



Community Energy Innovation Prize Round 2



OFFICIAL RULES (Round 2): CONCEPT Phase

January 2025



Preface

The U.S. Department of Energy’s Community Energy Innovation Prize Round 2 will be governed by 15 U.S.C. §3719 and this Official Rules document. This is not a procurement under the Federal Acquisitions Regulations and will not result in a grant or cooperative agreement under 2 CFR 200. The prize administrator reserves the right to modify this Official Rules document if necessary and will publicly post any such notifications as well as notify registered prize participants.

The following table describes changes that may be implemented on this rules document.

Date	Modification



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1 Executive Summary

The U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) is launching a second iteration of the Community Energy Innovation Prize. The first round of this competition (August 2023 to December 2024) offered a prize of almost \$7.5 million to teams conducting clean energy and manufacturing projects in their local communities. This second round is an opportunity for a new cohort of communities to compete for federal funding to address local issues on clean energy, manufacturing/materials, and transportation efficiency and electrification. The prize is jointly sponsored by three offices within DOE's Office of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy (EERE): the Integrated Strategies Office (ISO), the Advanced Materials and Manufacturing Office (AMMTO), and the Vehicle Technologies Office (VTO).

Through this prize, DOE seeks to identify and support:

- Organizations that are community-centric and have experience in successfully engaging with historically underrepresented communities to address energy challenges and implement clean energy technologies¹
- Organizations that promote clean energy and environmental initiatives and demonstrate strong community ties
- Organizations that can use their experience to serve as bridges between DOE and historically underrepresented communities
- Clean energy grassroots innovation and in-community coalitions related to technology advancement and solutions in climate and clean energy, with a focused impact on historically underrepresented communities.

This document describes the rules and review criteria for the first phase of the prize, the CONCEPT Phase. The rules for the following prize phases will be released a later date, coinciding with the announcement of winners of the CONCEPT Phase and the opening of the subsequent phase, the PROGRESS Phase. Similarly, the rules for the IMPACT Phase will be released at a later date, coinciding with the announcement of the winners of the PROGRESS Phase.

1.1 Prizes

This prize offers a total of \$8.42 million in cash prizes, intended to support clean energy innovation and entrepreneurship in historically underrepresented communities. Competitors can participate in one of three tracks: the Clean Energy Ecosystem Track, the Manufacturing Ecosystem Track, or the Vehicles Ecosystem Track, each of which has distinct goals and submission requirements.

¹ "Underrepresented" refers to populations sharing a particular characteristic, as well as geographic communities, that are shown to have been systematically denied a full opportunity to participate in aspects of economic, social, and civic life, as exemplified by communities that have been denied fair, just, and impartial treatment. These communities may include women; persons with disabilities; persons who live in rural areas; persons otherwise adversely affected by persistent poverty or inequality; veterans; members of religious minorities; Black, Latino, Indigenous, and Native American persons; Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders; other persons of color; and lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ+) persons.



Track	Clean Energy Ecosystem Track	Manufacturing Ecosystem Track	Vehicles Ecosystem Track
Prize Pool	\$3.22 million cash prize pool	\$2.6 million cash prize pool	\$2.6 million cash prize pool
CONCEPT Phase Prizes	Up to 12 cash prizes of \$75,000 each and in-kind mentorship services	Up to 10 cash prizes of \$100,000 each and in-kind mentorship services	Up to 10 cash prizes of \$100,000 each and in-kind mentorship services
PROGRESS Phase Prizes	Up to 12 cash prizes of \$75,000 each and in-kind mentorship services	Up to 10 cash prizes of \$100,000 each and in-kind mentorship services	Up to 10 cash prizes of \$100,000 each and in-kind mentorship services
IMPACT Phase Prizes	Up to 12 cash prizes of \$10,000 each	Up to 10 cash prizes of \$10,000 each	Up to 10 cash prizes of \$10,000 each
GRAND PRIZE	Total cash prize pool of up to \$1,300,000 to be distributed among GRAND PRIZE winners	Total cash prize pool of up to \$500,000 to be distributed among GRAND PRIZE winners	Total cash prize pool of up to \$500,000 to be distributed among GRAND PRIZE winners

Clean Energy Ecosystem, Manufacturing Ecosystem, and Vehicles Ecosystem Tracks:

- In the first phase of the prize, the CONCEPT Phase, competitors can win up to \$100,000. They will develop and submit Impact Plans describing their team and partners, the proposed activities, a budget, and the communities they intend to work with. These submissions will be reviewed by DOE and external experts.
- During the second phase, the PROGRESS Phase, competitors can win up to an additional \$100,000. The winning competitors from the CONCEPT Phase will implement the planned community activities outlined in their Impact Plan and report on their progress. Competitors that demonstrate progress will each be eligible to win the PROGRESS Phase cash prize. If competitors fail to submit required materials and/or do not demonstrate progress, competitors will not be eligible for the PROGRESS Phase cash prize and will not be eligible to continue in the IMPACT Phase.
- During the third phase, the IMPACT Phase, competitors will continue to implement and complete the activities outlined in their Impact Plan. Competitors that successfully complete their Impact Plan activities will be reviewed and selected to participate in the Grand Prize presentation.
- At the end of the IMPACT Phase, competitors will be able to present their activities and measurable impacts they were able to achieve during the prize, share their plans for the future,



and compete for a portion of the final GRAND PRIZE. Teams will each receive a \$10,000 cash prize for competing in the IMPACT Phase (this fund may offset travel costs for the final event), alongside any potential winnings from the GRAND PRIZE pool. All IMPACT Phase prize funds will be paid out after the final event.

In addition to prize awards, winning competitors in all three tracks will receive in-kind mentorship (through Power Connectors; see Section 2.4.1) and other support services, valued at approximately \$400,000 in total across all competitors.

The rules for the subsequent phases, the PROGRESS and IMPACT Phases, will be released along with the announcement of CONCEPT and PROGRESS Phase prize winners in August 2025.

1.2 Important Dates

	Clean Energy, Manufacturing, and Vehicles Ecosystem Tracks
CONCEPT Phase Submissions Open	January 15, 2025
CONCEPT Phase Submissions Close	June 20, 2025
CONCEPT Phase Winner Awards and PROGRESS Phase Opens	August 8, 2025 (anticipated)
PROGRESS Phase Closes	February 6, 2026 (anticipated)
PROGRESS Phase Winner Awards and IMPACT Phase Opens	March 20, 2026 (anticipated)
IMPACT Phase Closes	January 25, 2027 (anticipated)
IMPACT Phase Winner Awards	April 6, 2027 (anticipated)
Final Event (In Person) and GRAND PRIZE Winner Awards	May 11, 2027 (anticipated)

All dates are subject to change. All submissions are due at 5 p.m. ET on the deadline noted.

1.3 Eligibility and Competitors

Competitors are encouraged to form multidisciplinary teams and partnerships to bring a range of perspectives to their work. The HeroX platform (<https://www.herox.com/CommunityEnergyInnovation-round2>) provides a space where parties interested in collaboration can post information about themselves and learn about others who are interested in competing in this prize.

Competitors can submit separately to each prize track but must submit distinct materials with the appropriate activities and budget for each track. If a duplication of scope is noted and the duplicates are meritorious, the prize administrator will work with DOE and the prize judge(s) to make a selection



between those submissions. Competitors may be selected as a winner for none, one, or multiple prize tracks. Competitors may not compete with multiple projects within a single track.

DOE reserves the right to place competitors into a different track from the one to which they originally applied, based on the subject matter and content of their application. For example, a competitor who originally applies to the Clean Energy Ecosystem Track but whose application is deemed to have a manufacturing focus may be placed in the Manufacturing Ecosystem Track during the review process.

1.3.1 Eligibility Requirements

The following are the eligibility requirements for all competitors in this prize. Only submissions relevant to the prize objectives laid out in Section 2.2 of this document will be considered. The prize administrator has the right to refuse any submission for incompleteness or unresponsiveness to the prize objectives.

This competition is open only to individuals; private entities (for-profits and nonprofits); nonfederal government entities such as states, counties, Tribes, and municipalities; and academic institutions, subject to the following requirements:

- An individual prize competitor (who is not competing as a member of a group) must be a U.S. citizen or permanent resident.
- A group of individuals competing as one team may win, provided that the online account holder of the submission is a U.S. citizen or permanent resident. Individuals competing as part of a team are eligible to participate if they are legally authorized to work in the United States.
- Private entities must be incorporated in and maintain a primary place of business in the United States.
- Academic institutions must be based in the United States.
- DOE employees, employees of sponsoring organizations, members of their immediate families (e.g., spouses, children, siblings, or parents), and persons living in the same household as such persons, whether or not related, are not eligible to participate in the prize.
- Individuals who worked at DOE (federal employees or support service contractors) within six months prior to the submission deadline of any contest are not eligible to participate in any prize contests in this program.
- Federal entities and federal employees are not eligible to participate in any portion of the prize.
- DOE national laboratory employees cannot compete in the prize.
- Entities and individuals publicly banned from doing business with the U.S. government, such as entities and individuals debarred, suspended, or otherwise excluded from or ineligible for participating in federal programs, are not eligible to compete.



- Individuals participating in a foreign government talent recruitment program² sponsored by a country of risk³ and teams that include such individuals are not eligible to compete.
- Entities owned by, controlled by, or subject to the jurisdiction or direction of a government of a country of risk are not eligible to compete.
- To be eligible, an individual authorized to represent the competitor must agree to and sign the following statement upon registration with HeroX:

I am providing this submission package as part of my participation in this prize. I understand that the information contained in this submission will be relied on by the federal government to determine whether to issue a prize to the named competitor. I certify under penalty of perjury that the named competitor meets the eligibility requirements for this prize competition and complies with all other rules contained in the official rules document. I further represent that the information contained in the submission is true and contains no misrepresentations. I understand false statements or misrepresentations to the federal government may result in civil and/or criminal penalties under 18 U.S.C. § 1001 and § 287, and 31 U.S.C. §§ 3729-3733 and 3801-3812.

Competitors participating in the Manufacturing Ecosystem Track must include at least one organization connected to manufacturing. This organization can be but is not limited to being a local manufacturer, a manufacturing-specific trade group, association, union, or another entity that can reasonably represent the interests of the manufacturing sector.

Competitors participating in the Vehicles Ecosystem Track are highly encouraged to include or partner with at least one Clean Cities and Communities (CC&C) coalition.⁴ CC&C is a DOE partnership to advance clean transportation nationwide. More than 75 DOE-designated CC&C coalitions work locally in urban, suburban, and rural communities to strengthen the nation's environment, energy security, and economic prosperity.

² Foreign Government-Sponsored Talent Recruitment Program is defined as an effort directly or indirectly organized, managed, or funded by a foreign government, or a foreign government instrumentality or entity, to recruit science and technology professionals or students (regardless of citizenship or national origin, or whether having a full-time or part-time position). Some foreign government-sponsored talent recruitment programs operate with the intent to import or otherwise acquire from abroad, sometimes through illicit means, proprietary technology or software, unpublished data and methods, and intellectual property to further the military modernization goals and/or economic goals of a foreign government. Many, but not all, programs aim to incentivize the targeted individual to relocate physically to the foreign state for the above purpose. Some programs allow for or encourage continued employment at United States research facilities or receipt of federal research funds while concurrently working at and/or receiving compensation from a foreign institution, and some direct participants not to disclose their participation to U.S. entities. Compensation could take many forms including cash, research funding, complimentary foreign travel, honorific titles, career advancement opportunities, promised future compensation, or other types of remuneration or consideration, including in-kind compensation.

