



Inland Regional Energy Network I-REN Executive Committee

REVISED AGENDA

Tuesday, October 17, 2023
2:00 PM

WRCOG
3390 University Avenue
Suite 200, Citrus Conference Room
Riverside, CA 92501

Remote Meeting Locations:

CVAG
74-199 El Paseo
West Building, Suite 100
Palm Desert, CA 92260

County of San Bernardino
Conference Room A
14010 City Center Drive
Chino Hills, CA 91709

The following remote location is no longer available:

~~The Town of Apple Valley
Town Hall, Conference Room A
14955 Dale Evans Parkway
Apple Valley, CA 92307~~

Committee members are asked to attend this meeting in person unless remote accommodations have previously been requested and noted on the agenda. The below Zoom link is provided for the convenience of members of the public, presenters, and support staff.

[Public Zoom Link](#)
Meeting ID: 853 0667 5994
Passcode: 563708
Dial in: (669) 900 9128 U.S.

In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act and Government Code Section 54954.2, if special assistance is needed to participate in the I-REN Executive Committee meeting, please contact WRCOG at (951) 405-6702. Notification of at least 48 hours prior to meeting time will assist staff in assuring that reasonable arrangements can be made to provide accessibility at the meeting. In compliance with Government Code Section 54957.5, agenda materials distributed within 72 hours prior to the meeting which are public records relating to an open session agenda item will be available for inspection by members of the public prior to the meeting at 3390 University Avenue, Suite 200, Riverside, CA, 92501.

In addition to commenting at the Committee meeting, members of the public may also submit written comments before or during the meeting, prior to the close of public comment to jleonard@wrcog.us.

Any member of the public requiring a reasonable accommodation to participate in this meeting in light of this announcement shall contact Janis Leonard 72 hours prior to the meeting at (951) 405-6702 or jleonard@wrcog.us. Later requests will be accommodated to the extent feasible.

The Committee may take any action on any item listed on the agenda, regardless of the Requested Action.

1. **CALL TO ORDER (Crystal Ruiz, Chair)**
2. **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**
3. **ROLL CALL**
4. **PUBLIC COMMENTS**

At this time members of the public can address the Committee regarding any items within the subject matter jurisdiction of the Committee that are not separately listed on this agenda. Members of the public will have an opportunity to speak on agenda items at the time the item is called for discussion. No action may be taken on items not listed on the agenda unless authorized by law. Whenever possible, lengthy testimony should be presented to the Committee in writing and only pertinent points presented orally.

5. **CONSENT CALENDAR**

All items listed under the Consent Calendar are considered to be routine and may be enacted by one motion. Prior to the motion to consider any action by the Committee, any public comments on any of the Consent Items will be heard. There will be no separate action unless members of the Committee request specific items be removed from the Consent Calendar.

A. **Action Minutes from the August 15, 2023, Executive Committee Meeting**

Requested Action(s): 1. Approve the Action Minutes from the August 15, 2023, Executive Committee meeting.

6. **REPORTS / DISCUSSION**

Members of the public will have an opportunity to speak on agenda items at the time the item is called for discussion.

A. **I-REN Programmatic Activities Updates**

Requested Action(s): 1. Receive and file.

B. Public Sector Technical Assistance and Incentive Structure Discussion

Requested Action(s):

1. Provide feedback on the four presented policy options to establish resource allocation for the Public Sector Technical Assistance Program.
2. Approve the proposed Normalized Metered Energy Consumption Incentive Program structure, with the option to adjust after a 12-month evaluation.

C. Workforce Education & Training Update - Workforce Request for Proposal

Requested Action(s):

1. Receive and file.

7. REPORT FROM THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE CHAIR

Crystal Ruiz, WRCOG

8. ITEMS FOR FUTURE AGENDAS

Members are invited to suggest additional items to be brought forward for discussion at future Committee meetings.

9. GENERAL ANNOUNCEMENTS

Members are invited to announce items / activities which may be of general interest to the Committee.

10. NEXT MEETING

The next I-REN Executive Committee meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, November 21, 2023, at 2:00 p.m., location to be determined.

