

NASEO Midwest State Roundtable: Iowa Energy Office Update

2:15 p.m. – 3:45 p.m. – **State Roundtable: COVID-19 Impacts and Opportunities, and Advancing Equity within State Energy Offices**

During this roundtable session, each State Energy Office will be asked to share updates from their office by addressing the questions below. *States are encouraged to share a one-page print out of their responses prior to the meeting, and should limit their remarks to 5-10 minutes each, with discussion to follow.*

1. What projects or programs are your office's SEP funds supporting this upcoming year and will you be considering changes due to COVID-19?

An Iowa Energy Storage Economic Development Assessment is underway and is the result of a recommendation of the Iowa Energy Storage Action Plan that was released in 2019. The assessment's goal is to complete a more in-depth analysis of how Iowa can best prepare for energy storage and the economic development potential.

EV charging station at IEDA (state agency lead by example)

Energy code collaboration

Public building benchmarking

Energy assurance/rural community resiliency plans

Renewable natural gas opportunities

VW settlement collaboration w/DOT

Energy Storage conference

Energy Efficiency Summit

First responder trainings around alternative fuel vehicles

No specific changes are expected for the upcoming fiscal year as a result of COVID other than our travel budget is not going to be realized and we may need to shift some funding to further support already identified initiatives.

a. What additional clean energy policies, programs, or projects is your office supporting (if any), and how is your office working to overcome implementation challenges associated with COVID-19?

This will not be made public until next week, but our agency and in particular the energy office has been tasked by the Governor's Office to develop and launch a COVID-19 utility bill assistance program for small businesses and non-profits. The program funding will come from Iowa's share of CARES ACT. We will make sure to share with NASEO details once the program goes live and we'd be more than willing to share lessons learned with any interested states and their energy offices.

Update on Governor Kim Reynolds' role as Chair of the Midwestern Gov.'s Association and with a Chair's agenda of establishing a long-term transmission grid vision for the Midwest. The regional grid vision has been developed with collaboration and input by many participating states and within the next few weeks, it is expected that the grid vision will be shared with the heads of MISO, SPP & PJM.

Thanks to Microsoft Teams and an increased emphasis on virtual coordination, the Iowa Energy Office has continued with a "business as usual" mentality. We have been working remotely since

mid-March with travel restrictions in place for the remainder of 2020. Going back to the office is mostly being based on comfort level, personal and health related factors. SEP implementation efforts are continuing as planned.

b. Have you been able to improve your office's programs or operations as a result of COVID-19?

Working remotely and holding virtual meetings is not as foreign, daunting, or ineffective as it once seemed. This realization has made the Iowa Energy Office more mobile and resourceful.

2. How is your office working to advance equitable and inclusive energy policies, programs, engagement, and decision-making?

The Iowa Energy Office continues to have collaborative relationships with energy stakeholders across the state to include utilities, energy associations, other state agencies, internal energy programs like the Iowa Energy Center and more. We are a small office in terms of number of employees, so we have to be resourceful and strategic in ensuring our programs and supportive funding are both impactful and far-reaching, especially for our low-income and rural citizens and businesses. We have found success in this area by providing grant funding to other organizations who can address our key focus areas and with greater staffing resources. Examples include:

- Grant for Green Iowa AmeriCorps to offer energy efficiency expertise for Low- to Moderate-Income Households.
- Grant for University of Northern Iowa's Waste Reduction Center to offer on-site technical assistance, specifically tailored to the needs of rural small business to reduce their energy consumption.
- Grant to Iowa Prison Industries for an energy training manager that teaches incarcerated men construction skills while they build energy efficient affordable housing for income qualified Iowans. Incarcerated individuals will receive third party certification related to energy efficient building skills increasing the energy workforce pool of applicants when they re-enter the workforce.