



**SOLAR TRAINING AND EDUCATION FOR  
PROFESSIONALS FOA**  
[STEP@ee.doe.gov](mailto:STEP@ee.doe.gov)

**FOA Webinar  
DE-FOA-0001329  
6/04/2015**

# Notice

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- All applicants are strongly encouraged to carefully read the Funding Opportunity Announcement DE-FOA-0001329 (**“FOA”**) and adhere to the stated submission requirements.
- This presentation summarizes the contents of FOA. If there are any inconsistencies between the FOA and this presentation or statements from DOE personnel, the FOA is the controlling document and applicants should rely on the FOA language and seek clarification from EERE.
- If you believe there is an inconsistency, please email us at [STEP@ee.doe.gov](mailto:STEP@ee.doe.gov)

# Frequently Asked Questions

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- Please enter your questions in the webinar questions function
- Answers will be provided in the FAQs page for this FOA on EERE Exchange: <https://eere-exchange.energy.gov/>
- This webinar and script will also be posted on the EERE Exchange site.
- If you have questions in the future, please email [STEP@ee.doe.gov](mailto:STEP@ee.doe.gov)



# Agenda

## I. Content Overview

- 1) FOA Description
- 2) Topic Areas
- 3) Award Information

## II. Application Process

- 1) Concept Papers
- 2) Full Applications
- 3) Merit Review and Selection Process
- 4) Pre-Selection Interviews

