

US Department of Energy

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The US Department of Energy (DOE) has several avenues for funding activities that have an energy-related component. These avenues include a variety of solicitations issued by various departments throughout the year, including the Regional Biomass Energy Program, grants through the Small Business and Innovation Research (SBIR) and Inventions and Innovations programs, Cooperative Research and Development Agreements (CRADAs), and other avenues. DOE funds are also frequently available through programs conducted by state energy offices. Most DOE funding requires cost sharing from non-federal sources. Examples are described below.

The Inventions and Innovations Program provides funds to establish technical performance and conduct a project in the early development phase. Financial assistance is offered at two levels: up to \$40,000 or up to \$100,000. One solicitation per year is issued, however submissions can be made anytime. Other assistance can come from technical partners, commercial sponsors, or business plan resources.

The NICE3 (National Industrial Competitiveness Through Energy, Environment, Economics) program focuses on simultaneous reduction of industrial energy use, reduction of pollution generated by industrial pro-

cesses, and improvement of the economics of energy production. The proposer must justify the use of government funds and awardees are expected to finance continuation after initial government funding. Awards are made through the states.

The SBIR (Small Business Innovation Research) program requires the participation of all federal agencies with budgets over \$100,000 and 2.5% is set aside to implement this program. SBIR contains specific topical areas that vary yearly and consists of 3 phases: phase 1—up to \$100,000 may be awarded for a 6 month feasibility study; phase 2—up to \$75,000 may be awarded over a 2 year period to conduct principal R&D; phase 3—non-federal capital is used to pursue commercial applications. One solicitation is issued per year. The anticipated FY 1999 budget is \$75 million.

Request for Proposals (RFP's) and Program Opportunity Notices (PONs) for energy-related R&D are offered by various offices within DOE and include the Office of Industrial Technologies, the Office of Transportation Technologies, the Office of Utilities Technology, and the Regional Biomass Energy Program. Announcements are made in the *Commerce Business Daily* (CBD). The amount of awards, the timing of RFPs and the award processes vary greatly.

Another mechanism to promote R&D is the CRADA (Cooperative Research & Development Agreement). Government and a company cooperate on R&D through a formal agreement to determine how much each party puts into R&D. The company keeps the intellectual property and the government keeps the information for a period of time. This mechanism is heavy on bureaucracy and red tape.

Unsolicited proposals have little likelihood of being funded. The numerous solicitations that are offered throughout the year are usually general enough to cover most subjects. For more information about funding opportunities that have been described, check the following websites:

www.eren.doe.gov

www.eren.doe.gov/golden

and check the *Commerce Business Daily* (CBD)