Department of Energy
Assistance Regulation

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FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE LETTER

This Financial Assistance Letter is issued under the authority of the Procurement Executives of DOE and NNSA

Subject: Implementation of DOE's Industry Interactive Procurement System (IIPS)

When is this Financial Assistance Letter (FAL) Effective?

This FAL is effective 10 business days from the date of issuance.

When Does this FAL Expire?

This FAL remains in effect until superseded or canceled.

Who is the Point of Contact?

Contact Trudy Wood of the Office of Procurement and Assistance Policy at (202) 586-5625, or by email at trudy.wood@pr.doe.gov

Please visit our website at www.pr.doe.gov/fahome.html for information on Financial Assistance Letters and other policy issues.

What is the Purpose of this FAL?

This FAL provides guidance on implementing the Industry Interactive Procurement System (IIPS) for financial assistance.

What is the Background?

On October 1, 2001, DOE contracting officers began using IIPS for competitive financial assistance actions in accordance with the direction contained in an April 3, 2001 memorandum from the DOE and NNSA Directors, Office of Procurement and Assistance Management. In June 2002, the Office of Science began using IIPS to post solicitations and receive new applications under its Program Rule.

During the last year, IIPS users suggested improvements to the system and expressed concern about the lack of standard solicitation instructions on how to use IIPS. They noted that many contracting activities had included IIPS instructions in their solicitations or on their web sites; however, the instructions varied in content and detail and some were easier to understand than others. ME-651 is currently making limited enhancements to IIPS relating to the submission of financial assistance applications (e.g., instead of submitting 3 separate volumes, applicants will submit a single volume with specified file attachments). This FAL provides guidance for posting financial assistance solicitations on the IIPS web site and model IIPS instructions that can be incorporated into those solicitations.

Guidance Included in this Financial Assistance Letter

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I. What are the DOE Contracting Officers' Responsibilities?

A. IIPS REQUIREMENT

In accordance with the direction contained in an April 3, 2001 memorandum from the DOE and NNSA Directors, Office of Procurement and Assistance Management, Contracting Officers must use IIPS for competitive financial assistance solicitations. If it is not practicable to use IIPS for a specific requirement, the Contracting Officer must obtain a waiver from the DOE Director, Office of Management Systems and Services for a DOE solicitation, or from the NNSA Director, Office of Acquisition and Assistance Policy for a NNSA solicitation. Requests for waivers should be signed by the Procurement Director and provide sufficient justification to support the request.

B. SOLICITATION

The Contracting Officer must ensure that:

- the application preparation instructions in the solicitation identify the files that must be included in the application and the format for the files (e.g., MS Word, PDF). Except for DOE or standard forms, solicitations that close after January 31, 2003 must describe what information is to be included in each of the following files:

  <u>File Names as Listed on the IIPS Application Creation Page</u>

  - Application/Pre-application (Contracting Officers must describe the requirement for a pre-application, if any, and specify SF 424 or DOE F 4650.2)
  - Certifications and Assurances
  - Project Summary
  - Narrative
  - Budget (Contracting Officers must specify SF 424A, SF 424C, DOE 4600.4 or 4620.1)
  - Budget Narrative

  <u>(Additional Files, if needed)</u>
  - Attachment 1
  - Attachment 2
  - Attachment 3
  - Attachment 4

- the solicitation specifies which forms must be included in an application and the location where the forms are available. Suggested solicitation language:

Application Forms.
The application form (Insert: SF 424 or DOE F 4650.2), Budget Form (insert: SF 424A, SF 424 C, DOE F 4600.4, or 4620.1), and Certifications and Assurances are available at {Insert URL or location of forms}. You must complete the required information, type the name of the individual authorized to sign the form in the signature block, and save the file with the designated name for that form.

C. AMENDMENTS

The Contracting Officer must ensure that:

- all amendments are posted on IIPS as a "Document" (See IIPS User Guide).
- the prior version of the solicitation is removed from IIPS.
- changes to the solicitation are incorporated in a new conformed file of the solicitation and a line in the margin annotates the changed sections.
- the conformed solicitation file is posted on IIPS. The conformed solicitation must identify the original issuance date and the date of the last revision.

