

Open the Front Door

THE PROBLEM

A front door too few can find or walk through

The Department of Energy (DOE) is the nation’s primary engine for funding high-potential energy research and deployment — including work the private sector cannot take on alone. But for many capable companies, engaging DOE is harder than it should be opportunities are scattered with no single-entry point, solicitations are written in dense language, and applications often demand months of work before a company learns if it has any real chance. The result is a shrinking applicant pool, and the losses are invisible. Companies that never find, decode, or finish the process simply never appear in DOE’s own data. This Blueprint traces the application journey through three stages, each with its own barriers.

BARRIER 1 - DISCOVERY
Awareness & Accessibility
Many companies that could contribute to national priorities never find a relevant funding opportunity because schedules aren’t published far enough in advance, the timing doesn’t work, or they never see the opportunity at all.

BARRIER 2 - UNDERSTANDING
Information & Trust
Some companies find federal funding opportunities but lack the information needed to make an informed decision about whether to apply.

BARRIER 3 - EFFORT
Application Burden & Narrow Topics
Others decide to apply but face disproportionate effort, unclear processes, and solicitation topics scoped too narrowly to accommodate their approach..

Working models already exist inside DOE. The goal is to standardize and scale what already works, not invent something new

WHAT DOE SHOULD DO — AND HOW

Five moves, one system

Each reform is within DOE's existing authority. The set reinforces itself — a portal is far more useful with a forward schedule behind it; concept papers make broader, outcome-based topics manageable instead of overwhelming.

1 - Digital Front Door

Single Funding Portal:
A single, searchable portal listing all competitive funding opportunities across DOE with structured listings covering technology area, funding range, mechanism type, eligibility, and status.

Future Solicitation Schedule
A forward-looking schedule of planned solicitations published six to twelve months out, integrated into the solicitations portal. Same authority.

Next Step: – One office publishes a single, consistently formatted page of its live opportunities within months - then scale department-wide.

2 - Simplified, Standarized & Transparent Applications

Right-size applications to what DOE needs to make a decision; publish terms & conditions - with plain-language guides and a two-page summary - alongside every solicitation, before applicants commit.

Who Acts
Pogram offices + General Counsel

First Step
Add a two-page plain-language front page to the next solicitation

3- Funded Intermediaries for Outreach & Application Support

Systematically fund accelerators, incubators, and tech-transfer offices that companies already trust to reach applicants