³ DOE has designated the following countries as foreign countries of risk: Iran, North Korea, Russia, and China. This list is subject to change.

⁴ <https://cleancities.energy.gov/coalitions/locations/>



CONCEPT Phase Eligibility

- Please see eligibility requirements above.

PROGRESS Phase Eligibility

- Only winners of the CONCEPT Phase are eligible to compete in the PROGRESS Phase.

IMPACT Phase Eligibility

- Only winners of the PROGRESS Phase are eligible to compete in the IMPACT Phase.

2 Background

EERE supports Research, Development, Demonstration, and Deployment (RDD&D) of renewable energy, energy efficiency, and advanced manufacturing technologies that enable clean energy technology. Within EERE, ISO accelerates development of innovative energy solutions; AMMTO supports a globally competitive U.S. manufacturing sector that accelerates the adoption of innovative materials and manufacturing technologies in support of a clean, decarbonized economy; and VTO funds RDD&D of new, efficient, and clean mobility options that are affordable for all Americans while maintaining transportation service quality and safety.

DOE funds RDD&D activities in energy technologies through its 17 national laboratories and in academic institutions, private sector companies, community-based organizations, state and local governments, and more through a variety of competitive solicitations. In addition to funding research and technology development, DOE programs support building and sustaining an innovation ecosystem for energy technologies, including early career and workforce development, entrepreneurial programs and resources for individuals and organizations, and support for communities and regions. Achieving these program goals will require a combination of innovative solutions and acceleration of the deployment and implementation of energy technologies, policies, and processes.

In October 2022, experts published the *National Strategy for Advanced Manufacturing*,⁵ which presents a vision for United States leadership in advanced manufacturing that will grow the economy, create jobs, enhance environmental sustainability, strengthen supply chains, ensure national security, and improve healthcare. The strategy highlights the need to engage with historically underrepresented communities and to address social and structural barriers for underrepresented groups.

In January 2023, the Departments of Energy, Transportation, Housing and Urban Development, and the Environmental Protection Agency released the *U.S. National Blueprint for Transportation Decarbonization*,⁶ a landmark interagency framework of strategies and actions to remove all emissions

⁵ <https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/National-Strategy-for-Advanced-Manufacturing-10072022.pdf>

⁶ <https://www.energy.gov/eere/us-national-blueprint-transportation-decarbonization-joint-strategy-transform-transportation>



from the transportation sector by 2050. The blueprint offers a whole-of-government approach to addressing these challenges.

Improvements are needed to make the clean energy innovation ecosystem more inclusive and accessible to individuals from groups historically underrepresented in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) and to historically underrepresented communities. Through this prize, DOE aims to support efforts by community-centric organizations and groups who have been historically underrepresented in federal clean energy investments.

2.1 The Prize

DOE has released a series of prizes and solicitations providing technical and financial assistance to enable an entrepreneurial innovation ecosystem⁷ in climate and energy technologies.

Providing access to affordable energy and developing the clean energy workforce are priorities for DOE. DOE is taking a number of proactive steps to address the structural barriers to entry into its funding opportunities and other forms of assistance. DOE released a request for information on Inclusive Innovation and Entrepreneurship in Climate Technology⁸ and held the [Inclusive Innovation and Entrepreneurship Roundtable with the Pacific Northwest National Laboratory](#) in June 2021.⁹ These efforts characterized the programmatic, operational, and other internal measures that DOE could implement to remove existing structural barriers. The goals of this prize and its preceding versions are informed in part by responses received to the request for information and feedback from the roundtable.

AMMTO, one of EERE's technology-specific offices, supports a globally competitive U.S. manufacturing sector that accelerates the adoption of innovative materials and manufacturing technologies in advancement of a clean, decarbonized economy. Communities are central to that effort as hosts of the nation's manufacturing, as primary beneficiaries of a clean and decarbonized energy sector, and as key stakeholders informing the office's work. As part of the Community Energy Innovation Prize, AMMTO is sponsoring the Manufacturing Ecosystem Track to support the advancement of the clean energy manufacturing innovation ecosystem within historically underrepresented communities.

The Manufacturing Ecosystem Track aims to support several of the objectives of the *National Strategy for Advanced Manufacturing*, including:

1. Expand the advanced manufacturing talent pool
2. Develop, scale, and promote advanced manufacturing education and training
3. Strengthen connections between employers and educational organizations
4. Enhance supply chain interconnections

⁷ The innovation ecosystem is defined as “the evolving set of actors, activities, and artifacts, and the institutions and relations, including complementary and substitute relations, that are important for the innovative performance of an actor or a population of actors” (Grandstrand, Ove and Holgersson, Marcus. 2020. “Innovation Ecosystems: A Conceptual Review and a New Definition.” *Technovation* 90-91(2020) 102098. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.technovation.2019.102098>).

⁸ <https://www.energy.gov/eere/water/past-funding-opportunity-inclusive-innovation-and-entrepreneurship-climate-technology>

⁹ <https://www.pnnl.gov/events/inclusive-innovation-and-entrepreneurship-roundtable>



5. Expand efforts to reduce manufacturing supply chain vulnerabilities
6. Strengthen and revitalize advanced domestic manufacturing ecosystems.

Successful clean energy manufacturing innovation ecosystems will coordinate stakeholders, activities, and resources to bolster regional and national clean energy capacity and manufacturing through the adoption of novel processes and materials. AMMTO seeks to support the development of clean energy manufacturing innovation ecosystems through programs that address barriers in early-stage technology development and adoption by cultivating entrepreneurial talent, increasing funding access, connecting developers and customers, and supporting industrywide initiatives.¹⁰

VTO, another EERE technology-specific office, will play a leading role in decarbonizing the transportation sector by driving innovation and deploying clean transportation technologies, all while maintaining transportation service quality and safety. Within VTO, the Technology Integration Program supports the demonstration and deployment of new technology at the community level, including alternative fuels, workforce development and training, and other efficient advanced technologies that can reduce transportation energy costs for businesses and consumers. CC&C is DOE partnership within the Technology Integration Program to advance clean transportation nationwide. More than 75 DOE-designated CC&C coalitions work locally in urban, suburban, and rural communities to strengthen the nation's environment, energy security, and economic prosperity.

VTO created an implementation plan for maximizing benefits to historically underrepresented communities, with three main areas: (1) improving the competitive financial assistance process to address barriers; (2) expanding reporting processes and metrics measurement capabilities for funded projects and partnerships; and (3) implementing a capacity-building initiative for CC&C coalitions, in collaboration with DOE national laboratories and transportation subject matter experts. Through this initiative, DOE provides CC&C coalitions with training, resources, and funding to pursue projects that prioritize community engagement and include underrepresented communities as critical partners. DOE also launched a cohort pilot that provided funding for 17 coalitions to hire community engagement liaisons. Each liaison acts as a key partner and bridge between their coalition and local community-based organizations that serve people who live in historically underrepresented communities. Coalitions participating in the pilot cohort have worked in-depth with local communities to produce community transportation action plans, which highlight particular communities' transportation-related needs and identify potential projects to address those needs.

VTO has also directly funded community engagement projects related to clean transportation projects through competitive financial assistance processes. In fiscal year 2022, VTO awarded \$22 million for 13 projects that invest in community-based organizations to codevelop community-driven plans with underrepresented communities across 16 states. VTO has also awarded numerous other projects that fund community engagement, outreach, technical assistance, and training in underrepresented communities around electric vehicles, electric vehicle charging infrastructure, and other transportation decarbonization solutions. Developing community-driven strategic plans that define community

¹⁰ See AMMTO's website for examples of additional programs: <https://www.energy.gov/eere/ammto/about-advanced-materials-manufacturing-technologies-office>



transportation energy goals and identify strategies that use transportation decarbonization technologies to meet community needs is an important foundational step before project implementation.

VTO is sponsoring the Community Energy Innovation Prize's Vehicles Ecosystem Track to continue the office's support for communities who have been historically underrepresented in developing and implementing community-driven transportation technology projects. VTO encourages prize submissions that build on the office's previously funded community engagement and strategic planning work. VTO recognizes that other community-driven planning efforts are also underway and welcomes prize submissions that reflect high-quality community engagement and innovative uses of transportation technologies to meet community needs.

Through the Community Energy Innovation Prize, DOE intends to serve as a "front door" to DOE clean energy funding programs and other federal funding opportunities to communities and organizations who have been historically underrepresented.

2.2 Prize Objectives

The Community Energy Innovation Prize aims to incentivize organizations working in the service of historically underrepresented communities to make progress toward clean energy, manufacturing, and vehicle technology implementation. The prize is designed to fund organizations for ongoing activities related to climate and clean energy that foster strong relationships and partnerships with historically underrepresented communities. Specifically, this prize seeks to enable and enhance business and technology incubation, acceleration, other community-based and university-based capacity building, innovation, and entrepreneurship in climate and clean energy technologies.

2.2.1 Historically Underrepresented Communities

Throughout this document, we use the term "historically underrepresented" in lieu of "disadvantaged" to more accurately represent communities we intend to reach. To be relevant to this prize, communities and organizations of interest may be disadvantaged and considered historically underrepresented.

The Office of Management and Budget's (OMB) Interim Implementation Guidance¹¹ defines a community as either: (1) geographic: a group of individuals living in geographic proximity (such as census tract) or (2) common condition: a geographically dispersed set of individuals (such as migrant workers or Native Americans), where either type of group experiences common conditions.

For the "geographic" definition of community, pursuant to the Interim Implementation Guidance and OMB guidance M-23-09,¹² DOE recognizes as disadvantaged those census tracts identified by the White House Climate and Economic Justice Screening Tool.¹³ Generally, a census tract that meets the threshold for: (1) environmental, climate, or other burdens and (2) an associated socioeconomic burden will be marked as disadvantaged. The screening tool considers the following eight categories of burden:

¹¹ M-21-28 (whitehouse.gov): <https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/M-21-28.pdf>

¹² M-23-09 (whitehouse.gov): https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2023/01/M-23-09_Signed_CEO_CPO.pdf

¹³ <https://screeningtool.geoplatform.gov/>



1. Climate change
2. Energy
3. Health
4. Housing
5. Legacy pollution
6. Transportation
7. Water and wastewater
8. Workforce development.

2.2.2 Community Energy Innovation Prize Goals

The goals of the Community Energy Innovation Prize support capacity building, innovation, entrepreneurship, and economic development related to clean energy, manufacturing, and clean transportation for historically underrepresented communities in the following areas:

- **Clean Energy Technology:** Fosters grassroots innovation ecosystems and/or deployments through activities focusing on community-centric networks and bottom-up solutions for sustainable development, based on the needs of the communities involved
- **Clean Energy Manufacturing:** Fosters manufacturing innovation ecosystems across government, industry, academia, national labs, and communities to address key challenges in the development and adoption of emerging materials and manufacturing technologies
- **Vehicles Technology:** Fosters the deployment of clean transportation technologies in a manner that promotes equitable access to clean transportation technologies, improved health and air quality outcomes, decreased transportation burden.

2.3 Anticipated Prize Impact

Meritorious prize submissions will demonstrate that the competitor's team or participating organization has the capability to successfully build capacity, form partnerships, and implement plans that will achieve one or more of the goals of this prize.