II. What Information Should Be Included in the Solicitation?

Contracting Officers should include the information contained in paragraphs A, B, and C, in this section, in solicitations issued through IIPS that close after January 31, 2003. If there is a specified application deadline, Contracting Officers should include paragraph D, Application Due Date. Contracting Officers should also include paragraph E, More than One Application, if applicable.

A. LOCATE SOLICITATION, JOIN MAILING LIST, SUBMIT QUESTIONS, VIEW AMENDMENTS OR QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

If you would like to receive notifications related to this specific solicitation, submit questions on the content of the solicitation, or view amendments or questions and answers, you should locate this solicitation, and then follow the appropriate directions:

1. **Locate Solicitation.**
   - Go to the IIPS website at http://e-center.doe.gov and click on "Browse Opportunities", or login in if you are registered.
   - Click on any of the options for viewing the solicitation (whichever is easiest for you to locate this solicitation).
   - Click on "Enter IIPS".
   - Locate and click on the solicitation number to view "Synopsis and Solicitation Information".
   - Click on hyperlink under "File Attachments" or "URL Links" to access the full solicitation or program notice.

2. **Join Solicitation Mailing List.**
Click on the "Join Solicitation Mailing List" button at the top of the page, enter the required information, and submit. After you have joined the list, you should receive an email when a solicitation message is posted. Even though you have joined the mailing list, you should visit the solicitation page periodically to ensure that you have the latest information.

3. **View Amendments.**
   - Click on the yellow folder next to the solicitation number to view amendments and solicitation messages; or
   - Follow directions for "Locate Solicitation" to view a conformed copy of the solicitation (a line in the margin annotates changed sections).

4. **Submit Question on the Content of the Solicitation.**
Click on the "Submit Question" button at the top and enter required information. You will receive an electronic notification that your question has been answered. DOE/NNSA will try to respond to a question within 5 days, unless a similar question and answer have already been posted on the website.

5. **View Questions and Answers.**
Click on the "View Questions" button at the top of the page. If no questions have been submitted and answered, a statement to that effect will appear at the top of the page. You should periodically check the IIPS website for new questions and answers.

B. SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS

1. **Electronic Submission.**
Applications must be submitted through the DOE Industry Interactive Procurement System (IIPS) at http://e-center.doe.gov in accordance with the instructions in this solicitation. ONLY APPLICATIONS SUBMITTED THROUGH IIPS WILL BE CONSIDERED FOR AWARD.

2. **Electronic Signature.**
Applications submitted through IIPS constitute submission of electronically signed applications. The name of the authorized organizational representative (i.e., the administrative official, who, on behalf of the proposing organization, is authorized to make certifications and assurances or to commit the applicant to the conduct of a project) must be typed in the signature block on the form to be accepted as an electronic signature. A scanned copy of the signed document is not required.

3. **IIPS Registration.**
In order to submit an application, you must be authorized by the applicant (i.e., institution or business entity) to submit an application on its behalf and you must

register in IIPS. You are encouraged to register as soon as possible. You only have to register once to apply for any DOE award. To register:

- Go to the IIPS website at http://e-center.doe.gov.
- Click on the "Register" button on the left.
- Click on the box that says, "Check this box for Acquisitions greater than Simplified Acquisitions threshold or financial assistance" and then click on the radio button next to the "Register only" option.
- Click on "Proceed to Form."
- Read the "Security Alert" and click on "Yes" to proceed.
- Read the "Notice of Disclaimer" and click on "I Accept."
- Complete the Registration Form.
- Click on "Submit Registration." You will receive an acknowledgement confirming receipt of your registration.
- Then you will receive an email confirming successful registration. If you do not receive an email confirmation within one business day, contact the IIPS Help Desk at 1-800-683-0751 and select option 1, or send an email to HelpDesk@e-center.doe.gov.
- Note the user name on your confirmation and your password for future reference. You must use this user name and password for any applications submitted in IIPS.