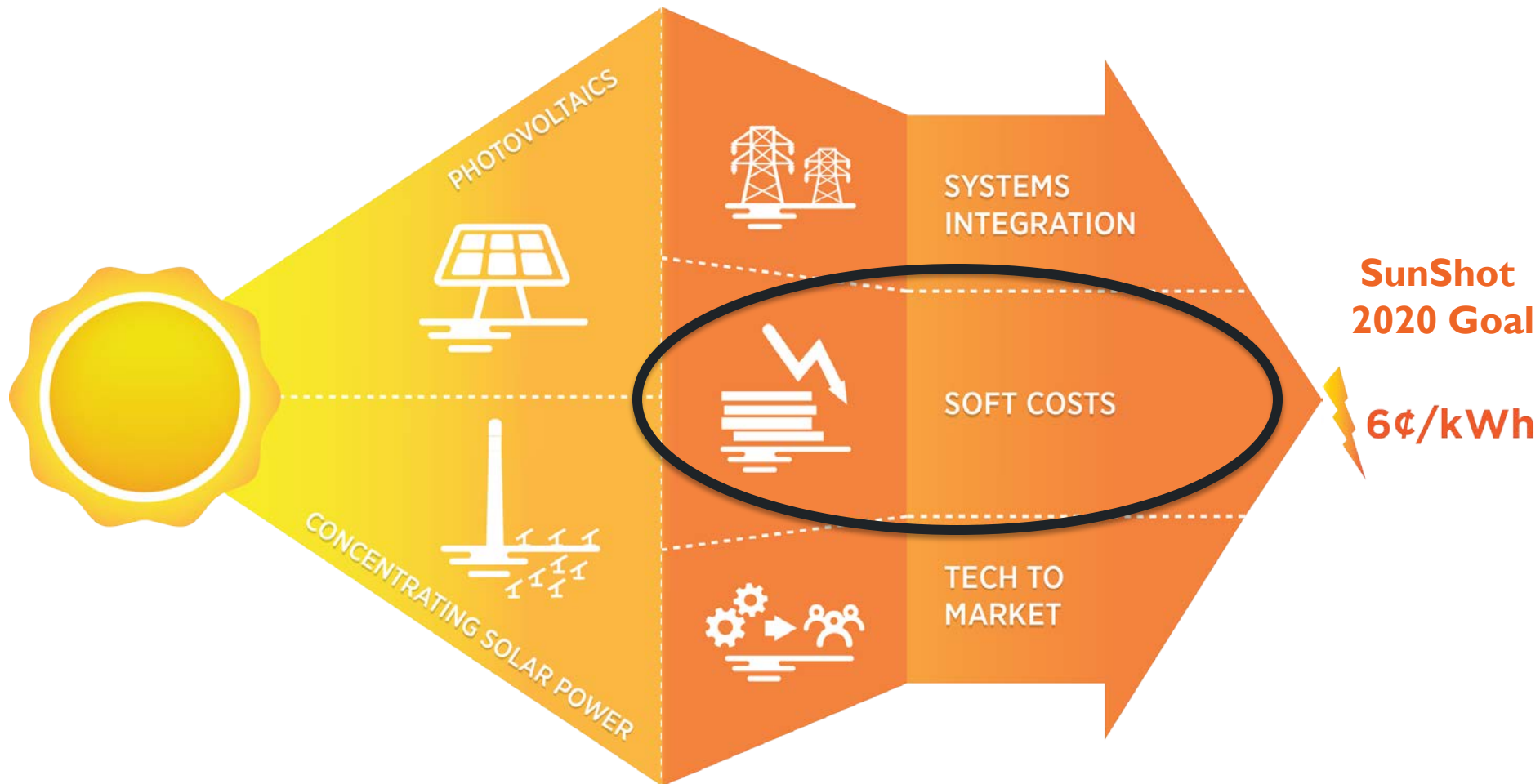
## III. Additional Details

- 1) Registration Requirements
- 2) Statement of Substantial Involvement
- 3) Cost Sharing



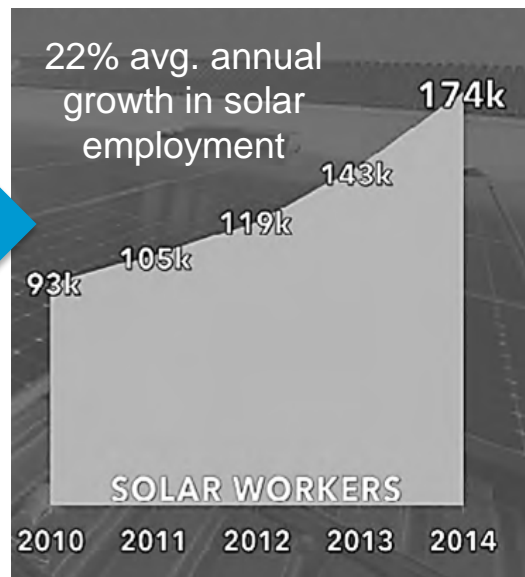
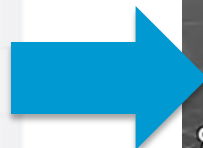
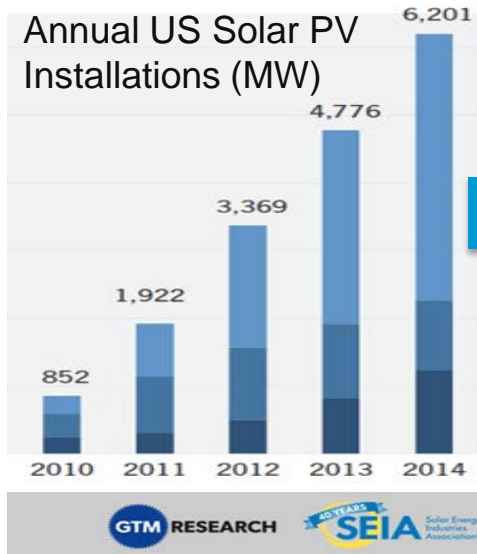
# I. CONTENT OVERVIEW

# SunShot Initiative



# Solar Industry Growth Leading to Impressive Job Growth

- 6.2 GW installed
- 30% growth in PV installations



- 31,000 new jobs added in 2014
- 20% expected job growth in 2015

*National Solar Jobs Census 2014, The Solar Foundation, January 2015*

## ...but, workforce training gaps can slow industry expansion

- 77% of all employers reported difficulty finding employees
- Difficulty hiring has limited 68% of solar employers' ability to grow