Successful competitors will not necessarily need to have significant expertise in "deep tech" support and incubation and/or in working with or being embedded in large research institutions. Rather, DOE seeks to identify and support organizations that are community-centric and have experience in successfully engaging historically underrepresented communities and/or in promoting energy-focused opportunities. Successful organizations will demonstrate strong community ties and build stakeholder relationships and will show how they can serve as bridges between DOE and communities and innovators with whom DOE has not previously engaged.

Additionally, DOE seeks to support and recognize clean energy grassroots innovation related to technology advancement from disciplines beyond science and engineering that accelerate clean energy technology development and adoption with a focused impact on historically underrepresented communities. This may include innovations in processes related to siting, financing, and community ownership of clean energy and climate solutions at the local or state level.



A key component of this prize is that competitors from all tracks will be able to participate in all the in-kind mentorship services, and they will be able to build connections with other competitors in the cohort and alumni of the prize through virtual meetings and in-person events. All competitors are expected to participate in peer networking sessions during the PROGRESS and IMPACT phases, with their participation incorporated into the evaluation process. These opportunities will enable the sharing of lessons learned and seed future collaborative community-centric clean energy innovation activities.

For competitors in the Clean Energy Ecosystem, Manufacturing Ecosystem, and Vehicles Ecosystem Tracks, it is expected that cash awards from the CONCEPT, PROGRESS, and IMPACT phases will enable the winning competitors to fund their proposed plans. Proposed plans may include activities such as initiating new programming, hiring for approximately one full-time-equivalent staff member, engaging with historically underrepresented communities in their regions, building relationships through workshops and other events, forming partnerships, purchasing equipment for clean energy deployments, providing technical support, facilitating connections with technical experts and academic institutions, and travel to in-person prize-related events. These are examples of potential activities, and competitors are encouraged to think creatively about specific activities that play to their strengths and serve their communities.

2.3.1 Clean Energy Ecosystem Track

Within the Clean Energy Ecosystem Track, DOE aims to support communities and organizations who have been historically underrepresented. The Clean Energy Ecosystem Track is intended to award prizes to projects that advance community-based clean energy programs from a wide range of clean energy initiatives, technologies, and areas of focus. Some examples of successful projects in the Community Energy Innovation Prize are:

- Accelerating microgrid deployment in rural and low-resourced communities that enables residents to take control of a clean energy future by installing rooftop solar and storage systems in businesses and community service centers
- Working with local businesses to install solar panels and batteries and create a resilient network, creating neighborhood food sites, cooling centers, and cell phone charging hubs and empowering local businesses to become first responders
- Using traditional principles of land stewardship for Native communities to create and identify technical assistance resources for renewable energy technologies and pilot a solar array at a community center
- Developing and building a culturally specific acceleration support ecosystem for clean energy innovators from underrepresented communities and accelerating start-up development and incubation, facilities for hands-on workforce training, and incubator and maker spaces.

Competitors in the Clean Energy Ecosystem Track of the Community Energy Innovation Prize are by no means limited to the types of projects listed above. These examples are illustrative of the breadth of activities carried out by successful competitors and may spur new ideas for competing teams in this prize.



2.3.2 Manufacturing Ecosystem Track

The Manufacturing Ecosystem Track, funded by AMMTO, aims to support communities and organizations that have been historically underrepresented and further the development of innovation ecosystems related to manufacturing. AMMTO describes an innovation ecosystem as an evolving set of stakeholders, resources, and activities (and the relationship and connections between them) that drive technological advancement. The clean energy manufacturing innovation ecosystem convenes stakeholders across government, industry, academia, national labs, and communities to address key challenges in the development and adoption of emerging materials and manufacturing technologies.

Successful competitors in this track will bring together public, private, and community stakeholders to address key barriers to advancing manufacturing innovation, business models, and market development. These projects may include manufacturing-related education and workforce development, entrepreneurship, resilient supply chains, circular economy development, or other goals related to clean energy manufacturing.

Competitors in the Manufacturing Ecosystem Track will be expected to participate in a series of peer learning activities alongside other competitors in this track. Once the CONCEPT award winners are selected, curriculum and programming will be tailored to their specific needs. Additionally, these events will serve to connect competitors to share challenges and successes. To be eligible for the grand prizes in the Manufacturing Ecosystem Track, competitors must develop resources for public dissemination. These resources can include lessons learned, best practices, planning guides, or other resources that serve to share knowledge with nonparticipating communities.

Hypothetical examples of successful projects include but are not limited to:

- A local technology incubator engages and partners with regional academic institutions and a nearby industry cluster to host a series of workshops to identify academic and research needs of participating entities and to establish a course or training series to collectively meet those needs (e.g., life cycle assessment courses to support the circular economy or training in supply chain management and digitization).
- An academic institute/organization develops a curriculum related to business development in clean energy manufacturing and/or other technical careers in clean energy manufacturing.
- A community-based organization engages and partners with a manufacturing entity to recruit and train individuals from historically underrepresented communities for high-paying jobs and careers in advanced and clean energy manufacturing.
- Regional community colleges and high schools partner with industry innovation centers, graduate schools, and manufacturers to establish new advanced manufacturing training and education programs. This may also involve acquiring equipment to train students in advanced manufacturing technologies and processes (e.g., a 3D printer to demonstrate and teach additive manufacturing concepts; other equipment to demonstrate smart manufacturing techniques).
- A multidisciplinary team comes together to identify efforts needed to transform the currently underrepresented community into a community that is welcoming to growth, innovation, and economic prosperity and begins to implement solutions to those needs.



- A local business incubator coordinates with regional clean energy manufacturers to explore recent supply chain vulnerabilities and then works with innovators and entrepreneurs to develop business plans for local production that increase the robustness of the regional clean energy supply chain.
- Regional manufacturers engage with other local entities to develop remanufacturing, reuse, and recycling opportunities for material byproducts.

2.3.3 Vehicles Ecosystem Track

Within the Vehicles Ecosystem Track, DOE aims to support historically underrepresented communities in developing and implementing clean transportation projects. The goal of this track is to foster clean transportation technology planning and/or deployment within underrepresented communities in a manner that aligns with community-identified transportation energy goals and advances DOE's priority to equitably decarbonize the transportation sector.

The objective of the Vehicles Ecosystem Track is to award prizes to projects and activities that plan for, increase access to and awareness of, and/or deploy clean transportation technologies in a manner that promotes equitable access to clean transportation technologies, improved health and air quality outcomes, decreased transportation burden, and other benefits, as described in section 2.2.1. DOE prefers projects and activities with the largest potential community benefits and transportation decarbonization impacts. DOE will consider a variety of fuel types (e.g., electricity, renewable natural gas, biodiesel, hydrogen), vehicle types (e.g., light-, medium-, and heavy-duty vehicles; e-bikes and e-scooters; nonroad vehicles), infrastructure (electric vehicle supply equipment in various use cases/for different kinds of vehicles, other alternative fuel infrastructure), and use cases (e.g., transit, car-share or other shared vehicles, commercial freight, other fleet vehicles, etc.) to be within scope as potential solutions for this prize.

Competitors participating in the Vehicles Ecosystem Track are highly encouraged to include or partner with at least one CC&C coalition.¹⁴ CC&C coalitions are uniquely positioned to support implementation of community-driven transportation decarbonization, to foster deep local connections, and to provide technical expertise. They also have access to robust training, technical assistance, and peer sharing opportunities through the CC&C partnership.

Competitors are also encouraged to review the *Spectrum of Community Engagement to Ownership*¹⁵ before applying. The spectrum includes the following developmental stages: (1) Inform, or provide the community with relevant information; (2) Consult, or gather input from the community; (3) Involve, or ensure community needs and assets are integrated into process and inform planning; (4) Collaborate, or ensure community capacity to play a leadership role in implementation of decisions; and (5) Defer To, or foster democratic participation and equity by bridging the divide between community and governance

¹⁴ <https://cleancities.energy.gov/coalitions/locations/>

¹⁵

https://d3n8a8pro7vhmx.cloudfront.net/facilitatingpower/pages/53/attachments/original/1596746165/CE_20_SPECTRUM_2020.pdf?1596746165



through community-driven decision-making. Competitors are encouraged to design projects and activities that perform community engagement at the Involve, Collaborate, or Defer To levels.

Examples of community-driven projects of interest include, but are not limited to:

- Developing and/or implementing a plan to ensure that historically underrepresented communities have access to affordable electric vehicle charging infrastructure that meets their transportation needs
- Partnering with a local community college that serves historically underrepresented communities to incorporate an electric vehicle repair or electric vehicle supply equipment installation curriculum and facilitate job placement
- Working with a transit or school bus fleet to identify bus or shuttle routes within historically underrepresented communities that are suitable for electric, hybrid-electric, or other alternative fuel vehicles, and pilot alternative-fuel vehicles along these routes
- Transitioning a municipal, Tribal, or other medium-duty or heavy-duty fleet (e.g. refuse collection vehicles, snowplows, other work trucks) that routinely runs a service route or performs work in historically underrepresented communities to cleaner alternative fuels, such as biodiesel, renewable natural gas, or electricity
- Developing an electric car-share program in collaboration with a historically underrepresented community to increase mobility and improve air quality within that community
- Creating an e-bike or e-scooter library in collaboration with a historically underrepresented community to increase mobility and improve air quality within that community
- Creating an outreach campaign to raise awareness about alternative fuel options in a historically underrepresented community, through methods such as ride and drive events, vehicle displays, dealership outreach, site visits and educational tours, and outreach to potential fueling infrastructure site hosts
- Other projects that promote clean transportation options in partnership with historically underrepresented communities.

Projects that design and/or deploy transportation infrastructure not directly pertaining to vehicles and or vehicle fueling and charging, such as sidewalks, bike lanes, and bus stops, are considered outside the scope of DOE and not of interest to this prize track. Projects should not duplicate plans, resources, tools, or other deliverables funded by DOE, DOE laboratories, or any other federal agency.

2.4 Competitor Support Mechanisms

To better enable competitors to be successful, the Community Energy Innovation Prize administrator is providing access to a network of supporters for competitors. Power Connectors, described below, is a competitor support mechanism formalized for competitors to ensure they are able to develop a high-quality submission or support the execution of their proposed activities.

Some of these training sessions and events may take place in person. Should competitors choose to attend these in-person events, they are expected to leverage the prize funds provided.



2.4.1 Power Connectors

Power Connectors support all competitors participating in the prize. The Power Connectors will provide equal, direct support including webinars, training, and networking sessions for the benefit of all competitors. Potential areas for support and training opportunities are identified in the following table, but this list is not intended to be comprehensive. A final list of these opportunities will be distributed as the prize evolves.

During the prize process, competitors may be asked for their input on the types of support that will be the most relevant to them. The support provided to competitors will be shaped around their needs.

