Liaisons
 - Regional Liaison Contact List
 - How To Apply for RACEE TA
 - Technical Assistance Projects
 - Technical Assistance Activities
 - Technical Assistance Providers
- The Guide has two charts communities can use to explore examples of Technical Assistance (TA) activities and examples of providers for the RACEE Competition.
- Names of TA providers in guide are only for examples, actual fulfillment depends on scoping of TA applications.
- This Guide is not exhaustive and other activities and providers may be relevant to the RACEE Competition. Don't think that if it's not listed it's not possible.
- More detail on organizations and specific projects or activities are available in the narratives that follow these charts.
- The ideas in the Guide are intended to inspire communities and providers to submit robust TA applications no later than 5 pm ET on March 31, 2016.
- There are nine regional liaisons across Alaska that can work to advance the collective activities of the Community Efficiency Champions. Regional liaisons will work closely with the AEA project managers to develop efficiency projects to the point they can be implemented with financing.
- DOE encourages you to speak with others involved with regional energy efficiency planning, send questions to AlaskaCompetition@hq.doe.gov or fax questions to 240-562-1640.
- RACEE Technical Assistance (TA) will not be assigned at the time DOE makes community selections for TA. TA decisions will be based on groundwork in each community after the community selections.
- Specific Community Efficiency Champions (CEC's) selected to receive TA will have a program manager at AEA that works with DOE

- As described in the Guide, the plan is to rely exclusively on gov-to-gov TA delivery to allow the aggressive timetable
- The goal of Phase 2 TA is that while some communities may start with data driven plan with specific activities identified, while others may not have detailed data and may just know that reducing energy use is a good idea, this TA should move either group forward

Questions and Answer period -

Q1: Looking at providers recommended - you mentioned that not all are listed. If you have someone different does that need to be taken care of before or after the application?

A1: In the application if a community identifies a provider it will not guarantee that if selected to receive TA, this community will be able to work with the provider named in the application. After communities are selected for TA, a specific Project Manager from the Alaska Energy Authority will be assigned to each community to work with communities to scope out how to fulfill the TA request. If it makes sense from a technical and economic perspective to contract with a provider named in the application that will be determined at this point. It is possible that other providers will make more sense.

Q2: Is there any info on whether the 20 successful applicants will be spread out - for example so many by region, does it matter if they are all in one region, or is it just by merit?

A2: DOE provided the evaluation criteria for TA applications to the public in the Notice of Technical Assistance for RACEE (NOTA). In both Topic Areas, applications will be evaluated and selections will be made based on the following criteria:

- Technical Merit (40%)
- Innovation and replicability (20%)
- Impact (40%)

There is a program policy factor for the Selection Official that if there were significant geographic imbalance, DOE can make an adjustment. There is no prescriptive formula to determine how many communities must be selected from each Energy Efficiency Planning Region.

Q3: Recently there have been a great set of resources such as AHFC's building resource booklet. To what extent are residential activities supported in this NOTA?

A3: The Pledge made by all communities was to reduce 15% energy usage per capita by 2020. It was important to use the per capita measurement so that a community would have the flexibility to choose how to meet the terms of the pledge, including residential, commercial, transportation energy use options. The choice belongs with the community and they have the responsibility to put forth a technically strong and valid application to meet that 15% reduction. It will not hurt or help an application if it residential or not. If that community has already done commercial or community work and sees residential as an opportunity, then they must make the case for why that would be a good opportunity in the application.

Q4: The last time the city received an energy efficiency grant from DOE the money went to the State of Alaska with no control by the city whatsoever. What is the anticipated structure of these awards?

A4: DOE's vision is to partner with the Alaska Energy Authority (AEA) and also the regional energy efficiency regional contacts to work directly with communities to scope the TA, so we won't go through that again. RACEE published a Request for Information (RFI) to gather feedback on how best to structure this effort. It is important to manage these project to protect the integrity of the TA application and balance with the resources from DOE and the state. The vision is to have local people involved in the community and the state, in regular communication through the scoping process. After the TA applications are evaluated and communities selected, RACEE plans to send people to each community to validate what's in the request and collect energy use data. Data collection is at the heart a good needs assessment.

Q5: Another concern is that we don't really know about different opportunities. It's hard when communities don't know what kinds of grants we can apply for.

A5: There are a number of communities that share these concerns and information barriers - one of the things that go along with your designation as a Community efficiency Champion is the development of a peer network which is really all about sharing practical information. RACEE has some good resources, but we know not all resources. The preparation accomplished in the RACEE Competition should allow them to apply to other funding opportunities that we find and share through the peer exchange network.

Q6: Are Phase 2 applicants encouraged to discuss applications with TA providers?