4. **Submit Application or Pre-application (if a pre-application is required):** You are strongly encouraged to submit your application or pre-application at least 24 hours before the deadline in order to have time to resolve any transmission problems. If you are registered in IIPS, you may use the IIPS test site at http://doe-iips.pr.doe.gov/iips/busopor.nsf/TestSolicitation?OpenView&login to practice submitting an application. You can also access the test site from the link provided at the top of each solicitation page.

   To submit an application, complete the following steps:

   Step 1 -- Prepare Application
   Prepare all of the files in accordance with the instructions in this solicitation prior to starting the transmission process. You should submit the entire application package in one IIPS session (i.e., do not logoff before all the files are attached).

   Step 2 – Locate Solicitation and Create Application
   - Enter the IIPS website at http://e-center.doe.gov.
   - Click on "Login" button on the left.
   - Click on the radio button that says, "Industry Interactive Procurement System."
   - Enter your user name (as shown on your registration email confirmation) and password. (Note: These are case sensitive.)

- The "View Synopses and Solicitations as Sorted by...." screen will appear. Click on one of the choices and locate the solicitation.
- Click on the solicitation number and the Synopsis & Solicitation Information screen will appear.
- Click on "Create Application" (you may have to scroll to the right to locate the button) and complete the information on the Application Cover Page. Enter the project title and the principal investigator/project director, if any, in the "Subject" blank.

Step 3 --- Attach Files and Submit Application

- Click on "Submit Cover Page & Attach Files", complete information, and submit.
- Click on "Attach Application" link.
- Attach each file in the corresponding block on the page and then click "Submit."
- IIPS will provide an acknowledgement.
- Click on the link on the acknowledgement to verify submission. It will take you to your submission.
- In order to verify successful transmission at a later date, click on the yellow folder beside the solicitation number. Your application should appear.

5. **Questions or Problems with Transmission**
View the "IIPS Frequently Asked Questions" by clicking on the "Help" button. You may also call 1-800-683-0751 and select option 1, or send an email to IIPS_HelpDesk@e-center.doe.gov, for help with the IIPS system. If you have questions on the content of the solicitation, follow the directions for "Submit Question on the Content of the Solicitation."

6. **IIPS User Guide:** Additional instructions are available in the IIPS User Guide. Click on the "help" button to access the guide.

C. REVISIONS, DELETIONS, AND WITHDRAWAL OF APPLICATIONS

1. **Remove application or application file(s) from IIPS**
To delete or withdraw an application or an application file(s), send an email to the IIPS Help Desk requesting the application or file(s), be removed. Be sure to identify your user name, the applicant's name, and the subject, as shown on the cover page of the application.

2. **Submit revised application**
Follow the steps in "Submit Application or Pre-application" to submit a revised application (i.e. cover page and all required files).

3. **Submit revised file**
After the Help Desk has removed the requested file from your application:

- Locate the solicitation.
- Click on the yellow folder next to the solicitation number.
- Click on the cover page of your submission, click on the "Attach Application" link, and attach the revised file. In the event that two files, with identical names, are included in an application, the file with the latest transmission date/time stamp will be considered for review, if it is received prior to the deadline.

D. APPLICATION DUE DATE

Applications and amendments of applications must be received by [Insert date], not later than 8:00 PM EST. You are encouraged to transmit your application well before the deadline. APPLICATIONS, OR APPLICATION FILES, THAT HAVE AN IIPS DATE/TIME STAMP LATER THAN THE DEADLINE WILL NOT BE REVIEWED OR CONSIDERED FOR AWARD.

E. MORE THAN ONE APPLICATION

You may submit more than one application. Each application must have its own unique title on the subject line (i.e., project title and principal investigator/project director, if any). For each application, you must first click on "Create Application" and then complete the information requested.

III. What Are the Requirements for Solicitations Issued Under a Program Rule?

If a Program Official decides to issue a solicitation or a funding opportunity notice through IIPS, the solicitation, funding opportunity notice, or the application instructions must include the language in Section II of this FAL.