Support Tasks	Detailed Execution
Outreach & Engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify and reach out to potential applicants for the CONCEPT Phase of the prize. The focus of this outreach will be on ensuring the pipeline of potential applicants grows beyond DOE and the National Renewable Energy Laboratory's existing networks. Improve the range and type of competitors developing submissions in the CONCEPT Phase of the prize.
Office Hours	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide feedback to competitors as they develop submissions in the CONCEPT Phase. This feedback is specifically input from a third party and does not represent the opinion of DOE or the National Renewable Energy Laboratory. This support does not include directly writing submissions or direct editing of drafts.
Regional Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In regions representative of the CONCEPT Phase winners, work with competitors to identify existing regional/place-based entrepreneurship or innovation hubs supporting historically underrepresented communities. Develop a map of the ecosystem of these regional/place-based entrepreneurship hubs. Collaboratively expand training and on-site programming to meet the needs of the winning competitors and their communities, leveraging the hubs' existing expertise and programs combined with Power Connector energy-specific expertise and relationships.
Targeted Training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In partnership with competitors, identify training session topics that would be the most impactful for the CONCEPT Phase winners and the community or communities they are supporting. Produce, amplify, and host information sessions, webinars, training sessions, workshops, matchmaking events, career fairs, and/or internship/apprenticeship programs. Host seminars featuring experts on topics such as clean energy manufacturing, clean energy development for community organizations, best practices for developing a strategic energy plan, grant/proposal writing, community engagement, or other topics of interest.
Networking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Host quarterly peer-to-peer workshops where CONCEPT Phase winners and other organizations who are focused on creating an inclusive energy ecosystem can discuss challenges and make connections with potential partners.



- Host a public showcase and networking event featuring the CONCEPT Phase winners, their projects, and any partnership opportunities.

Updates on training sessions, mentorship contacts, and office hours will be posted on the [HeroX platform](#) periodically and competitors are encouraged to leverage these opportunities.

3 Clean Energy Ecosystem Track Submission Requirements

3.1 Prizes

Prize Pool	\$3.22 million cash prize pool
CONCEPT Phase Prizes	Up to 12 cash prizes of \$75,000 each and in-kind mentorship services
PROGRESS Phase Prizes	Up to 12 cash prizes of \$75,000 each and in-kind mentorship services
IMPACT Phase Prizes	Up to 12 cash prizes of \$10,000 each
GRAND PRIZE	Total cash prize pool of up to \$1,300,000 to be distributed among GRAND PRIZE winners

Some training sessions and events may take place in person. Should competitors elect to attend the in-person final event, they are expected to leverage the funds provided in the IMPACT Phase.

3.2 How to Enter

Go to HeroX (<https://www.herox.com/CommunityEnergyInnovation-round2>) and follow the instructions for registering and submitting all required materials before the deadline in Section 3.3 or as displayed on the [HeroX](#) website.

Competitors can also form teams or find partners through the HeroX platform. In keeping with the goal of growing a community of innovators, competitors are encouraged to form multidisciplinary teams while developing their concept. The HeroX platform provides a space where parties interested in collaboration can post information about themselves and learn about others who are also interested in competing in this contest.



3.3 Important Dates

	Clean Energy Ecosystem Track
CONCEPT Phase Submissions Open	January 15, 2025
CONCEPT Phase Submissions Close	June 20, 2025
CONCEPT Phase Winner Awards and PROGRESS Phase Opens	August 8, 2025 (anticipated)
PROGRESS Phase Closes	February 6, 2026 (anticipated)
PROGRESS Phase Winner Awards and IMPACT Phase Opens	March 20, 2026 (anticipated)
IMPACT Phase Closes	January 25, 2027 (anticipated)
IMPACT Phase Winner Awards	April 6, 2027 (anticipated)
Final Event (In Person) and GRAND PRIZE Winner Awards	May 11, 2027 (anticipated)

All dates are subject to change. All submissions are due at 5 p.m. ET on the deadline noted.

3.4 What to Submit

The items in the following table constitute the submissions package for the Community Energy Innovation Prize and must be submitted through the HeroX platform. Each is described in more detail below the table. Competitors may provide multiple submission packages for review; however, each submission must be materially different in the content and topic to be considered. If multiple submissions from the same competitor are too similar, only the last submission received will be scored and considered for prizes.

The following items are required for each submission:

Item	Will Be Made Public ¹⁶	Scored Item
Cover Page	Yes	No
Summary Slide	Yes	No
3-Minute Video Pitch	Yes	Yes
Impact Plan	No	Yes

¹⁶ Competitors who do not want the impact plan or other documents to be made public will need to mark them according to the instructions in Appendix A (Section A.4).



3.4.1 Unscored, Public-Facing Submission Materials

Cover Page Content

The cover page, which is included in the final submission, will be made public. Competitors should list basic information about the submission, including:

1. Title
2. Team name
3. Short description
4. Link to 3-minute online video pitch
5. Key project members and/or partnering organizations (names, contacts, and links to their professional online profiles)
6. Location of community to benefit from the clean energy project (name of city, town, or unincorporated area)
7. Competitor’s city and state (this may or may not be different than the community to benefit from the clean energy project)
8. Goals of the prize the proposed project aims to achieve
9. Prize track that the competitor intends to compete in, e.g., Clean Energy Ecosystem Track, Manufacturing Ecosystem Track, or Vehicles Ecosystem Track.

Submission Summary Slide

Competitors must make a public-facing, one-slide submission summary that introduces their team and/or organization and their mission. There is no template, so competitors are free to present the information in any format. Any text must be readable in a standard printed page and a conference room projection and should be in at least 14-point font.

3.4.2 Scored Submission Items

The scored items in the CONCEPT Phase submission package include a 3-minute video pitch and an Impact Plan. Scored materials will be evaluated on how well they address scoring statements in the respective criterion; each statement (described below) will be scored from 0 to 5, as shown here:

0	1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree/ Does Not Address	Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Slightly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree/Fully Addresses

The following table explains how the scores for each submission will be calculated:

Scored Submission Items	Number of Scored Statements	Total Possible Points
3-Minute Video	3	15
Impact Plan		



Criterion 1: Team Experience in Engaging and Supporting Historically Underrepresented Communities and Promoting Clean Energy Development	3	15
Criterion 2: Proposed Activities and Goals Aligned to the Prize Award	3	15
Criterion 3: Resources and Capabilities to Implement Proposed Activities	3	15
TOTAL	12	60

3-Minute Video Pitch

Competitors must produce a 3-minute video that will help the reviewers and public understand the competitor, any partnering organizations, and the planned activities. Suggested content for the video is noted on the left side of the following table. The right side of the table includes the scored statements that the reviewers will use to evaluate submissions. Individual reviewers will assign a score between 0 and 5 for each scored statement after reviewing the project submission.

Competitors are encouraged to be creative and convey information in a fun and engaging way. Reviewers will focus on the content, not the quality, of the video production. Competitors should upload the video to a publicly accessible online platform (e.g., YouTube, Vimeo).

Scoring Criteria: 3-Minute Video Pitch	
<p>Suggested Content Competitor Provides</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An introduction to the team and any partnering organizations and relevant experience, qualifications, and capabilities that the competitor will use to complete the proposed project. • An introduction to the historically underrepresented community the competitor intends to work with and the community clean energy needs that the proposed project intends to effectively address. • A high-level description of the proposed project and anticipated impact within the historically underrepresented community or communities, should the project be selected. 	<p>Each Statement Scored on a 0–5 Scale</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The team and any partnering organizations possess relevant experience, qualifications, and capabilities to complete the proposed project. • The competitor has demonstrated an understanding of the historically underrepresented community they intend to work with and how the proposed project will be effective in addressing the community’s needs. • The proposed activities will advance clean energy innovation in a historically underrepresented community.



Impact Plan

Competitors must write a detailed Impact Plan in a narrative format describing their team/organization, planned activities, resources and capabilities, and anticipated impacts. A template will be made available on the HeroX platform to use in drafting the Impact Plan.¹⁷

The total length of the Impact Plan cannot exceed **5,000** words. Competitors may include up to **five** supporting visualizations or graphics. The Impact Plan must be submitted as a PDF via the HeroX platform along with the other submission documents. Information contained in hyperlinks to external sources will not be reviewed or considered by the reviewers or the judge.

The Impact Plan should describe the work competitors will do during the PROGRESS and IMPACT Phases that addresses the prize goals. All competitors selected in the CONCEPT Phase to receive the first set of \$75,000 cash prizes will be eligible to win the additional \$75,000 cash prize at the end of the PROGRESS Phase. To win \$75,000 in the PROGRESS Phase and to be eligible for the \$10,000 in the IMPACT Phase, competitors will need to show how they have made progress toward prize goals as described in the initial Impact Plan.

The initial Impact Plan should describe the competitor's plans throughout the duration of the prize until the end of the IMPACT Phase and metrics to measure progress toward and success in achieving one or more prize goals. Example metrics can include but are not limited to: jobs/internships created, clean energy programs/curriculum created, number of constituents (students, entrepreneurs, workers, etc.) supported through programming, partnerships formed (letters of commitment, memoranda of understanding, contracts, funding agreements, etc.), stakeholders engaged via a project activity, workshops/training conducted, number of clean energy deployments, energy benefits (e.g., cost savings), and external follow-on funding secured. IMPACT Phase award winners will be eligible to compete for a GRAND PRIZE cash pool of up to \$1,300,000 to be divided among the winners.

The following tables describe the content that the competitor should provide to successfully address each criterion. The right-side column contains the scored statements that the reviewers will be using for each of the criteria. Individual reviewers will assign a score between 0 and 5 for each scored statement after reviewing the project submission. The left-side column includes suggested content that addresses each criterion. The suggested content provided is not mandatory, and competitors will not be judged against it. Rather, these are examples of details to include to help guide responses to better address each scored statement; competitors are welcome to use other information as they see fit.

¹⁷ To assist teams, DOE is providing elective templates to illustrate the types of information needed to evaluate whether teams meet minimum requirements in the associated critical success factors. Teams are not required to use these templates and may submit using any form or format of their choosing. All submissions should address the substantive measures outlined in the template outlines and described in this Rules document.



Impact Plan Criterion 1: Team Experience in Engaging and Supporting Historically Underrepresented Communities and Promoting Clean Energy Development

Suggested Content Competitor Provides

- A description of the experience/expertise of the team in working with historically underrepresented communities and promoting clean energy development.
- A description of the successes and/or lessons learned of previous efforts engaging and working with historically underrepresented communities.
- A description of the community of interest for this prize, and the team’s connection to the community; this builds on the video introduction.

Each Statement Scored on a 0–5 Scale

- The team has adequate experience/expertise working with historically underrepresented communities and promoting clean energy development.
- The team has demonstrated success and/or described lessons learned of previous efforts engaging and working with historically underrepresented communities.
- The team has identified and has connections to the community they intend to work with as a part of this prize.

Impact Plan Criterion 2: Proposed Activities and Goals Aligned to the Prize Award

Suggested Content Competitor Provides

- A description of how the proposed activities work toward achieving at least one of the prize goals, stated in Section 2.2.2 of this document.
- A description of planned activities, metrics to measure, and milestones to complete as specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound (SMART) goals.
- An engagement and outreach plan the competitor will use to build trust and strengthen relationships and partnerships with community members and other relevant stakeholders.

Each Statement Scored on a 0–5 Scale

- The competitor’s proposed activities aim to address at least one of the prize goals.
- The competitor has clearly defined SMART goals that include planned activities, metrics to measure, and milestones to completion.
- The competitor has described an engagement and outreach plan that builds trust and strengthens relationships and partnerships with community members and other relevant stakeholders.



