



REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS FY 2016

PLANNING GRANTS

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515-294-8819 | iecgrant@iastate.edu | iowaenergycenter.org

About the Iowa Energy Center

The Iowa Energy Center was created by the Iowa Energy Efficiency Act of 1990 with a mission to:

- Strive to increase energy efficiency in all areas of Iowa energy use;
- Conduct and sponsor research on energy efficiency and conservation that will improve the environmental, social, and economic well-being of Iowans, minimize the environmental impact of existing energy production and consumption, and reduce the need to add new power plants;
- Serve as a model for state efforts to decrease reliance on imported fuels and to decrease reliance on energy production from nonrenewable, resource-depleting fuels;
- Conduct and sponsor research to develop alternative energy systems that are based upon renewable sources and that will reduce the negative environmental and economic impact of energy production systems;
- Assist Iowans in assessing technology related to energy efficiency and alternative energy production systems and support educational and demonstration programs that encourage implementation of energy efficiency and alternative energy production systems;
- Develop a program to provide assistance to rural residents for energy efficiency efforts;
- Cooperate with the state board of education in developing a curriculum which promotes energy efficiency and conservation; and
- Sponsor research grants and projects submitted on a competitive basis by Iowa colleges and universities and private nonprofit agencies and foundations.

The Iowa Energy Center supports Iowa economic growth through collaborative projects that bring smart and sustainable energy technologies closer to market and by providing Iowans with reliable, objective information on energy and efficiency options.

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Planning Grant Program Overview

One objective of the Iowa Energy Center is to help Iowa organizations be more successful in attracting external funding that supports projects related to energy research, technology development, demonstration, deployment, education, and workforce development.

With that objective in mind, the Energy Center is seeking proposals for planning grants that will help facilitate applicants' preparation of proposals in response to major federal, nonprofit, or private-sector solicitations. An Energy Center award would provide funding for a set of activities specifically aimed at bringing potential partners together to strategize, plan, or execute a response to a known or likely external funding opportunity.

Proposals for conducting education or training events, conferences, seminars, and similar types of activities that are not directly related to development of a response to an external funding opportunity will not be considered.

Estimated Funding

Subject to the availability of funding, the Energy Center will set aside \$50,000 to award approximately 12 planning grants between September 1, 2015, and June 30, 2016. Typical awards will be less than \$5,000 and shall not exceed \$8,000. No matching funds are required.

Eligible Grantees

Organizations eligible to receive Energy Center grants are Iowa's educational institutions and Iowa-registered private nonprofit organizations and foundations. The Energy Center does not award grants to individuals; for-profit entities; and state, county, or local government entities — though those groups may be partners in the initiative being developed by the grant recipient. Proof of the private nonprofit status of the applicant may be requested. Collaborations among Iowa organizations are encouraged, but not required.

Eligible Projects

Funding decisions will be based on how well a proposal meets the following objectives, as detailed in the evaluation criteria listed later in this request for proposals. A proposal should:

1. Directly support planning activities intended to form teams and develop ideas with the intent to submit a proposal for a known or anticipated energy-related external funding opportunity being offered by industry, non-Iowa government agencies, non-government organizations, international agencies, or other such sponsors. Activities might include travel to gather prospective (in-state and out-of-state) team members or to meet with sponsors; focused strategy, planning, and proposal-writing workshops; and workshop facilitation.

2. Demonstrate evidence of the external funding opportunity that the applicant is targeting.
3. Aim toward attracting at least \$50,000 in new funding to Iowa—and ideally more than \$100,000. Proposals that target less than \$50,000 will not be rejected, but will score lower on that evaluation criterion.
4. Be consistent with the mission of the Iowa Energy Center to advance the environmental, social, and economic well-being of Iowans through improved energy efficiency measures and alternative energy technology. Appendix A provides example topic areas consistent with the Energy Center's mission.

Typical planning projects under this Iowa Energy Center program might require 2 to 8 months to complete. In some circumstances, however, external funding opportunities may be known well ahead of time, so that the planning projects would extend over a longer period. In all cases, the projects funded by the Energy Center under this solicitation must be completed within 12 months of the date of the award.

Allowable Expenses

Allowable planning activity costs might include, but are not limited to:

- Travel to meetings.
- Consultant or facilitation contracts.
- Event space.
- Meeting-related expenses, including ordinary hospitality expenses.

Supplies, telecommunications, postage, and printing may be allowable if they can be clearly documented and itemized as being specific to the planning activities.

Unallowable expenses are outlined in 2 CFR Part 200 (<http://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/retrieveECFR?gp=1&SID=862b53187a5a218862b53187a5a218c115e32d89e8af0ef&ty=HTML&h=L&mc=true&n=pt2.1.200&r=PART>).