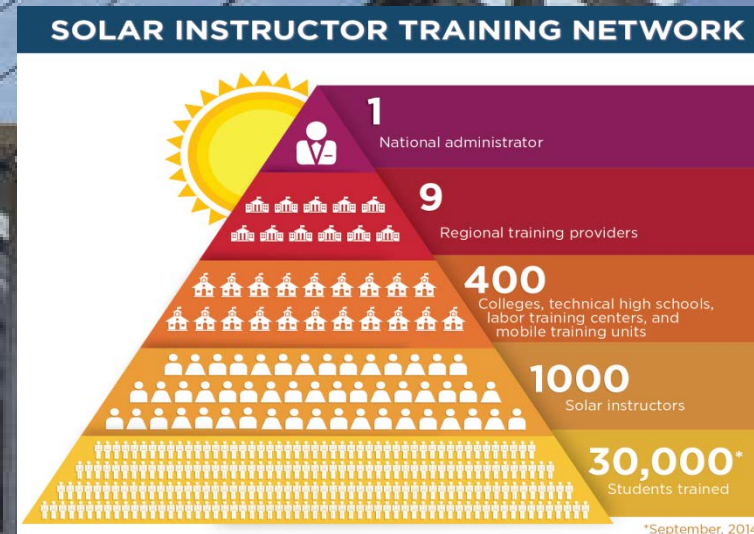
Why?

- 47% - applicants had a lack of technical skills and abilities
- 18% - applicants' lack of credentials

# Builds on Previous SunShot Training & Professional Programming



- NREL Solar Access to Public Capital
- Sandia PV Value Tool (Real Estate Valuation)





# Solar Transactions Require Trained Professionals



**Policy and Regulatory Environment:**  
PUCs, Regulators, State Legislators

Basic Information

## Related Professions



Code  
officials



Real  
estate



Fire-  
fighters



Investors,  
Appraisers



Insurers,  
Bankers

Continuing Education  
& Training

## Primary Solar Network

- Installers
- Project Developers
- Power providers
- Utilities



Credentials, Training & Higher Ed

## 2) Topic Areas

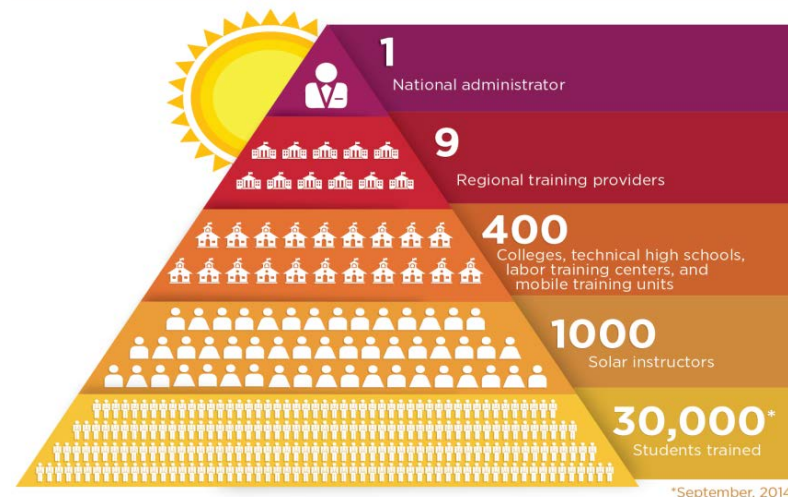
**The FOA has three topic areas :**

<b>Topic Area</b>	<b>Anticipated number of awards</b>	<b>Anticipated award amounts</b>	<b>Total funding (in millions)</b>
<b>1. Solar Workforce Training</b>	2-3	\$1 - 4	\$5
<b>2. Related Professions</b>	2-8	\$0.2 - 3	\$5
<b>3. GEARED</b>	1-3	\$0.5 - 2	\$2
<b>TOTAL</b>	5-14		\$12

# Topic 1 - Solar Workforce Training

## SOLAR INSTRUCTOR TRAINING NETWORK

- 2-3 awards, 2 years
- \$5M total, award amounts ranging from \$1-4 million
- Cost share encouraged but not required



