

Request for Proposals

NASEO Equity in Energy Security and Resilience Education Program

Solicitation Number: NASEO-2022-RFP-001

Released: January 7, 2022

Responses Due: February 11, 2022

National Association of State Energy Officials
1300 17th Street North, Suite 1275
Arlington, Virginia, 22209

Note on applicants' eligibility: All applicants must meet the DOE Mandatory Requirements and Standard Provisions (Annex I).

I. Introduction and Background

Recent state and federal (Justice40 Initiative) efforts to enhance energy equity and climate justice have highlighted the need for specific equitable energy security and resilience strategies. While there are many yet unexplored facets of the convergence between energy security and equity, at a foundational level, this convergence is an effort to ensure that, regardless of race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, or geographic location, consumers have reliable, accessible, affordable, acceptable, and timely energy delivery. As state subject matter experts on energy and leaders of energy security and resilience policy, State Energy Offices—often led by governor-appointed energy directors—are well-poised to incorporate equity into State Energy Security Plans, policies, and procedures.

With funding from the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE), Office of Cybersecurity, Energy Security, and Emergency Response (CESER), the National Association of State Energy Officials (NASEO) and its Energy Security and Equity Committees aim to develop a program to support State and Territory Energy Offices (State Energy Offices) on what to consider and how to best provide technical assistance to disadvantaged and at-risk communities to support their energy security.

To accomplish this goal, NASEO seeks a *Consultant* to serve as an equity advisor to assist with the development and implementation of an educational program and written products to help State Energy Officials engage, support, and empower disadvantaged communities in their states to meet their energy security and resilience objectives. Because of the exploratory nature of this project and its intended outcomes, the *Consultant* will be expected to have experience working collaboratively with state and local stakeholders. Additionally, the *Consultant* will be expected to have knowledge of Justice40 and other justice and equity-focused programs, approaches, and policies. The ideal *Consultant* will have extensive experience supporting the advancement of energy equity and energy resilience in underserved communities.

II. Objectives

The *Consultant* will assist NASEO in the development of an educational program in the form of four [4] webinars and two written products, which includes novel takeaways, recommendations, and strategies that State Energy Offices might employ in supporting equitable energy security in their respective states. The first webinars will also serve as a feedback loop wherein the consultant will present on equity and resilience topics generally, gather feedback from NASEO members on those topics, and incorporate the feedback to add a state and local energy security-specific “lens” to equity and resilience best practices. The goal of this educational program will be to enhance the knowledge of State Energy Officials with regards to:

- Expanding the scope of State Energy Security Plans to better address the unique circumstances and needs of disadvantaged communities.
- Ensuring that energy security planning, response, recovery, and mitigation programs account for disadvantaged communities.
- Developing long-term feedback mechanisms, structures, and/or relationships with disadvantaged communities to support their efforts to identify, assess, and mitigate energy security risks.

III. Approach

The *Consultant* will host a kickoff meeting with NASEO to discuss the approach for this activity. NASEO will provide a compilation of relevant energy security resources to the advisor to enhance their knowledge of the unique roles, responsibilities, and context of State Energy Offices.

Review of Background Materials

NASEO will provide the *Consultant* with appropriate background material and contextual documents (e.g., State Energy Office plans, programs, state strategies, case studies, etc.) to ensure that the current landscape of energy equity, resilience, and energy security as it pertains to State Energy Offices is accurately captured. The *Consultant* will be expected to review these documents and provide a summary of the findings to NASEO which will include a list of gaps or opportunities that may be addressed by the educational program.

Educational Program

The *Consultant* will be expected to leverage their expertise of equity, energy justice, and resilience to develop the education program for NASEO which will examine the nexus of energy security and equity.

The *Consultant* will work with NASEO to host 4 workshop webinars for the NASEO membership (one [1] introductory virtual webinar and three [3] subsequent educational webinars). The first webinar will be for the mutual educational benefit of NASEO members and the advisor to:

- Gain perspective on what State Energy Officials want and need from the program;
- Solicit input from NASEO members, relevant affiliates and partners (including local associations, grassroots organizations, and equity experts) on subsequent webinars, especially on engagement with disadvantaged communities and other relevant equitable energy security topics;
- Provide insight to the *Consultant* on the State Energy Office role as energy security, resilience, and assurance leads in the state; and
- Define the scope and parameters of realistic State Energy Office involvement in supporting equitable energy security and engagement with disadvantaged communities.

The topics of the three [3] subsequent educational webinars will be determined and agreed upon by NASEO and the *Consultant*.