Impact Plan Criterion 3: Resources and Capabilities to Implement Proposed Activities	
<p>Suggested Content Competitor Provides</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A budget for the proposed activities that indicates how the prize funds will be allocated. • A description of staff resources that will be available to the competitor to achieve the proposed plan. • A description of additional staff, partners, resources, and capabilities the competitor seeks to add to carry out their proposed plan and strategies for obtaining them. 	<p>Each Statement Scored on a 0–5 Scale</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The description of proposed activities and associated budget is adequately detailed and indicates how prize funds will be allocated. • The staff resources that will be available to the competitor are adequate for achieving the proposed plan. • The competitor has demonstrated that they will have access to, or can obtain, the necessary staff, partners, resources, and capabilities to achieve their proposed plan.

3.5 Peer Learning and Shared Resources

Competitors selected to participate in the PROGRESS and IMPACT Phases will be able to participate in regular meetings with the prize team and other events intended to offer technical assistance and support to the competitors, as described in Section 2.4 of this document. The curriculum and programming of these events will be tailored to the competitors’ specific needs. Active participation in these events will be scored criteria for PROGRESS and IMPACT Phase prizes. These events will serve to connect competitors to share challenges and successes.

Additionally, to be eligible for the grand prizes, competitors must develop resources for public dissemination. These resources can include but are not limited to lessons learned, best practices, planning guides, or other resources that serve to share knowledge with nonparticipating communities.

3.6 How We Determine and Award Winners

The prize administrator screens all completed submissions and ensures that the competitors are eligible. Then the prize administrator, in consultation with DOE, assigns subject-matter-expert reviewers who independently score the content of each submission. The reviewers will be composed of federal and nonfederal subject matter experts with expertise in areas relevant to the competition. They will review the competitor’s submitted video pitches and Impact Plans according to the evaluation criteria described in Section 3.4.2.

3.6.1 Reviewer Panel Scoring

The scoring of submissions will proceed as follows:



1. Reviewers will review each submission (video pitch and Impact Plan) individually and assess the response from the competitor to each statement in the criteria described in the tables in Section 3.4.2.
2. Reviewers will score each statement 0–5, depending on the degree to which the reviewer agrees that the submission reflects the statement.
3. Each statement score will be added together to generate a total score for the submission, which can be up to 60 points, as described in Section 3.4.2.
4. The total scores from each reviewer will be averaged to produce a final score for the competing team/organization. This score will inform the judge’s decisions on prize awards.

3.6.2 Interviews

DOE may decide to interview a subset of competitors. The interviews would be held prior to the announcement of the winners and would serve to help clarify questions the reviewers may have. Participating in interviews is not required, and interviews are not an indication of a competitor’s likelihood to win.

3.6.3 Final Determination

DOE will designate a federal employee as the judge before the final determination of the winners. Final determination of the winners by the judge will take into account the reviewers’ feedback and scores, application of program policy factors, and the interview findings (if applicable).

3.6.4 Announcement

The prize administrator will notify the winners and request the necessary information to distribute the prizes. The prize administrator and DOE will publicly announce the winners.

3.7 Additional Terms and Conditions

See Appendix A for additional requirements. **COMPETITORS THAT DO NOT COMPLY WITH THE ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS IN APPENDIX A MAY BE DISQUALIFIED.**

4 Manufacturing Ecosystem Track Submission Requirements

4.1 Prizes

Prize Pool	\$2.6 million cash prize pool
CONCEPT Phase Prizes	Up to 10 cash prizes of \$100,000 each and in-kind mentorship services



PROGRESS Phase Prizes	Up to 10 cash prizes of \$100,000 each and in-kind mentorship services
IMPACT Phase Prizes	Up to 10 cash prizes of \$10,000 each
GRAND PRIZE	Total cash prize pool of up to \$500,000 to be distributed among GRAND PRIZE winners

Some training sessions and events may take place in person. Should competitors elect to attend the final event, they are expected to leverage the funds provided in the IMPACT Phase.

4.2 How to Enter

Go to HeroX (<https://www.herox.com/CommunityEnergyInnovation-round2>) and follow the instructions for registering and submitting all required materials before the deadline in Section 4.3 or as displayed on the [HeroX](#) website.

Competitors can also form teams or find partners through the HeroX platform. In keeping with the goal of growing a community of innovators, competitors are encouraged to form multidisciplinary teams while developing their concept. The HeroX platform provides a space where parties interested in collaboration can post information about themselves and learn about others who are also interested in competing in this contest.

4.3 Important Dates

	Clean Energy Ecosystem Tracks
CONCEPT Phase Submissions Open	January 15, 2025
CONCEPT Phase Submissions Close	June 20, 2025
CONCEPT Phase Winner Awards and PROGRESS Phase Opens	August 8, 2025 (anticipated)
PROGRESS Phase Closes	February 6, 2026 (anticipated)
PROGRESS Phase Winner Awards and IMPACT Phase Opens	March 20, 2026 (anticipated)
IMPACT Phase Closes	January 25, 2027 (anticipated)
IMPACT Phase Winner Awards	April 6, 2027 (anticipated)



Final Event (In Person) and GRAND PRIZE Winner Awards	May 11, 2027 (anticipated)
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All dates are subject to change. All submissions are due at 5 p.m. ET on the deadline noted.

4.4 What to Submit

The following items constitute the submissions package for the Community Energy Innovation Prize and must be submitted through the HeroX platform. Each is described in more detail below. Competitors may provide multiple submission packages for review; however, each submission must be materially different in the content and topic to be considered. If multiple submissions from the same competitor are too similar, only the last submission received will be scored and considered for prizes.

The following items are required for each submission:

Item	Will Be Made Public ¹⁸	Scored Item
Cover Page	Yes	No
Summary Slide	Yes	No
3-Minute Video Pitch	Yes	Yes
Impact Plan	No	Yes

4.4.1 Unscored, Public-Facing Submission Materials

Cover Page Content

The cover page, which is included in the final submission, will be made public. Competitors should list basic information about their submission, including:

1. Title
2. Team name
3. Short description
4. Link to 3-minute online video pitch
5. Key project members and/or partnering organizations (names, contacts, and links to their professional online profiles)
6. Location of community to benefit from the clean energy project (name of city, town, or unincorporated area)
7. Competitor’s city and state (this may or may not be different than the community to benefit from the clean energy project)
8. Goals of the prize the proposed project aims to achieve

¹⁸ Competitors who do not want the Impact Plan or other documents to be made public will need to mark them according to the instructions in Appendix A (Section A.4).



- 9. Prize track that the competitor intends to compete in, e.g., Clean Energy Ecosystem Track, Manufacturing Ecosystem Track, or Vehicles Ecosystem Track.

Submission Summary Slide

Competitors must make a public-facing, one-slide submission summary that introduces their team and/or organization and their mission. There is no template, so competitors are free to present the information in any format. Any text must be readable in a standard printed page and a conference room projection and should be in at least 14-point font.

4.4.2 Scored Submission Items

The scored items in the CONCEPT Phase submission package include a 3-minute video pitch and an Impact Plan. Scored materials will be evaluated on how well they address scoring statements in the respective criterion; each statement (described below) will be scored from 0 to 5, as shown here:

0	1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree/ Does Not Address	Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Slightly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree/ Fully Addresses

The following table explains how the scores for each submission will be calculated:

Scored Submission Items	Number of Scored Statements	Total Possible Points
3-Minute Video	3	15
Impact Plan		
Criterion 1: Team Experience in Engaging and Supporting Historically Underrepresented Communities and Promoting Clean Energy Manufacturing	6	30
Criterion 2: Proposed Activities and Goals Aligned to the Prize Award	7	35
Criterion 3: Resources and Capabilities to Implement Proposed Activities	4	20
TOTAL	20	100

3-Minute Video Pitch

Competitors must produce a 3-minute video that will help the reviewers and public understand the competitor, any partnering organizations, and the planned activities. Suggested content for the video is noted on the left side of the following table. The right side of the table includes the scored statements



that the reviewers will use to evaluate submissions. Individual reviewers will assign a score between 0 and 5 for each scored statement after reviewing the project submission.

Competitors are encouraged to be creative and convey information in a fun and engaging way. Reviewers will focus on the content, not the quality, of the video production. Competitors should upload the video to a publicly accessible online platform (e.g., YouTube, Vimeo).

Scoring Criteria: 3-Minute Video Pitch	
<p>Suggested Content Competitor Provides</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An introduction to the team and any partnering organizations and relevant experience, qualifications, and capabilities that the competitor will use to complete the proposed project. • An introduction to the historically underrepresented community the competitor intends to work with, and the community needs that the proposed project intends to effectively address. • A high-level description of the proposed project and anticipated impact within the historically underrepresented community or communities, should the project be selected. 	<p>Each Statement Scored on a 0–5 Scale</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The team and any partnering organizations possess relevant experience, qualifications, and capabilities to complete the proposed project. • The competitor has demonstrated an understanding of the historically underrepresented community they intend to work with and how the proposed project will be effective in addressing the community’s needs. • The proposed project is valuable, impactful, and will advance clean energy innovation in a historically underrepresented community.

Impact Plan

Competitors must write a detailed Impact Plan in a narrative format describing their team/organization, planned activities, resources and capabilities, and anticipated impacts. A template will be made available on the HeroX platform to use in drafting the Impact Plan.¹⁹

The total length of the Impact Plan cannot exceed **5,000** words. Competitors may include up to **five** supporting visualizations or graphics. The Impact Plan must be submitted as a PDF via the HeroX platform along with the other submission documents. Information contained in hyperlinks to external sources will not be reviewed or considered by the reviewers or the judge.

The Impact Plan should describe the work competitors will do during the PROGRESS and IMPACT Phases that addresses the prize goals. All competitors selected in the CONCEPT Phase will receive the first set of \$100,000 cash prizes and will be eligible to win the additional \$100,000 cash prize at the end of the

¹⁹ To assist teams, DOE is providing elective templates to illustrate the types of information needed to evaluate whether teams meet minimum requirements in the associated critical success factors. Teams are not required to use these templates and may submit using any form or format of their choosing. All submissions should address the substantive measures outlined in the template outlines and described in this Rules document.



PROGRESS Phase. To win \$100,000 in the PROGRESS Phase and be eligible for the \$10,000 in the IMPACT Phase, competitors will need to show how they have made progress toward prize goals as described in the initial Impact Plan.

The initial Impact Plan should describe the competitor’s plans throughout the duration of the prize until the end of the IMPACT Phase and metrics to measure progress toward and success in achieving one or more prize goals. Example metrics can include but are not limited to jobs/internships created, clean energy programs/curriculum created, number of constituents (students, entrepreneurs, workers, etc.) supported through programming, partnerships formed (letters of commitment, memoranda of understanding, contracts, funding agreements, etc.), stakeholders engaged via a project activity, workshops/training conducted, number of clean energy deployments, energy benefits (e.g., cost savings), and external follow-on funding secured. IMPACT Phase award winners will be eligible to compete for a GRAND PRIZE cash pool of up to \$500,000 to be divided among the winners.

The following tables describe the content that the competitor should provide to successfully address each criterion. The right-side column contains the scored statements that the reviewers will be using for each of the criteria. Individual reviewers will assign a score between 0 and 5 for each scored statement after reviewing the project submission. The left-side column includes suggested content that addresses each criterion. The suggested content provided is not mandatory, and competitors will not be judged against it. Rather, these are examples of details to include to help guide responses to better address each scored statement; competitors are welcome to use other information as they see fit.