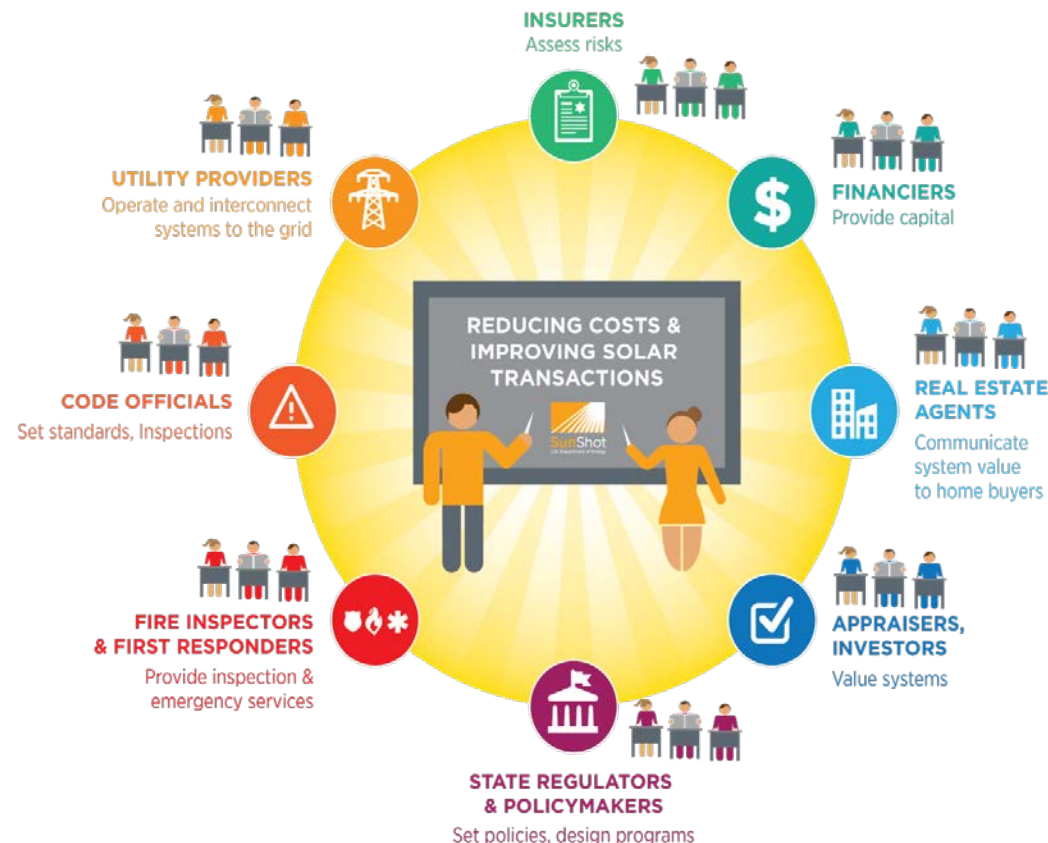
- Awardees will conduct one or more of the following activities:
  - Coordinate the Solar Training Network, which builds on the success of the Solar Instructor Training Network, to ensure the nation's solar training needs are being met with high standards
  - Facilitate the training of military personnel and veterans in solar jobs skills
  - Establish new personnel credentials (O&M and commercial scale)

## Topic 2 - Education and Materials for Related Professions

- 2-8 awards, 2 years,
- \$5M total, with awards ranging from \$200,000- \$3 million
- Cost share encouraged, but not required

Topic 2 seeks awardees to develop and disseminate solar reference materials and training to:

- professionals in fields related to solar transactions
- state regulators and policy makers





## Topic 3 - Expansion of GEARED network

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- 1-3 awards, 3 years
- \$2M total, with awards ranging from \$500,000 to \$2 million
- 20% cost share required
- Awardees will expand the Grid Engineering for Accelerated Renewable Energy Deployment consortia to additional utility, industry, and university partners, in order to ensure nationwide impacts, and provide training and workforce development resources where there is demand and interest.

Topic 3 is limited to current awardees under the GEARED FOA Topic 1.



# Non-Responsive Applications

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The following types of applications will be deemed nonresponsive and will not be reviewed or considered for an award:

- Institutions or trainers in the SITN seeking funds for local trainings, equipment, or train-the-trainer activities.
- GEARED awardees proposing activities that are already in the scope of work under current awards.
- Applications that seek funding primarily to support existing programs or fund already-designed programs. However, applicants can propose innovative and novel iterations if responsive to parameters in Section I.B of this FOA and that are solar-specific and nationally applicable.

# Non-Responsive Applications (Continued)

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- Applications with a primary focus on energy technologies other than solar.
- Proposals that aim to promote a specific hardware technology, or product.
- Applications that have the development of software or website tools as a primary focus. Software may be developed to supplement training materials and coordination activities during the project period, but will not be considered as a primary goal.