The *Consultant* will incorporate feedback from NASEO and its members to produce (1) a final takeaways summary and (2) an outline or framework for an “Equity in Energy Security Planning” that may be referenced by states when updating their own State Energy Security Plans with provisions for equity, and while developing and implementing energy security programs.

Final Products

Following the educational program, the *Consultant* will draft two final written products and send them to NASEO for review and comment. Based on feedback from NASEO and its members, the *Consultant* will revise the documents and prepare final drafts for NASEO. Upon NASEO approval, the *Consultant* will finalize the documents for subsequent publication, distribution, reference, and development by NASEO. The consultant shall not have the right to reproduce, utilize portions of, or publish the material or takeaways document without NASEO’s express written permission.

Digital Design and Development

The *Consultant* will ensure that the final product is useable in both a digital (MS Word and PDF) and physical/printed format (standard 8.5 x 11 format). Interactive graphics or features will not be developed.

IV. Statement of Work, Timeline, and Expected Deliverables

NASEO is seeking to engage a *Consultant* (either an organization or independent consultant) for various expert services and tasks as described herein. It is envisioned that this project will be initiated in February 2022 and conclude no later than September 2022. Prior to the commencement of any formal task, NASEO will host a kickoff meeting with the contractor to clarify any approaches, answer any questions, and

resolve other specific details for the program. Based on the approach outlined above, the *Consultant* will be responsible for the following tasks and deliverables:

Task 1: Background Material Review and Summary

The *Consultant* will, in coordination with NASEO, conduct a background literature review of relevant (i.e., as pertaining to equity and community resilience; energy-specific preferred) state and territory energy office resources; broader state strategies employed to address energy equity and resilience; and summarize relevant findings and gaps. The intent of this review is to provide an overview of the state of energy security subjects with considerations for equity (e.g., energy emergency and disaster planning, preparedness, response, recovery, mitigation), identify opportunities for novel improvements to existing material, and determine appropriate potential starting actions for State Energy Offices to facilitate long-term relationships with disadvantaged communities. The summary will not exceed four [4] pages.

Task 2: Introductory Virtual Workshop with NASEO Members

With NASEO support, the *Consultant* will design and host a virtual workshop with NASEO and select state energy officials to solicit input on the format and content of the educational program. The *Consultant* will perform the following functions during the webinar: (1) review the current landscape of energy equity and resilience based on the Background Material Review and Summary and solicit State Energy Office feedback; (2) conduct a facilitated discussion with state energy officials to help guide the development of the subsequent educational webinar series.

Task 3: Educational Webinars

Based on the landscape of energy equity and resilience clarified through *Task 1*, and the feedback received during *Task 2*, the *Consultant* will design the three (3) subsequent webinars. NASEO and DOE will approve the final plan before the consultant begins any further design of the educational webinars. The *Consultant* will host each webinar. Each webinar will be no longer than two (2) hours in length and will be designed to allow for up to one (1) hour of facilitated discussion. Feedback from the discussion will be incorporated into the final written products. The presentation portion of each webinar will be recorded and shared with NASEO members. NASEO may also elect to post the recording on the NASEO YouTube page. The facilitated discussion may be recorded for reference by NASEO and the *Consultant* but will not be distributed or posted online. Slides from each webinar will also be shared.

Task 4: Final Deliverables

The *Consultant* will deliver two final written products. The first written product will be a summary of key takeaways, insights gained from State Energy Offices and partners, and lessons learned from the educational webinars. The second written product will be an Appendix/Annex outline which may be referenced by State Energy Offices in the internal development of State Energy Security Plans; specifically, a framework, outline, or itemized list of subtopics pertaining to equity integration into state energy security plans, policies, and procedures.

Upon completion of the initial draft of the final written products, the *Consultant* will provide a copy to NASEO for review and comment. NASEO may choose to send the initial draft to select stakeholders for further input. The *Consultant* will incorporate feedback and provide a second draft of the final written products to NASEO. NASEO will provide the second draft to DOE for review and comment. NASEO may also opt to send the second draft to select relevant external stakeholders for review and comment.

For planning purposes, the *Consultant* should build 4 weeks into the deliverables schedule to accommodate internal and external reviews and revisions. More time may be needed to accommodate external reviewers' availability.

Upon receiving feedback on the second draft, the *Consultant* will revise the final written products and provide a final draft to NASEO. NASEO will provide both the final draft and the executive summary to DOE for final review. That review process can take up to four weeks, which should be reflected in the deliverables schedule.