Impact Plan Criterion 1: Team Experience in Engaging and Supporting Historically Underrepresented Communities and Promoting Clean Energy Manufacturing	
Suggested Content Competitor Provides	Each Statement Scored on a 0–5 Scale
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An identification of primary team and partnering organizations and the project roles and responsibilities, including team members with expertise/experience related to clean energy manufacturing • A description of the experience/expertise of the team in working with historically underrepresented communities and promoting clean energy manufacturing. • A description of the organization connected to manufacturing as part of the competing team. This organization can be a local manufacturer, a manufacturing-specific trade group, association, union, or another entity that can reasonably represent the interests of the manufacturing sector. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The primary team members and partnering organizations have clearly identified project roles and responsibilities and those with clean energy manufacturing related expertise/experience are identified. • The team has adequate experience/expertise working with historically underrepresented communities and promoting clean energy manufacturing. • The team includes at least one organization connected to manufacturing (0 or 5). • The team has demonstrated success and/or described lessons learned of previous efforts engaging and working



<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A description of the successes and/or lessons learned of previous efforts engaging and working with historically underrepresented communities. • A description of the community of interest for this prize, and the team’s connection to the community. • A description of the community’s needs and potential clean energy manufacturing resources. 	<p>with historically underrepresented communities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The team has described and has connections to the community of interest for this prize. • The team demonstrates an understanding of the community’s needs and potential clean energy manufacturing resources.
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Impact Plan Criterion 2: Proposed Activities and Goals Aligned to the Prize Award	
<p>Suggested Content Competitor Provides</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A description of the specific proposed activities by the competitor that will further the development of manufacturing-related specific goals, which may include education and workforce development, entrepreneurship, resilient supply chains, circular economy development, or other goals related to clean energy manufacturing. • A description of how the proposed activities enable the development or advancement of domestic clean energy manufacturing innovation ecosystems as described in Section 2.3.2 of this document. • A description of planned activities, metrics to measure, and milestones to complete as specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound (SMART) goals. • A description of credible mechanisms to evaluate the competitor’s progress of activities through the prize, such as data collection and pre- or post-project surveys. • An engagement and outreach plan the competitor will use to build trust and 	<p>Each Statement Scored on a 0–5 Scale</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The competitor’s proposed activities will further manufacturing-related specific goals, that may include education and workforce development, entrepreneurship, resilient supply chains, circular economy development, or other goals related to clean energy manufacturing. • The competitor’s proposed activities aim to enable the development or advancement of domestic clean energy manufacturing innovation ecosystems. • The competitor has clearly defined SMART goals that include planned activities, metrics to measure, and milestones to completion. • The competitor has clearly defined tracking mechanisms to evaluate the success of their proposed activities. • The competitor has described an engagement and outreach plan to build trust and strengthen relationships and partnerships with organizations connected to manufacturing, community members, and other relevant stakeholders.



<p>strengthen relationships and partnerships with organizations connected to manufacturing, community members, and other relevant stakeholders.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A description of how the proposed project enables a transition to a clean energy economy in the relevant community and region. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The competitor has described how the proposed project enables a transition to a clean energy economy in the relevant community and region. • The proposed activities and strategies to complete these activities have a high likelihood for success (0 or 5).
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Impact Plan Criterion 3: Resources and Capabilities to Implement Proposed Activities	
<p>Suggested Content Competitor Provides</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A budget for the proposed activities that indicates how the prize funds will be allocated. • A description of staff resources that will be available to the competitor to achieve the proposed plan, including but not limited to staff experienced in clean energy manufacturing. • A description of additional staff, partners, resources, and capabilities the competitor seeks to add to achieve their proposed plan and strategies for obtaining them. 	<p>Each Statement Scored on a 0–5 Scale</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The description of proposed activities and associated budget is adequately detailed and indicates how prize funds will be allocated. • The activities proposed are achievable within the proposed budget (0 or 5). • The staff resources that will be available to the competitor are adequate for achieving the proposed plan. • The competitor has demonstrated that they will have access to, or can obtain, the necessary staff, partners, resources, and capabilities to achieve their proposed plan.

4.5 Peer Learning and Shared Resources

Competitors selected to participate in the PROGRESS and IMPACT Phases will be able to participate in regular meetings with the prize team and other events intended to offer technical assistance and support to the competitors, as described in Section 2.4 of this document. As described in Section 2.3.2, for the Manufacturing Ecosystem Track, competitors will be expected to participate in a series of peer learning activities alongside the other Manufacturing Ecosystem Track and prize teams. Participation in these events will be part of the scoring criteria for the PROGRESS and IMPACT Phases. The curriculum and programming of these events will be tailored to the competitors’ specific needs. Additionally, these events will serve to connect competitors to share challenges and successes.

To be eligible for the grand prizes in the Manufacturing Ecosystem Track, competitors must develop resources for public dissemination. These resources can include but are not limited to lessons learned,



best practices, planning guides, or other resources that serve to share knowledge with nonparticipating communities.

4.6 How We Determine and Award Winners

The prize administrator screens all completed submissions and ensures that the competitors are eligible. Then the prize administrator, in consultation with DOE, assigns subject-matter-expert reviewers who independently score the content of each submission. The reviewers will be composed of federal and nonfederal subject matter experts with expertise in areas relevant to the competition. They will review the competitors' submitted video pitches and Impact Plans according to the evaluation criteria described in Section 4.4.2.

4.6.1 Reviewer Panel Scoring

The scoring of submissions will proceed as follows:

1. Reviewers will review each submission (video pitch and Impact Plan) individually and assess the response from the competitor to each statement in the criteria described in the tables in Section 4.4.2.
2. Reviewers will score each statement 0–5, depending on the degree to which the reviewer agrees that the submission reflects the statement.
3. Each statement score will be added together to generate a total score for the submission, which can be up to 100 points, as described in Section 4.4.2.
4. The total scores from each reviewer will be averaged to produce a final score for the competing team/organization. This score will inform the judge's decisions on prize awards.

4.6.2 Interviews

DOE may decide to interview a subset of competitors. The interviews would be held prior to the announcement of the winners and would serve to help clarify questions the reviewers may have. Participating in interviews is not required, and interviews are not an indication of a competitor's likelihood to win.

4.6.3 Final Determination

DOE will designate a federal employee as the judge before the final determination of the winners. Final determination of the winners by the judge will take into account the reviewers' feedback and scores, application of program policy factors, and the interview findings (if applicable).

4.6.4 Announcement

The prize administrator will notify the winners and request the necessary information to distribute the prizes. The prize administrator and DOE will publicly announce the winners.

4.7 Additional Terms and Conditions

See Appendix A for additional requirements. **COMPETITORS THAT DO NOT COMPLY WITH THE ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS IN APPENDIX A MAY BE DISQUALIFIED.**



5 Vehicles Ecosystem Track Submission Requirements

5.1 Prizes

Prize Pool	\$2.6 million cash prize pool
CONCEPT Phase Prizes	Up to 10 cash prizes of \$100,000 each and in-kind mentorship services
PROGRESS Phase Prizes	Up to 10 cash prizes of \$100,000 each and in-kind mentorship services
IMPACT Phase Prizes	Up to 10 cash prizes of \$10,000 each
GRAND PRIZE	Total cash prize pool of up to \$500,000 to be distributed among GRAND PRIZE winners

Some training sessions and events may take place in person. Should competitors elect to attend the final event, they are expected to leverage the funds provided in the IMPACT Phase.

5.2 How to Enter

Go to HeroX (<https://www.herox.com/CommunityEnergyInnovation-round2>) and follow the instructions for registering and submitting all required materials before the deadline in Section 5.3 or as displayed on the [HeroX](#) website.

Competitors can also form teams or find partners through the HeroX platform. In keeping with the goal of growing a community of innovators, competitors are encouraged to form multidisciplinary teams while developing their concept. The HeroX platform provides a space where parties interested in collaboration can post information about themselves and learn about others who are also interested in competing in this contest.

5.3 Important Dates

	Vehicles Ecosystem Track
CONCEPT Phase Submissions Open	January 15, 2025
CONCEPT Phase Submissions Close	June 20, 2025



CONCEPT Phase Winner Awards and PROGRESS Phase Opens	August 8, 2025 (anticipated)
PROGRESS Phase Closes	February 6, 2026 (anticipated)
PROGRESS Phase Winner Awards and IMPACT Phase Opens	March 20, 2026 (anticipated)
IMPACT Phase Closes	January 25, 2027 (anticipated)
IMPACT Phase Winner Awards	April 6, 2027 (anticipated)
Final Event (In Person) and GRAND PRIZE Winner Awards	May 11, 2027 (anticipated)

All dates are subject to change. All submissions are due at 5 p.m. ET on the deadline noted.

5.4 What to Submit

The following items constitute the submissions package for the Community Energy Innovation Prize and must be submitted through the HeroX platform. Each is described in more detail below. Competitors may provide multiple submission packages for review; however, each submission must be materially different in the content and topic to be considered. If multiple submissions from the same competitor are too similar, only the last submission received will be scored and considered for prizes.

The following items are required for each submission:

Item	Will Be Made Public ²⁰	Scored Item
Cover Page	Yes	No
Summary Slide	Yes	No
3-Minute Video Pitch	Yes	Yes
Impact Plan	No	Yes

²⁰ Competitors who do not want the Impact Plan or other documents to be made public will need to mark them according to the instructions in Appendix A (Section A.4).



5.4.1 Unscored, Public-Facing Submission Materials

Cover Page Content

The cover page, which is included in the final submission, will be made public. Competitors should list basic information about their submission, including:

- Title
- Team name
- Short description
- Link to 3-minute online video pitch
- Key project members and/or partnering organizations (names, contacts, and links to their professional online profiles)
- Location of community to benefit from the clean energy project (name of city, town, or unincorporated area).
- Competitor’s city and state (this may or may not be different than the community to benefit from the clean energy project)
- Goals of the prize the proposed project aims to achieve
- Prize track that the competitor intends to compete in, e.g., Clean Energy Ecosystem Track, Manufacturing Ecosystem Track, or Vehicles Ecosystem Track.

Submission Summary Slide

Competitors must make a public-facing, one-slide submission summary that introduces their team and/or organization and their mission. There is no template, so competitors are free to present the information in any format. Any text must be readable in a standard printed page and a conference room projection and should be in at least 14-point font.

5.4.2 Scored Submission Items

The scored items in the CONCEPT Phase submission package include a 3-minute video pitch and an Impact Plan. Scored materials will be evaluated on how well they address scoring statements in the respective criterion; each statement (described below) will be scored from 0 to 5, as shown here:

0	1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree/ Does Not Address	Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Slightly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree/Fully Addresses

The following table explains how the scores for each submission will be calculated:

Scored Submission Items	Number of Scored Statements	Total Possible Points
3-Minute Video	3	15
Impact Plan		
Criterion 1: Team Experience in Engaging and Supporting Historically Underrepresented	6	30



Communities and Promoting Clean Energy Vehicles		
Criterion 2: Proposed Activities and Goals Aligned to the Prize Award	7	35
Criterion 3: Resources and Capabilities to Implement Proposed Activities	4	20
TOTAL	20	100

3-Minute Video Pitch

Competitors must produce a 3-minute video that will help the reviewers and public understand the competitor, any partnering organizations, and the planned activities. Suggested content for the video is noted in the left side of the following table. The right side of the table includes the scored statements that the reviewers will use to evaluate submissions. Individual reviewers will assign a score between 0 and 5 for each scored statement after reviewing the project submission.

Competitors are encouraged to be creative and convey information in a fun and engaging way. Reviewers will focus on the content, not the quality, of the video production. Competitors should upload the video to a publicly accessible online platform (e.g., YouTube, Vimeo).