### 3) Award Information

<b>Total Amount to be Awarded</b>	<b>\$12,000,000*</b>
<b>Average Award Amount</b>	EERE anticipates average award amounts to be approx. \$1 million, while individual awards may range from \$200,000 to \$4 million
<b>Types of Funding Agreements</b>	Cooperative Agreements, Technology Investment Agreements, and/or Work Authorizations
<b>Period of Performance</b>	For Topics 1 & 2: Up to 24 months For Topic 3: Up to 36 months
<b>Cost Share Requirement</b>	For Topics 1 & 2: Cost Sharing Not Required; cost sharing is encouraged. For Topic 3: 20% Cost Share Required

\*Subject to the availability of appropriated funds



# Who's Eligible to Apply?

- For Topics 1 and 2, eligible applicants include:

1. Individuals
2. Domestic Entities
3. Foreign Entities
4. Incorporated Consortia
5. Unincorporated Consortia

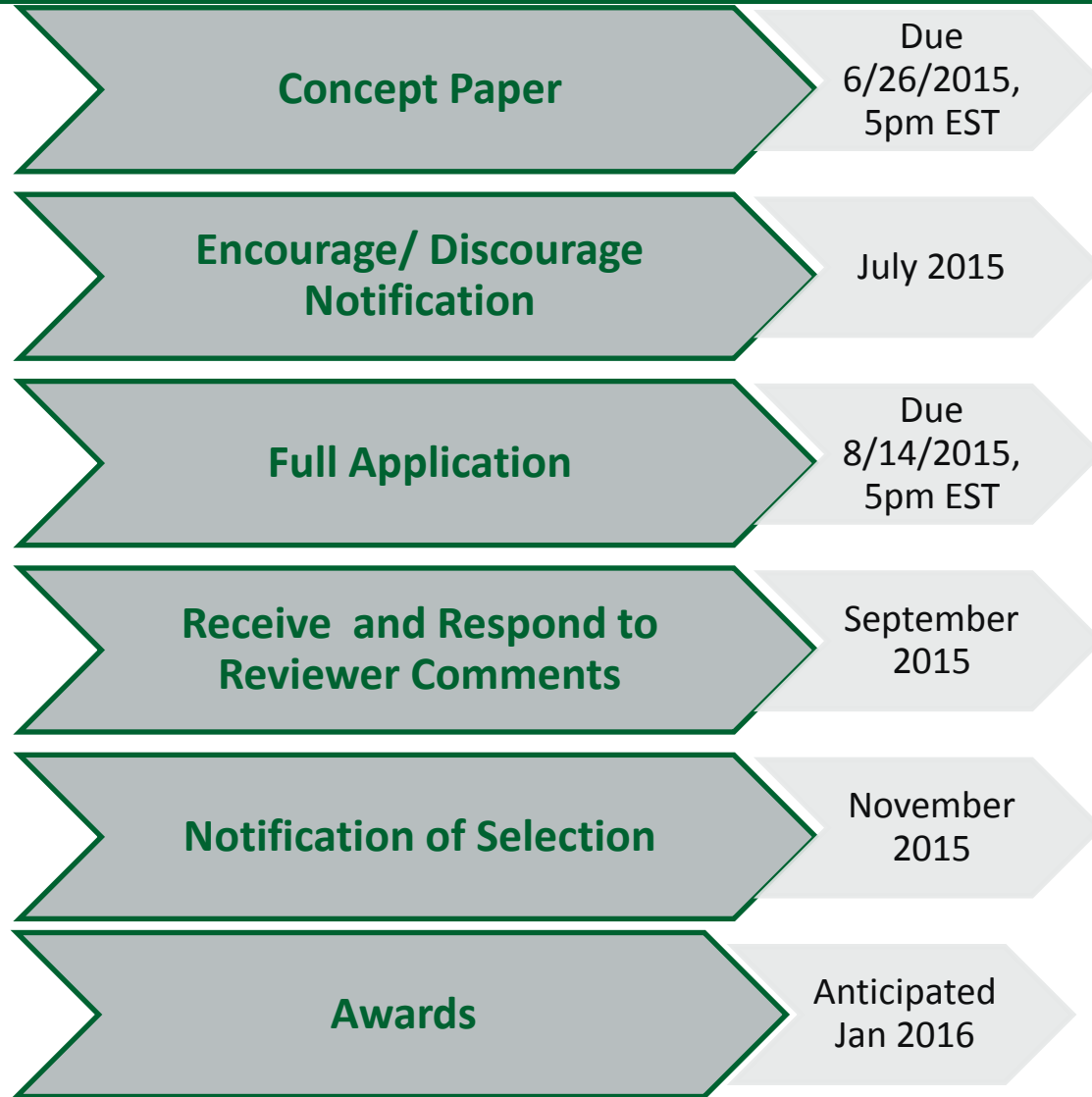
For more detail about each eligible applicant, please see Section III.A of the FOA for eligibility requirements

Nonprofit organizations described in Section 501(c)(4) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 that engaged in lobbying activities after December 31, 1995, are not eligible to apply for funding.

