

**Federal Grants and Loans for  
Renewable Energy & Cleantech Companies:**  
*An Introduction for Potential Applicants*

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# Schedule

- 7:30 – 7:40: Welcome and Introductions
- 7:40 – 8:15 Presentation
- 8:15 – 8:30 Q&A / Discussion
- 8:30 – 9:00 Networking

# Presentation Topics

1. Finding the Opportunities
2. Evaluating Opportunities
3. Preparing an Application
4. From the Application to the Award
5. Legal Issues in the Application Process
6. Tips for Applicants

# 1. Tracking Funding Opportunities

- *What funding opportunities are out there?*
  - DOE Loan Guarantee Program
  - Advanced Technology Vehicles Manufacturing (ATVM) Program
  - Recovery Act Grants for
    - Renewable energy
    - Energy efficiency
    - Smart grid
    - Transportation
  - And more ...

# 1. Tracking Funding Opportunities

- *Where should I look?*
- Comprehensive listings ...
  - [www.FedConnect.net](http://www.FedConnect.net)
  - [www.Grants.gov](http://www.Grants.gov)
- DOE listings ...
  - <http://www.energy.gov/recovery/funding.htm>
  - <http://www1.eere.energy.gov/financing/business.html>
- Other:
  - <http://www.grantsinfocenter.com/>

# 1. Tracking Funding Opportunities

- *Is it too late?*
  - Many deadlines for Recovery Act grants are approaching, and some have passed.
  - But more opportunities are on the way.
    - Future rounds under the Recovery Act
    - ATVM accepting applications
    - Loan Guarantee will re-open
    - More funding likely in future legislation; could be accompanied by program reforms

## 2. Evaluating the Opportunities

- *What to look for when reviewing an FOA?*
  - Eligibility (of applicant and project)
  - Areas of interest
  - Cost share
  - Award sizes & number of awards
  - Evaluation criteria
  - Elements required in application
  - Steps in application process
  - Certifications and assurances

## 2. Evaluating the Opportunities

- *What decisions need to be made?*
  - Who will be the **applicant**?
  - How will the "**project**" be defined?
  - What is the **schedule** and **budget**?
- All of these may evolve in response to the application requirements.
- And there is little time to adjust, given the application deadlines ...

# 3. Preparing the Application

- *What information must be included?*
  - Many required elements, not just a form.
  - Substantial lead time needed to prepare.
  - Key items include:
    - Narrative
    - Project Management Plan
    - Financials/Budget
    - Environmental Reports
    - More ...

## 3. Preparing the Application

- *How long does it take to prepare?*
  - At least several weeks.
  - Long-lead items may take longer.
  - More time needed if project definition changes, team members are added, etc.
- 'Rushed' process is the norm, given DOE's short deadlines.

## 3. Preparing the Application

- *How is an application filed?*
  - Upload through [www.FedConnect.net](http://www.FedConnect.net).
  - Early registration is essential (weeks, not days, in advance of deadline).

## 4. From Application to Award

- What are the initial steps in DOE's review?
  - "Substantial completeness" review
  - "Eligibility review"
- Many applications are rejected at these initial screens.
- Rejected applicants must wait for future solicitations.

## 4. From Application to Award

- *What does 'merit review' involve?*
  - Technical review based on evaluation criteria defined in program regulations or FOA.
  - Performed by technical experts (DOE staff or consultants).
  - May include information requests directed from DOE to applicant.
  - Does not involve an in-person 'pitch' session.

## 4. From Application to Award

- What other steps are required?
  - NEPA review
    - Includes an evaluation of the environmental impacts of the proposed project.
    - Simple for some projects, but can be time-consuming for others – e.g., construction projects.
  - Financial review
    - DOE rigorously reviews financial projections, including any third-party funding commitments
    - All loans must be reviewed by Credit Review Board

## 4. From Application to Award

- *How long will it all take?*
  - DOE is expediting its process, but it's still lengthy.
  - Initial round of Loan Guarantee applicants took more than a year
  - Initial round of ATVM applicants took about six months
  - Some Recovery Act grants may be faster...

## 5. Legal Issues

- *Can FOIA force DOE to disclose confidential information in an application?*
  - "Exemption 4" in FOIA allows DOE to withhold proprietary business information received from an applicant.
  - Applicant designates information as confidential in the application - but ultimately, DOE makes the call about what to release.

## 5. Legal Issues

- *Does DOE seek control of IP rights?*
  - Depends on nature of the work and terms of the agreement under which it is done.
  - By statute, DOE has an ownership stake in IP produced under a DOE award, but those rights can be waived under some conditions.
  - *IP ownership is a critical issue for applicants, and must be addressed case-by-case.*

## 5. Legal Issues

- *What restrictions apply to lobbying?*
  - President issued an order in March, restricting lobbyists' contact with agencies regarding Recovery Act funding.
  - OMB guidance has modified the prohibition on "oral communications". They now:
    - Apply to communications initiated by lobbyists and non-lobbyists (not just lobbyists)
    - Apply only from the filing of the application to the award of funding

## 5. Legal Issues

- *What reporting is required by grant and loan recipients?*
  - Quarterly reports
  - Filed on-line, and made available on-line
  - Required after award is made
  - Must disclose:
    - Funds received and spent
    - Jobs "created or retained"
    - Compensation of recipient's top 5 officers

# Tips for Applicants

1. Focus on eligibility first.
2. Define 'the project' early, and use that term consistently.
3. Make it easy for your reviewers.
4. Be attentive and responsive, not pushy.
5. Consider risks to ownership of your IP.
6. Register early with FedConnect.

Thank You!

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