Iowa Energy Center planning grants may not be used to procure computers or for capital expenses. Moreover, personnel and indirect costs are not allowed under this grant program.

Proposal Deadlines

- >> Proposals will be accepted beginning September 1, 2015, and through June 30, 2016.
- >> Proposals must be received at least 3 weeks prior to the date the funds are needed.

Since awards will be made throughout the proposal period, the pool of funds available for this competition may be expended before June 30, 2016. Applicants are encouraged to check the Energy Center website (www.iowaenergycenter.org/planning-grants) to verify that the Planning Grant program is still accepting proposals.

Proposal Requirements

Special Note: Starting September 1, 2015 all proposals must be submitted through the Iowa Energy Center's Grants Management System: <https://iec.smartsimple.com>.

Proposal narratives should not exceed 3 pages and should be uploaded as a single PDF file. A cover page and budget information should be entered separately through the Grant Management System.

To enable the Iowa Energy Center to quickly and effectively review them, each proposal must contain the following elements:

1. A completed cover page, generated online, which contains the information shown in Appendix B.
2. A project narrative with the following sections:
 - a. **Overview**
A summary describing the need for Planning Grant funds, the external funding opportunity, and the applicant's plan to pursue it.
 - b. **External Funding Opportunity**
A description of the external funding opportunity being targeted, including information on
 - i. The sponsor;
 - ii. Evidence that such an external funding opportunity exists or will materialize, including a link to the funding announcement, if available.
 - iii. The topic being considered for funding and its relationship to the Iowa Energy Center's mission to advance the environmental, social, and economic well-being of Iowans through improved energy efficiency measures and alternative energy technology.
 - iv. An estimate of the overall external-program funding and the size of individual awards.
 - v. The timing of the opportunity.
 - c. **Proposal Concept**
A summary of the applicant's concept to be proposed to the external sponsor.

d. Planning Activities

A description of the planning activities in preparation for the external funding opportunity, including

- i. The applicant's credentials in this topic area, including past success in securing external funding.
- ii. Commitments from existing partners in terms of collaboration and resources.
- iii. Additional partners the applicant plans to approach.
- iv. A timeline of the activities that would lead to a proposal to the external sponsor.
- v. The specific set of activities to be supported by the Energy Center award.
- vi. The potential gross funding level the applicant's team will pursue from the external sponsor and the portion of that expected to come to Iowa if the proposal is successful.

3. Budget and Schedule

- a. A completed budget must be entered into the Iowa Energy Center's Grant Management System (Appendix C and www.iowaenergycenter.org/planning-grants).
- b. A brief narrative justifying the items in each budget category.
- c. A tentative schedule for the activities funded by the Energy Center. Note that the activities funded by the Energy Center under this solicitation must be completed within 12 months of the date of the award.

Applicants may append any additional documentation they feel will help the decision process of the Iowa Energy Center. Although such appendices are not subject to the 3-page limit, applicants should exercise discretion in providing additional material.

Note that all people listed in the proposal as a principal, supporter, or collaborator must have given consent for their names to be included.

Deliverable

The grantee will provide the Iowa Energy Center with a three-page report on the activities funded under this award. The report will be due 30 days following completion of the project activities or the grant end date, whichever comes first.

The Iowa Energy Center will periodically check on the progress of the project through its duration.

The Energy Center will track metrics on funded projects for two years after their completion. The metrics will include information on external sponsorship and further collaborations among the partners that were facilitated by the Energy Center project.

Submitting the Proposal

Special Note: Starting September 1, 2015, all submissions must be made through the Iowa Energy Center's Grant Management System: <https://iec.smartsimple.com>

Applicants must submit their proposals through the Iowa Energy Center's Grant Management System (<https://iec.smartsimple.com>). Project narratives shall be uploaded as a single PDF file, which may not exceed 25 Mb in size. Paper proposals, whether faxed, mailed, or hand delivered, will not be accepted. Proposals that exceed the stated page limit will be rejected without review.

The Iowa Energy Center intends to treat proposals as proprietary until an award is made. Nonetheless, applicants shall not include proprietary or sensitive information in their submittals to the Energy Center.

Planning Grant Awards

The Iowa Energy Center will strive to notify applicants within one week after proposal submission whether the grant will be awarded. The evaluation, award, and payment process may take up to three weeks, so applicants should accommodate that in their project planning. Although awards made under this grant program will be cost-reimbursable, funding advances can be made at the recipient's request and at the discretion of the Iowa Energy Center.

The Iowa Energy Center may enter into pre-award discussions with an applicant to address issues such as:

1. Budget items;
2. The scope of the proposed effort that is selected for award;
3. Additional information that is needed to enable an award decision;
4. Any special terms and conditions that may be required.