- For Topic 3, applicants are restricted to current awardees under GEARED (DE-FOA-0000856) Topic 1.

## II. APPLICATION PROCESS

# Timeline



# 1) Concept Papers

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- Applicants must submit a Concept Paper
  - Each Concept Paper must be limited to a single concept
- Total of 5 pages
  - Project description limited to 3 pages
  - Addendum of graphs, charts, or other data (limited to 2 pages)
  - See Section IV.C for all requirements
- Concept Papers must be submitted by June/26/2015, 5:00pm, ET, through EERE Exchange



# Concept Paper Review

EERE evaluates the Concept Papers based on the following technical review criteria

(See section V. of the FOA for full details)

## Criterion 1: Mission, Innovation, Impact (50%)

- This criterion involves consideration of the following factors:
- **Mission** – Extent to which the proposed project will enable the achievement of SunShot goals as pertains to reduction of soft costs and market barriers.
- **Innovation** - Extent to which the proposed project represents a significant improvement with respect to existing solutions.
- **Market Impact** – Extent to which the proposed project will result in quantifiable and measurably enhanced local solar markets.

# Concept Paper Review Continued

## Criterion 2: Project Feasibility and Team (50%)

This criterion involves consideration of the following factors:

- **Team** - The extent to which the capability of the Principal Investigator(s) and the proposed team, including sub-recipients and partnerships, can address all aspects of the proposed project with a good chance of success, including, but not limited to, qualifications, relevant expertise, and time commitment of the individuals on the team.
- **Plan** - Adequacy, value, and reasonableness of the schedule and quality of the plan to achieve stated project outcomes, while identifying and addressing the expected barriers and risks.
- **Measurable goals** - Extent to which the proposed activities in the proposal are validated through explicitly stated and measurable goals.

# Concept Paper Review

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- Following the Concept Paper Review, EERE provides applicants with:
  - “Encouraged” or “discouraged” notification, and
  - Reviewer comments

## 2) Full Applications

- The Full Application includes:
  - **Technical Volume:** The key technical submission - info relating to the technical content, project team members, etc.
  - **SF-424 Application for Federal Assistance:** The formal application signed by the authorized representative of the applicant.
  - **EERE 159:** a detailed budget and spend plan for the project.
  - **Summary for Public Release**
  - **Summary Slide**
  - **Administrative Documents:** E.g., FFRDC Authorization (if applicable), Disclosure of Lobbying Activities, etc

# Full Applications: Technical Volume Content

- **Technical Volume: the key technical component of the Full Application**

Content of Technical Volume	Suggested % of Technical Volume
Cover Page	
Project Overview	10%
Technical Description, Innovation and Impact	25%
Workplan	50%
Technical Qualifications and Resources	15%

# Full Application Eligibility Requirements

- Applicants must submit a Full Application by August 14, 2015 at 5pm ET
- Full Applications are eligible for review if:
  - The Applicant is an eligible entity Section III.A of FOA;
  - The Applicant submitted an eligible Concept Paper;
  - The Cost Share requirement is satisfied Section III.B of FOA;
  - The Full Application is compliant Section III.C of FOA; and
  - The proposed project is responsive to the FOA Section III.D of FOA
  - The Full Application meets any other eligibility requirements listed in Section III of the FOA.

## 4) Merit Review and Selection Process (Full Applications)

- The Merit Review process consists of multiple phases that each include an initial eligibility review and a thorough content review
- Rigorous reviews are conducted by reviewers that are experts in the subject matter of the FOA
- Ultimately, the Selection Official considers the recommendations of the reviewers, along with other considerations such as program policy factors (see Section V.C.1), to make the selection decisions



# Merit Review Criteria

## Criterion 1: Knowledge, Innovation, and Impact (40%)

- **Market Knowledge**

- Extent to which the applicant possesses *in-depth, current and data-driven insight* into the market's needs for solar training, credentialing, and/or education;
- Degree to which the application identifies critical training, credentialing, and/or education gaps and needs within the solar workforce or with targeted professions related to the solar workforce, and clearly explains the impact that gap is having and will have on the solar market.