Scoring Criteria: 3-Minute Video Pitch	
<p>Suggested Content Competitor Provides</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An introduction to the team and any partnering organizations and relevant experience, qualifications, and capabilities that the competitor will use to complete the proposed project. • An introduction to the historically underrepresented community the competitor intends to work with, and the community needs that the proposed project intends to effectively address. • A high-level description of the proposed project and anticipated impact within the historically underrepresented community or communities, should the project be selected. 	<p>Each Statement Scored on a 0–5 Scale</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The team and any partnering organizations possess relevant experience, qualifications, and capabilities to complete the proposed project. • The competitor has demonstrated an understanding of the historically underrepresented community they intend to work with and how the proposed project will be effective in addressing the community’s needs. • The proposed project will advance clean energy innovation in a historically underrepresented community, in a way that is valuable and impactful to that community.



Impact Plan

Competitors must write a detailed Impact Plan in a narrative format describing their team/organization, planned activities, resources and capabilities, and anticipated impacts. A template will be made available on the HeroX platform to use in drafting the Impact Plan.²¹

The total length of the Impact Plan cannot exceed **5,000** words. Competitors may include up to **five** supporting visualizations or graphics. The Impact Plan must be submitted as a PDF via the HeroX platform along with the other submission documents. Information contained in hyperlinks to external sources will not be reviewed or considered by the reviewers or the judge.

The Impact Plan should describe the work competitors will do during the PROGRESS and IMPACT Phases that addresses the prize goals. All competitors selected in the CONCEPT Phase will receive the first set of \$100,000 cash prizes and will be eligible to win the additional \$100,000 cash prize at the end of the PROGRESS Phase. To win \$100,000 in the PROGRESS Phase and to be eligible for \$10,000 in the IMPACT Phase, competitors will need to show how they have made progress toward prize goals as described in the initial Impact Plan.

The initial Impact Plan should describe the competitor's plans throughout the duration of the prize until the end of the IMPACT Phase and metrics to measure progress toward and success in achieving one or more prize goals. Metrics will vary from project to project and should be specific to each project's goals. Example metrics can include, but are not limited to: number of attendees at trainings, meetings, or community education events; formal agreements and partnerships formed (letters of commitment, memoranda of understanding, contracts, funding agreements, etc.); number of workshops or trainings conducted, number of vehicles or fueling/charging stations deployed, energy benefits (e.g., gasoline gallon equivalents reduced, greenhouse gas emissions reduced, air quality benefits, cost savings), percentage of project governance and decision-making roles held by members of underrepresented communities, and external follow-on funding secured. IMPACT Phase award winners will be eligible to compete for a GRAND PRIZE cash pool of up to \$500,000 to be divided among the winners.

The following tables describe the content that the competitor should provide to successfully address each criterion. The right-side column contains the scored statements that the reviewers will be using for each of the criteria. Individual reviewers will assign a score between 0 and 5 for each scored statement after reviewing the project submission. The left-side column includes suggested content that addresses each criterion. The suggested content provided is not mandatory, and competitors will not be judged against it. Rather, these are examples of details to include to help guide responses to better address each scored statement; competitors are welcome to use other information as they see fit.

²¹ To assist teams, DOE is providing elective templates to illustrate the types of information needed to evaluate whether teams meet minimum requirements in the associated critical success factors. Teams are not required to use these templates and may submit using any form or format of their choosing. All submissions should address the substantive measures outlined in the template outlines and described in this Rules document.



Impact Plan Criterion 1: Team Experience in Engaging and Supporting Historically Underrepresented Communities and Promoting Clean Energy Vehicles

Suggested Content Competitor Provides	Each Statement Scored on a 0–5 Scale
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An identification of primary team and partnering organizations and the project roles and responsibilities. • A description of the experience and expertise of the team in working with historically underrepresented communities and promoting clean transportation technologies. • A description of the successes and/or lessons learned of previous efforts engaging and working with historically underrepresented communities. • A description of the community of interest for this prize. • A description of the team’s connection to the community, including existing relationships and any prior community engagement work related to clean transportation performed. • A description of the community’s clean transportation needs and how this project will fit into those needs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The primary team members and partnering organizations have clearly identified project roles and responsibilities. • The team has adequate experience/expertise working with historically underrepresented communities and promoting clean transportation technologies. • The team has demonstrated success and/or described lessons learned of previous efforts engaging and working with historically underrepresented communities. • The team has identified and has strong connections to the community they intend to work with as a part of this prize. • The team demonstrates an understanding of the community’s clean transportation and/or energy needs. • The team has involved the community in developing this project.

Impact Plan Criterion 2: Proposed Activities and Goals Aligned to the Prize Award

Suggested Content Competitor Provides	Each Statement Scored on a 0–5 Scale
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A description of how the proposed activities aim to address the Vehicles Ecosystem Track objective, stated in Section 2.3.3 of this document. • A timeline of planned activities, metrics to measure, and milestones to complete as specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound (SMART) goals. • A description of credible mechanisms to evaluate the competitor’s progress of 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The competitor’s proposed activities aim to address the Vehicles Ecosystem Track objective stated in Section 2.3.3 of this document. • The competitor has clearly defined SMART goals that include planned activities, metrics to measure, and milestones to completion.



<p>activities through the prize, such as data collection and pre- or post-project surveys.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An engagement and outreach plan the competitor will use to build trust and strengthen relationships and partnerships with community-based organizations, fleets, and other relevant stakeholders. • A description of how the proposed project enables a transition to a clean energy economy in the relevant community and region. • A description of how the project offers a high-impact solution to the community's transportation-related needs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The competitor has clearly defined tracking mechanisms to evaluate the success of their proposed activities. • The competitor has described an engagement and outreach plan that builds trust and strengthens relationships and partnerships with community members and other relevant stakeholders. • The competitor has described how the proposed project enables a transition to a clean energy economy in the relevant community and region. • The proposed activities and strategies will be impactful to the community's transportation goals. • The proposed activities and strategies will have a high likelihood for success (0 or 5).
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Impact Plan Criterion 3: Resources and Capabilities to Implement Proposed Activities	
<p>Suggested Content Competitor Provides</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A budget for the proposed activities that indicates how the prize funds will be allocated during the PROGRESS and IMPACT phases. • A description of staff resources that will be available to the competitor to achieve the proposed plan, including but not limited to staff experienced in working with historically underrepresented communities in a clean vehicle technologies context. • A description of additional staff, partners, resources, and capabilities the competitor seeks to add to achieve their proposed plan and strategies for obtaining them. 	<p>Each Statement Scored on a 0–5 Scale</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The description of proposed activities and associated budget is adequately detailed and indicates how prize funds will be allocated. • The activities proposed are achievable within the proposed budget (0 or 5). • The staff resources that will be available to the competitor are adequate for achieving the proposed plan. • The competitor has demonstrated that they will have access to, or can obtain, the necessary staff, partners, resources, and capabilities to achieve their proposed plan.



5.5 Peer Learning and Shared Resources

Competitors selected to participate in the PROGRESS and IMPACT Phases will be able to participate in regular meetings with the prize team and other events intended to offer technical assistance and support to the competitors, as described in Section 2.4 of this document. As described in Section 2.3.2, for the Vehicles Ecosystem Track, competitors will be expected to participate in a series of peer learning activities alongside the other Vehicles Ecosystem Track and prize teams. Participation in these events will be part of the scoring criteria for the PROGRESS and IMPACT Phases. The curriculum and programming of these events will be tailored to the competitors' specific needs. Additionally, these events will serve to connect competitors to share challenges and successes.

To be eligible for the grand prizes in the Vehicles Ecosystem Track, competitors must develop resources for public dissemination. These resources can include but are not limited to lessons learned, best practices, planning guides, or other resources that serve to share knowledge with nonparticipating communities.

5.6 How We Determine and Award Winners

The prize administrator screens all completed submissions and ensures that the competitors are eligible. Then the prize administrator, in consultation with DOE, assigns subject-matter-expert reviewers who independently score the content of each submission. The reviewers will be composed of federal and nonfederal subject matter experts with expertise in areas relevant to the competition. They will review the competitors' submitted video pitches and Impact Plans according to the evaluation criteria described in Section 5.4.2.

5.6.1 Reviewer Panel Scoring

The scoring of submissions will proceed as follows:

- Reviewers will review each submission (video pitch and Impact Plan) individually and assess the response from the competitor to each statement in the criteria described in the tables in Section 5.4.2.
- Reviewers will score each statement 0–5, depending on the degree to which the reviewer agrees that the submission reflects the statement.
- Each statement score will be added together to generate a total score for the submission, which can be up to 100 points, as described in Section 5.4.2.
- The total scores from each reviewer will be averaged to produce a final score for the competing team/organization. This score will inform the judge's decisions on prize awards.

5.6.2 Interviews

DOE may decide to interview a subset of competitors. The interviews would be held prior to the announcement of the winners and would serve to help clarify questions the reviewers may have. Participating in interviews is not required, and interviews are not an indication of a competitor's likelihood to win.

5.6.3 Final Determination

DOE will designate a federal employee as the judge before the final determination of the winners. Final determination of the winners by the judge will take into account the reviewers' feedback and scores, application of program policy factors, and the interview findings (if applicable).



5.6.4 Announcement

The prize administrator will notify the winners and request the necessary information to distribute the prizes. The prize administrator and DOE will publicly announce the winners.

5.7 Additional Terms and Conditions

See Appendix A for additional requirements. COMPETITORS THAT DO NOT COMPLY WITH THE ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS IN APPENDIX A MAY BE DISQUALIFIED.



Appendix A: Additional Terms and Conditions

1. Requirements

Your submission for the prize is subject to the following terms and conditions:

- You must post the final content of your submission or upload the submission form online by 5 p.m. ET on the prize deadline date, before the prize's phase submission period closes. Late submissions or any other form of submission may be rejected.
- You must include all the required elements in your submission. The prize administrator may disqualify your submission after an initial screening if you fail to provide all required submission elements. Competitors may be given an opportunity to rectify submission errors due to technical challenges.
- Your submission must be in English and in a format readable by Microsoft Word or Adobe PDF. Scanned handwritten submissions will be disqualified.
- Submissions will be disqualified if they contain any matter that, in the sole discretion of the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) or the National Renewable Energy Laboratory (NREL), is indecent, obscene, defamatory, libelous, and/or lacking in professionalism, or demonstrates a lack of respect for people or life on this planet.
- If you click "Accept" on the HeroX platform and proceed to register for any of the prizes described in this document, these rules will form a valid and binding agreement between you and DOE and are in addition to the existing HeroX Terms of Use for all purposes relating to these contests. You should print and keep a copy of these rules. These provisions only apply to the prize described here and no other prize on the HeroX platform or anywhere else.
- The prize administrator, when feasible, may give competitors an opportunity to fix nonsubstantive mistakes or errors in their submission packages.
- Winners are expected to cover any travel costs with prize funds.
- As part of your submission to this prize, you will be required to sign the following statement:

I am providing this submission package as part of my participation in this prize. I understand that the information contained in this submission will be relied on by the federal government to determine whether to issue a prize to the named competitor. I certify under penalty of perjury that the named competitor meets the eligibility requirements for this prize competition and complies with all other rules contained in the official rules document. I further represent that the information contained in the submission is true and contains no misrepresentations. I understand false statements or misrepresentations to the federal government may result in civil and/or criminal penalties under 18 U.S.C. § 1001 and § 287, and 31 U.S.C. §§ 3729-3733 and 3801-3812.