Proposal Evaluation

Eligible proposals will be evaluated according to the following criteria:

Weight	Criteria	Description
35%	Vision	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. The proposal articulates a well thought-out concept and approach to capturing funding from a private- or public-sector sponsor.2. There is a high likelihood that this vision will lead to external funding.
35%	Opportunity	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. The proposal clearly identifies an external source of potential funding beyond the IEC-funded project.2. The IEC-funded project significantly improves the likelihood of future external funding that will flow into Iowa.3. External funding would bring at least \$50,000 of new funding to Iowa, and ideally more than \$100,000.
15%	Impact	The project's goals are consistent with the mission of the Iowa Energy Center to advance the environmental, social, and economic well-being of Iowans through improved energy efficiency measures and alternative energy technology.
15%	Capability and Collaboration	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. The anticipated team would provide an appropriate level of expertise and capability for attracting external funding.2. The team is seeking collaboration with other Iowa non-profit and academic institutions, such as regent universities, independent colleges and universities, and community colleges.

Questions about this Request for Proposals

Specific questions about this request for proposals should be addressed in writing to Mark C. Petri, Director of the Iowa Energy Center, at iecgrant@iastate.edu.

The Iowa Energy Center reserves the right to fund, in whole or in part, any, all, or none of the applications submitted in response to this request for proposals. Submission requirements for this grant program may be waived at the discretion of the Energy Center.

In accordance with Iowa State University policy, the Energy Center does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, age, ethnicity, religion, national origin, pregnancy, sexual orientation, gender identity, genetic information, sex, marital status, disability, or status as a U.S. veteran. Inquiries can be directed to the Office of Equal Opportunity, 3350 Beardshear Hall, Ames, Iowa 50011; (515) 294-7612.

Appendix A

Guidance on Project Topics Consistent with the Mission of the Iowa Energy Center

Example topics that meet the Energy Center's mission well:

- Solar energy
- On-shore wind energy
- Biomass and biofuels
- Waste-based power production
- Geothermal power
- Conversion of waste heat and kinetic energy
- Combined heat and power
- Chemical storage batteries
- Fuel cells
- Commercial, residential, and industrial efficiency
- Heating and lighting
- Electricity transmission and distribution
- Energy workforce development
- Energy education

Example topics not well suited for Energy Center support:

- Nuclear fission and fusion power
- Off-shore wind energy
- Coal
- Pipelines and other energy-transport media
- Environmental and health consequences and management

Appendix B

Cover Page Information to be Entered Online

Project information:

- Principal investigator contact information
- Co-principal investigators
- Administrative contact
- Project title
- Project start and end dates

Contracting information:

- Organization contracting official
- Organization employer identification number
- Organization Iowa Senate district
- Organization Iowa House district
- Organization federal congressional district

Targeted future funding:

- Name of the potential external sponsor this project is targeting
- Program announcement title and solicitation number (if known)
- Proposal due date (if known)
- Potential total new funding
- Potential total new funding to Iowa
- Estimated award date

Appendix C Proposed Budget Worksheet — To be Completed Online

Project Start Date: _____ Project End Date: _____

		Requested from the Iowa Energy Center
Supplies & Materials (show total and justify in the narrative)	Total Supply & Material Costs	\$ _____
Travel (itemize and provide justification in narrative)		
a. _____		\$ _____
b. _____		\$ _____
c. _____		\$ _____
	Total Travel Costs	\$ _____
Consultants (itemize and provide justification of rates and travel in narrative)		
a. _____		\$ _____
b. _____		\$ _____
	Total Consultant Costs	\$ _____
Other Direct Costs (show total cost and provide justification in narrative)	Total Other Direct Costs	\$ _____
TOTAL ESTIMATED COSTS		\$ _____

Instructions for Completing Proposed Budget Worksheet

Supplies & Materials: Show the total cost and briefly describe in the budget narrative the nature of the supplies and materials to be purchased. Iowa Energy Center planning grants may not be used to procure computers or for grounds, motor vehicles, and other capital expenses such as the construction, repair, or improvement of buildings (including fixed equipment within buildings).

Travel: List all planned trips and provide cost estimates for each. For each trip include destination, number of travelers, duration, fees, transportation, lodging, and meals. Include any meeting hospitality expenses under travel.

Consultants: Provide the rates and basis for rates for each proposed consultant. All consultant costs must be included in this category, including consultant travel. In the budget narrative, fully justify the need for outside consultants.

Other Costs: This category includes fabrication, equipment maintenance and repair, and other routine services (e.g., printing, mailing costs, chemical analysis, photographic services, and telephone charges) that can be clearly documented as specific to and necessary for the project. In the budget narrative, briefly describe the nature of the proposed Other Costs.

NOTE: The Iowa Energy Center does not pay indirect costs. Personnel and equipment costs are not allowed under this grant program.