- **Innovation -**

- Extent to which the proposed project represents *a significant improvement* to existing solar training, credentialing and/or education solutions;
- Extent to which the proposal addresses the needs of new and important stakeholders that have not heretofore been engaged in or had sufficient access to solar training.

# Merit Review Criteria

## Criterion 1 continued

- **Identifying Impact**

- The *potential impact* of the project on advancing the solar marketplace;
- The impact the training of the proposed stakeholders would have on the solar market (Topic 2);
- Extent to which the application's proposal significantly reduces solar soft costs;
- How well the project supports the topic area objectives and target specifications and metrics; and
- Extent to which the application specifically and convincingly demonstrates how the applicant will improve the current training/credentialing/education products and/or processes.

# Merit Review Criteria - Continued

## Criterion 2: Workplan, Risk Identification, and Deliverables (30%)

- **Approach and Workplan –**
  - Degree to which the approach and critical path have been clearly described and thoughtfully considered, and applicants provide a clear path to the desired outcome;
  - Degree to which the workplan includes regular market assessments and industry feedback mechanisms to ensure work conducted is relevant and in demand; and
  - Degree to which the task descriptions are clear, detailed, timely, and reasonable, resulting in a high likelihood that the proposed workplan will succeed in meeting the project goals
- **Identification of Risks and Mitigation Strategies –** Thorough discussion and demonstrated *understanding of the key risk areas* involved in the proposed work, and the *quality of the mitigation strategies* to address them.

## Criterion 2 continued

- **Evaluation, Metrics, and Deliverables** –
  - Extent to which the application outlines a regular evaluation process and plan for all task and subtask activities; and
  - Extent to which the proposed task and subtask activities in the workplan are baselined, tracked and verified through milestones and mid-point deliverables that are specific, measurable, aggressive, realistic and timely.
- **Market Transformation Plan** – Extent to which applicant has provided a viable and well-considered plan for *program sustainability and continued market transformation*, utilizing the resources and programs developed through this project, following the award period.

# Merit Review Criteria - Continued

## Criterion 3: Team Capabilities, Contributions, and Resources (30%)

- **Capabilities and Readiness:**

- The extent to which the capability of the Principal Investigator(s) and the proposed team to address all aspects of the proposed work with a good chance of success. Including, but not limited to qualifications, relevant expertise, and time commitment of the individuals on the team;
- The *capability of the Principal Investigator(s) and the proposed team*, including sub-recipients and partnerships, can address all aspects of the proposed project with a good chance of success in advancing local solar markets, including, but not limited to, qualifications, relevant expertise, and time commitment of the individuals on the team;

- **Contributions and Commitments -**

- Level of participation by project participants as evidenced by letter(s) of commitment and how well they are integrated into the Workplan;
- Extent to which the final team required to execute this project is *fully in place* (e.g., are there any key members that are “to be hired at a later date?”);

- **Budget:** Reasonableness of the budget and spend plan for meeting objectives.

# Replies to Reviewer Comments

- EERE provides applicants with reviewer comments
- Applicants are not required to submit a Reply - it is optional
- To be considered by EERE, a Reply must be submitted by the due date indicated upon release of the comments (anticipated in June) and submitted through EERE Exchange
- Content and form requirements:

Section	Page Limit	Description
Text	2 pages max	Applicants may respond to one or more reviewer comments or supplement their Full Application.
Optional	1 page max	Applicants may use this page however they wish; text, graphs, charts, or other data to respond to reviewer comments or supplement their Full Application are acceptable.