2. Verification for Payments



The prize administrator will verify the identity and role of all competitors before distributing any prizes. Receiving a prize payment is contingent upon fulfilling all requirements contained herein. The prize administrator will notify winning competitors using provided email contact information for the individual or entity that was responsible for the submission. Each competitor will be required to sign and return to the prize administrator, within 30 days of the date on the notice, a completed NREL Request for ACH Banking Information form and a completed W-9 form (<https://www.irs.gov/pub/irs-pdf/fw9.pdf>). In the sole discretion of the prize administrator, a winning competitor will be disqualified from the competition and receive no prize funds if: (i) the person/entity does not respond to notifications, (ii) the person/entity fails to sign and return the required documentation within the required time period, (iii) the notification is returned as undeliverable, or (iv) the submission or person/entity is disqualified for any other reason.

In the event of a dispute as to any registration, the authorized account holder of the email address used to register will be deemed to be the competitor. The “authorized account holder” is the natural person or legal entity assigned an email address by an internet access provider, online service provider, or other organization responsible for assigning email addresses for the domain associated with the submitted address. All competitors may be required to show proof of being the authorized account holder.

3. Teams and Single-Entity Awards

The prize administrator will award a single dollar amount to the designated primary submitter, whether consisting of a single entity or multiple entities. The primary submitter is solely responsible for allocating any prize funds among its member competitors or teammates as they deem appropriate. The prize administrator will not arbitrate, intervene, advise on, or resolve any matters or disputes between team members or competitors.

4. Treatment of Submission Materials

The elements of the submission that are designated as public will become publicly available as part of this prize. Therefore, these elements must not include trade secrets or business-sensitive, proprietary, or otherwise confidential information.

If it is necessary to share trade secrets or business-sensitive, proprietary, or otherwise confidential information, it should only be done in an element that is NOT designated as public. Any confidential, proprietary, or privileged information must be marked as described below. Failure to comply with these marking requirements may result in the disclosure of the unmarked information under the Freedom of Information Act or otherwise.

The submission must be marked as follows and identify the specific pages containing trade secrets or confidential, proprietary, or privileged information: “Notice of Restriction on Disclosure and Use of Data: Pages [list applicable pages] of this document may contain trade secrets or confidential, proprietary, or privileged information that is exempt from public disclosure. Such information shall be used or disclosed only for evaluation purposes. [End of Notice]”

The header and footer of every page that contains confidential, proprietary, or privileged information must be marked as follows: “Contains Trade Secrets or Confidential, Proprietary, or Privileged Information Exempt from Public Disclosure.” In addition, each line or paragraph containing proprietary, privileged, or trade secret information must be clearly marked with double brackets.



DOE, the prize administrator, and any other third-party supporting DOE in the contest assume no liability for the public disclosure of any information in the elements designated public and for any unmarked information any element NOT designated as public.

Furthermore, by making a submission and consenting to the rules of the prize, the competitor is granting to DOE, the prize administrator, and any other third parties supporting DOE in the contest a license to display publicly and use the elements of the submission that are designated as public and any unmarked information in the elements of the submission that are NOT designated as public for government purposes, including posting or linking elements on websites or publicizing the submissions and competitors in the media and other announcements. The competitor is granting to DOE, the prize administrator, and other third parties a limited license to use or disclose any properly marked information for evaluation purposes only.

5. Representation and Warranties

By entering, the competitor represents and warrants that:

1. The competitor's entire submission is an original work by the competitor and the competitor has not included third-party content (such as writing, text, graphics, artwork, logos, photographs, likeness of any third party, musical recordings, clips of videos, television programs, or motion pictures) in or in connection with the submission, unless (i) otherwise requested by the prize administrator or disclosed by the competitor in the submission, and (ii) the competitor has acquired the necessary rights to use and to authorize others, including DOE, to use the submission, as specified throughout the rules.
2. To the best of the competitor's knowledge, the use of the submission in the prize, including any use by DOE or the prize administrator, does not and will not infringe upon or violate any rights of any third party or entity, including, without limitation, patent, copyright, trademark, trade secret, defamation, privacy, publicity, false light, misappropriation, intentional or negligent infliction of emotional distress, confidentiality, or any contractual or other rights.
3. All persons who were engaged by the competitor to work on the submission or who appear in the submission in any manner have:
 - A. Given the competitor their express written consent to submit the submission for exhibition and other exploitation in any manner and in any and all media, whether now existing or hereafter discovered, throughout the world
 - B. Provided written permission to include their name, image, or pictures in or with the submission (or, if a minor who is not the competitor's child, the competitor must have the permission of the minor's parent or legal guardian) and the competitor may be asked by the prize administrator to provide permission in writing
 - C. Not been and are not currently under any union or guild agreement that results in any ongoing obligations resulting from the use, exhibition, or other exploitation of the submission.
4. The submission is free of malware.



6. Contest Subject to Applicable Law

All contests are subject to all applicable federal laws and regulations. Participation constitutes each participant's full and unconditional agreement to these official rules and administrative decisions, which are final and binding in all matters related to the contest. This notice is not an obligation of funds; the final award is contingent upon the availability of appropriations.

7. Resolution of Disputes

DOE is solely responsible for administrative decisions, which are final and binding in all matters related to the contest.

Neither DOE nor the prize administrator will arbitrate, intervene, advise on, or resolve any matters between team members or among competitors.

8. Publicity

The winners of these prizes (collectively, "winners") will be featured on DOE and NREL websites.

Except where prohibited, participation in the contest constitutes each winner's consent to DOE's and its agents' use of each winner's name, likeness, photograph, voice, opinions, and/or hometown and state information for promotional purposes through any form of media worldwide, without further permission, payment, or consideration.

9. Liability

Upon registration, all participants agree to assume any and all risks of injury or loss in connection with or in any way arising from participation in this contest. Upon registration, except in the case of willful misconduct, all participants agree to and, thereby, do waive and release any and all claims or causes of action against the federal government and its officers, employees, and agents for any and all injury and damage of any nature whatsoever (whether existing or thereafter arising; whether direct, indirect, or consequential; and whether foreseeable or not) arising from their participation in the contest, whether the claim or cause of action arises under contract or tort.

In accordance with the delegation of authority to run this contest delegated to the judge responsible for this prize, the judge has determined that no liability insurance naming DOE as an insured will be required of competitors to compete in this competition per 15 U.S.C. § 3719(i)(2). Competitors should assess the risks associated with their proposed activities and adequately insure themselves against possible losses.

10. Records Retention and Freedom of Information Act

All materials submitted to DOE as part of a submission become DOE records and are subject to the Freedom of Information Act. Where necessary, materials should be marked as noted in Section A.4. Such information will be withheld from public disclosure to the extent permitted by law. Without assuming any liability for inadvertent disclosure, DOE will seek to limit disclosure of such information to its employees and to outside reviewers when necessary for review of the application or as otherwise authorized by law. This restriction does not limit the Government's right to use the information if it is obtained from another source.



Competitors will be notified of any Freedom of Information Act requests for their submissions in accordance with 29 C.F.R. § 70.26. Competitors may then have the opportunity to review materials and work with a Freedom of Information Act representative prior to the release of materials. DOE does intend to keep all submission materials private except for those materials designated as “will be made public.”

11. Privacy

If you choose to provide HeroX with personal information by registering or completing the submission package through the contest website, you understand that such information will be transmitted to DOE and may be kept in a system of records. Such information will be used only to respond to you in matters regarding your submission and/or the contest unless you choose to receive updates or notifications about other contests or programs from DOE on an opt-in basis. DOE and NREL are not collecting any information for commercial marketing.

12. General Conditions

DOE reserves the right to cancel, suspend, and/or modify the prize, or any part of it, at any time. If any fraud, technical failure, or any other factor beyond DOE's reasonable control impairs the integrity or proper functioning of the prize, as determined by DOE in its sole discretion, DOE may cancel the prize. Any performance toward prize goals is conducted entirely at the risk of the competitor, and DOE shall not compensate any competitors for any activities performed in furtherance of this prize.

Although DOE may indicate that it will select up to several winners for each prize, DOE reserves the right to only select competitors that are likely to achieve the goals of the program. If, in DOE's determination, no competitors are likely to achieve the goals of the program, DOE will select no competitors to be winners and will award no prize money.

DOE may conduct a risk review, using government resources, of the competitor and project personnel for potential risks of foreign interference. The outcomes of the risk review may result in the submission being eliminated from the prize competition. This risk review, and potential elimination, can occur at any time during the prize competition. An elimination based on a risk review is not appealable.

13. Program Policy Factors

While the scores of the expert reviewers will be carefully considered, it is the role of the prize judge to maximize the impact of prize funds. Some factors outside the control of competitors and beyond the independent expert reviewer scope of review may need to be considered to accomplish this goal. The following is a list of such factors. In addition to the reviewers' scores, the below program policy factors may be considered in determining winners:

- Geographic diversity and potential economic impact of projects
- Whether the use of additional DOE funds and provided resources are nonduplicative and compatible with the stated goals of this program and the DOE mission generally
- The degree to which the submission exhibits technological or programmatic diversity when compared to the existing DOE project portfolio and other competitors



- The degree to which the submission is likely to lead to increased employment and manufacturing in the United States or provide other economic benefits to U.S. taxpayers
- The degree to which the submission will accelerate transformational technological, financial, or workforce advances in areas that industry by itself is not likely to undertake because of technical or financial uncertainty
- The degree to which the submission supports complementary DOE-funded efforts or projects, which, when taken together, will best achieve the goals and objectives of DOE
- The degree to which the submission expands DOE's funding to new competitors and recipients who have not been supported by DOE in the past
- The degree to which the submission enables new and expanding market segments
- Whether the project promotes increased coordination with nongovernmental entities toward enabling a just and equitable clean energy economy in their region and/or community.

14. National Environmental Policy Act Compliance

This prize is subject to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) (42 U.S.C. § 4321, et seq.). NEPA requires federal agencies to integrate environmental values into their decision-making processes by considering the potential environmental impacts of their proposed actions. For additional background on NEPA, please see DOE's NEPA website at <http://nepa.energy.gov/>.

While NEPA compliance is a federal agency responsibility and the ultimate decisions remain with the federal agency, all participants in the prize will be required to assist in the timely and effective completion of the NEPA process in the manner most pertinent to their participation in the prize competition. Participants may be asked to provide DOE with information on fabrication and testing of their device such that DOE can conduct a meaningful evaluation of the potential environmental impacts.

15. Definitions

Prize administrator – Prize administrator means both the Alliance for Sustainable Energy, operating in its capacity under the management and operating contract for NREL, and DOE's Integrated Strategies Office, the Advanced Materials and Manufacturing Office, and the Vehicle Technologies Office. When the prize administrator is referenced in this document, it refers to staff from both the Alliance for Sustainable Energy and DOE staff. Ultimate decision-making authority regarding prize matters rests with the Director of DOE's Office of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy.

16. Return of Funds

As a condition of receiving a prize, competitors agree that if the prize was made based on fraudulent or inaccurate information provided by the competitor to DOE, DOE has the right to demand that any prize funds or the value of other noncash prizes be returned to the government.

ALL DECISIONS BY DOE ARE FINAL AND BINDING IN ALL MATTERS RELATED TO THE PRIZE.