A6: The only way to make a meaningful application is to make the case of how TA will help you meet the 15% reduction in energy use. It is your choice to discuss your application with providers. DOE neither encourages nor discourages this. If you have an idea on what opportunities would be good for your community, you may find the TA Providers can validate that idea. Communities should do what it takes to make a good application based on technically valid factual information. Discussing with and identifying a TA provider in the application does not guarantee that they would be selected to do the work.

Q7: Who makes the decision on TA provider?

A7: Ultimately DOE will decide on the TA provider, based on recommendations of people in Alaska who work in energy efficiency

Q8: Who are those experts?

A8: We provided the TA Resources Guide to help answer the question of who is available to provide TA. Every community will be assigned a project manager from AEA, those people will interface directly with the community and the energy efficiency regional planning contacts. They have the option to bring in specific TA providers as part of the scoping process for selected communities.

Q9: On the 15% energy reduction - can that be a project specific reduction and can the start of project be retroactive? Are we looking for complete 15% for entire community (including hospital, community buildings, etc.) or for a specific group (for example, residential)?

A9: The specific language in the RACEE pledge is a 15% per capita, based on 2010 Alaska legislation. Per capita energy reduction applies across the entire community in order to give flexibility in the approach. It is perfectly allowable for a community to choose to do a project on just one building if that is a good way to make the 15% energy reduction in the pledge.

Q10: Can we propose a pilot project to show a specific building could get 15%?

A10: Yes – in the application a community must make a case why what you're proposing will help you make that 15% or better. One of the reasons we provided the TA Resources Guide is to give a better idea of what you can think about to meet your pledge.

Q11: What if a community has already done 15%?

A11: Communities will be evaluated on impact for 40% of their application score. If you have already done 15% but want to go farther, your application would have to address the technical merit, replicability, innovation and impact your proposal.

Q12: If a community does not have specific items identified to meet the 15% reduction - what do we put in our TA request?

A12: DOE amended the NOTA for Phase 2 into two Topic Areas because some communities are still in early planning stages and may have limited or no energy data. These communities can compete separately from Topic Area 2 Communities that have more data and more existing or planned project development.

A community that would be good for Topic Area 1 is in early planning stages and may have limited or no energy use data. They should include general ideas about energy use, and a statement of what expert help may be needed for evaluating a cost effective improvement plan. If they don't have anything that points them to where they need to target, they will need to ask for things like:

- Collection and analysis of electricity and fuel use data
- Conducting energy audits on buildings, and/or developing a long-term community energy strategy, or conducting an energy options analysis to identify potential future energy projects
- Walk through (Level 1) Energy Audits
- Comprehensive Building inventory of all non-residential buildings
- Evaluation of Powerhouse efficiency opportunities
- Evaluation of Water / Sewer efficiency opportunities
- Community Kick-off Meeting and Community Energy Planning
- Energy use and project cash flow analysis

Q13: Tribal governments often have trouble getting funding to upgrade buildings – we have a Native administration building built in the 1920s and it is hard to get funds to upgrade. Can the TA liaison provide contacts to apply for this in either this competition or others?

A13: Yes, this would be an eligible idea to put in the RACEE application.

Q14: We are kind of “all of the above” for picking renewable energy for our village. We have worked with AEA for the past 7 years on our renewable resources. Can we keep working with AEA?

A14: Most of what I heard you mention is about Renewable Energy. RACEE focuses on TA for community pledges to reduce energy use by 15%. There are other programs that focus on new Renewable Energy generation, but that is not the focus here. While the NOTA allows renewable energy opportunities, the focus is energy efficiency opportunities.

Q15: For the 20 communities will they have the choice of TA providers?

A15: First, it is important to understand DOE has the authority to make up to 20, but DOE must remain within the project budget for TA, so the number of selections will depend the cost of the proposals in the TA applications in addition to the review criteria put forward in the NOTA.

To answer your question, if you mention a particular provider in your project summary file (the TA application), it does not mean DOE will be able to access that particular provider for your TA work. If you look at the TA Resources Guide you'll see we have limited timeframe to accomplish much work and in order to meet these demands, we will schedule TA work through the government to government network that AEA is setting up for RACEE. It is possible that a particular provider you identify can be used if the choice makes sense, can be accessed, and meets cost requirements for the project.

Q16: In reference to competing with other communities -in my region there are many communities that completed the RACEE pledge. You said only 1 community will be selected per region. If our region that big is it possible for more than 1 community in a region to be selected for TA through RACEE?

A16: There is no geographic requirement for the number of selections from a particular region of Alaska. The 3 areas for evaluation are- technical merit 40%, innovation and replicability 20%, impact 40%. The merit review committee will make selection recommendations based on those criteria. Per the NOTA, it is possible for the Selection Official at DOE to consider changes to make sure there is geographic diversity, but we do not have particular numeric goals for how many from a particular region.