## 4) Pre-Selection Interviews

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- After Merit Review of Full Applications, EERE may invite one or more applicants to participate in Pre-Selection Interviews
- All interviews will be conducted in the same format
- EERE will not reimburse applicants for travel and other expenses relating to the Pre-Selection Interviews, nor will these costs be eligible for reimbursement as pre-award costs. In addition costs may not be added any current DOE awards.
- Participation in Pre-Selection Interviews with EERE does not signify that applicants have been selected for award negotiations



### III. ADDITIONAL DETAILS

# 1) Registration Requirements

- To apply to this FOA, Applicants must register with and submit application materials through EERE Exchange: <https://eere-Exchange.energy.gov>
- Obtain a “control number” at least 24 hours before the first submission deadline
- Although not required to submit an Application, the following registrations must be complete to receive an award under this FOA:

Registration Requirement	Website
DUNS Number	<a href="http://fedgov.dnb.com/webform">http://fedgov.dnb.com/webform</a>
SAM	<a href="https://www.sam.gov">https://www.sam.gov</a>
FedConnect	<a href="https://www.fedconnect.net">https://www.fedconnect.net</a>
Grants.gov	<a href="http://www.grants.gov">http://www.grants.gov</a>

# Means of Submission

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- Concept Papers, Full Applications, and Replies to Reviewer Comments must be submitted through EERE Exchange at <https://eere-Exchange.energy.gov>
  - EERE will not review or consider applications submitted through other means
- The Users' Guide for Applying to the Department of Energy EERE Funding Opportunity Announcements can be found at <https://eere-Exchange.energy.gov/Manuals.aspx>

# Key Submission Points

- Check entries in EERE Exchange
  - Submissions could be deemed ineligible due to an incorrect entry
- EERE strongly encourages Applicants to submit 1-2 days prior to the deadline to allow for full upload of application documents and to avoid any potential technical glitches with EERE Exchange
- Make sure you hit the submit button
  - Any changes made after you hit submit will un-submit your application and you will need to hit the submit button again
- For your records, print out the EERE Exchange Confirmation page at each step, which contains the application's Control Number

## 2) Statement of Substantial Involvement

EERE has substantial involvement in work performed under Awards made following this FOA. EERE has substantial involvement in the direction and redirection of the technical aspects of the project as a whole. Substantial involvement includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- EERE shares responsibility with the Recipient for the management, control, direction, and performance of the Project.
- EERE may intervene in the conduct or performance of work under this Award for programmatic reasons. Intervention includes the interruption or modification of the conduct or performance of project activities.
- EERE may redirect or discontinue funding the Project based on the outcome of EERE's evaluation of the Project at that the Go/No Go decision point.
- EERE participates in major project decision-making processes.

### 3) Cost Share Contributions

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- Contributions must be:
  - Specified in the project budget
  - Verifiable from the Prime Recipient's records
  - Necessary and reasonable for proper and efficient accomplishment of the project
- Every cost share contribution must be reviewed and approved in advance by the Contracting Officer and incorporated into the project budget before the expenditures are incurred

# Allowable Cost Share

- Cost Share must be allowable and must be verifiable upon submission of the Full Application
- Refer to the following applicable Federal cost principles:

Entity	Cost Principles
Educational Institutions	2 CFR Part 220
State, Local, and Indian Tribal Governments	2 CFR Part 225
Non-profit Organizations	2 CFR Part 230
For-profit Organizations	FAR Part 31 & 2 CFR Part 200.910



# Allowable Cost Share

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- Cash Contributions
  - May be provided by the Prime Recipient, Subrecipients, or a Third Party
  - All subrecipient and third part cost share must be supported by a letter of commitment.
- In-Kind Contributions
  - Can include, but are not limited to: personnel costs, indirect costs, facilities and administrative costs, rental value of buildings or equipment, and the value of a service, other resource, or third party in-kind contribution

# Unallowable Cost Share

- The Prime Recipient may not use the following sources to meet its cost share obligations including, but not limited to:
  - Revenues or royalties from the prospective operation of an activity beyond the project period
  - Proceeds from the prospective sale of an asset of an activity
  - Federal funding or property
  - Expenditures reimbursed under a separate Federal Technology Office
  - The same cash or in-kind contributions for more than one project or program

# Questions

- Questions about this FOA? Email [STEP@ee.doe.gov](mailto:STEP@ee.doe.gov)
  - All Q&As related to this FOA will be posted on EERE Exchange
  - EERE will attempt to respond to a question within 3 business days, unless a similar Q&A has already been posted on the website
- Problems logging into EERE Exchange or uploading and submitting application documents with EERE Exchange? Email EERE-ExchangeSupport@hq.doe.gov.
  - Include FOA name and number in subject line
- All questions asked during this presentation will be posted on EERE Exchange

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Thank you!

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