Once DOE has completed its final review, NASEO will discuss any proposed changes with the *Consultant*, who will then proceed to finalize the takeaways document. Pending timely reviews/revisions, the *Consultant* will submit the final takeaways document and executive summary to NASEO. NASEO's communications department will complete copy editing and layout following final submission by the *Consultant*.

Project Schedule (Estimated)

Task	Estimated Deliverable Date*
Task 1: Background Material Review and Summary	March 2022
Task 2: Introductory Virtual Webinar	March 2022
Task 3: Educational Webinar Program	April, May, June 2022 (respectively)
Task 4: Final Written Products	July 2022

* The deliverable timeline may change depending on timeliness of internal and external reviews and approval processes. Final document review by DOE may also delay final deliverable date.

V. Period of Performance

This project is estimated to last from February 2022 to August 2022.

VI. Project Budget

The proposed project budget should reflect a times and materials consulting agreement. This is a competitively bid project; costs should be feasible and prudent. The *Subcontractor* must submit cost proposals by task for the entire Statement of Work using the DOE EERE-335 budget justification spreadsheet which is a separate file available for download from DOE's website. NASEO may request changes to the proposal if the proposed scope exceeds the available budget.

Compensation: The consultant shall invoice monthly for actual work completed. NASEO shall reimburse the *Subcontractor* for actual milestones achieved and hours spent in the execution of the work (not to exceed the total approved task budget shown in the final contract agreement) once NASEO has received payment from DOE. The *Subcontractor* will submit a monthly invoice and progress report by the tenth of each month of the agreement.

Rejection of Proposals and Incurred Costs

This Request for Proposals (RFP) does not obligate NASEO to award an agreement. All costs incurred in response to this RFP are the responsibility of the respondent.

NASEO reserves the right to reject any or all submitted proposals not in conformance with this RFP, or for other causes. NASEO reserves the right to request new proposals or to cancel all or part of this solicitation.

VII. Contract Requirements

The funds for this work have been provided through a cooperative agreement between NASEO and the DOE's Office of Cybersecurity, Energy Security, and Emergency Response. The underlying terms and conditions of the cooperative agreement between DOE and NASEO will be provided to the *Subcontractor*

and incorporated in the awarded subcontract. All requirements of the DOE contract shall be controlling, including, but not limited to, federal reporting and the propriety and form of expenses and costs. The contract shall be issued following approval from DOE and will become effective when signed and dated by NASEO and the *Subcontractor*.

VIII. Responding to the RFP

Please submit responses to the RFP to Campbell Delahoyde by e-mail at cdelahoyde@naseo.org. **RFP responses are due no later than 5:00 pm EST on February 11, 2022.** Please limit the narrative that addresses the proposed approach and treatment of the project tasks and proposed budget to 6 pages in 11pt. font. Responses shall fully address the following:

- Cover letter
- Resumes
- Description of relevant experience, including experience supporting local equity, resilience writ large, and energy security
- Proposed approach and treatment of the tasks and sub-tasks with a view toward expected deliverables
- Proposed Budget by Task Deliverables (budget should be completed using the DOE EERE-335 budget justification spreadsheet)

Note: Late proposals will not be accepted.

IX. Subcontractor Selection and Required Qualifications

NASEO will select a *Subcontractor* through a competitive selection, which will include consideration of the following:

- Experience working with State Energy Offices or other relevant state agencies.
- Relevant experience working on equity, community engagement, and energy security/resilience topics.
- Competitive budget proposal.
- Quality of academic and professional experience in relevant field.
- Flexibility of availability.

The NASEO Evaluation Team will use the following criteria in assessing all responses to this RFP.

Technical Experience and Applicant Qualifications (30% of total score)

1. Relevant experience in proposed topics in the energy sector, particularly working with disadvantaged communities, grassroots organizations, energy industry partners, and State Energy Offices.
2. Adequate level of technical knowledge to meet the demands of the project.
3. Quality of academic and professional experience in relevant field.

Proposed Approach for Implementation (40% of total score)

1. Proposal responds to the outlined topics in the RFP.
2. Existing resources / subcontractor availability to meet needs of flexible deployment.
3. Overall quality and professionalism of the proposal (well written, structured and organized) and materials are provided in the format requested.

Budget (30% of total score)

1. Given the scope, is the estimated cost of the proposal appropriate?
2. Does overall cost reflect an efficient value for the level of effort?
3. Is the level of effort for each task appropriate?