11. ADJOURNMENT

12. AGENCY ACRONYMS

Inland Regional Energy Network Acronym Guide

3C-REN – Tri-County Regional Energy Network (Counties of Ventura, Santa Barbara, and San Luis Obispo)

ABAL – Annual Budget Advice Letter

AHJ – Authority Having Jurisdiction

AVCE – Apple Valley Choice Energy

BayREN – Bay Area Regional Energy Network (nine county REN in Northern California)

BUC – Building Upgrade Concierge

C&S – Codes & Standards

CAEECC – California Energy Efficiency Coordinating Committee

CalChoice – California Choice Energy Authority

Cal ISO – California Independent System Operator

CARB – California Air Resources Board

CCA – Community Choice Aggregator

CCEC – California Climate & Energy Collaborative

CEC – California Energy Commission

COG - Council of Government

CPA – Clean Power Alliance

CPUC – California Public Utilities Commission

CVAG – Coachella Valley Association of Governments

DAC – Disadvantaged Communities
DACAG – Disadvantaged Communities Advisory Group
DCE – Desert Community Energy
DER – Distributed Energy Resources
DOE – U.S Department of Energy
EE – Energy Efficiency
EM&V – Evaluation, Measurement, and Verification
EV – Electric Vehicle
GHG – Greenhouse gas
HTR – Hard To Reach communities
IID – Imperial Irrigation District
IOU – Investor-Owned Utility
I-REN – Inland Regional Energy Network
JCM – Joint Cooperation Memorandum
LGSEC – Local Government Sustainable Energy Coalition
LGP – Local Government Partnership
MOA – Memorandum of Agreement
NEBs – Non-energy Benefits
NMEC – Normalized Metered Energy Consumption
NREL – U.S Department of Energy National Renewable Energy Laboratory
PG&E – Pacific Gas & Electric
PA – Program Administrator
POU – Publicly Owned Utility
REN – Regional Energy Network
RMEA – Rancho Mirage Energy Authority
RPU – Riverside Public Utilities
SBCOG – San Bernardino Council of Governments
SCE – Southern California Edison
SCG / SoCalGas – Southern California Gas Company
SDG&E – San Diego Gas & Electric
SJP – San Jacinto Power
SoCalREN – Southern California Regional Energy Network (all of southern California, administered by Los Angeles County)
TA – Technical Assistance
TOU – Time of use
TRC – Total Resources Cost
V2G – Vehicle to Grid
WE&T – Workforce Education & Training
WRCOG – Western Riverside Council of Governments

I-REN Executive Committee

Action Minutes

1. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting of the I-REN Executive Committee was called to order by Chair Crystal Ruiz at 2:00 p.m. on August 15, 2023, at the WRCOG office, 3390 University Avenue, Suite 200, Riverside.

2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Committee member Chris Barajas led the Committee members and guests in the Pledge of Allegiance.

3. ROLL CALL

CVAG

- City of La Quinta - Linda Evans

SBCOG

- City of San Bernardino - Curt Hagman

WRCOG

- City of Corona - Jacque Casillas
- City of Jurupa Valley - Chris Barajas
- City of San Jacinto - Crystal Ruiz (Chair)

Absent:

- City of Rialto - Deborah Robertson
- Town of Apple Valley - Art Bishop

4. PUBLIC COMMENTS

There were no public comments.

5. SELECTION OF I-REN EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE CHAIR, VICE-CHAIR, AND 2ND VICE CHAIR POSITIONS FOR FISCAL YEAR 2023/2024

A. Selection of I-REN Executive Committee Chair, Vice-Chair, and 2nd Vice Chair Positions for Fiscal Year 2023/2024

Actions:

1. Selected Crystal Ruiz, City of San Jacinto as Chair; Oscar Ortiz, CVAG Representative, as Vice-

- Chair; and Art Bishop, Town of Apple Valley, as 2nd Vice-Chair for Fiscal Year 2023/2024.
2. Referred the ranking voting matter to member agency representatives for discussion at their jurisdiction.

| | |
|------------------|---|
| RESULT: | APPROVED AS RECOMMENDED |
| MOVER: | Hagman |
| SECONDER: | Evans |
| AYES: | Evans, Hagman, Barajas, Casillas, Barajas, Ruiz |

6. CONSENT CALENDAR

| | |
|------------------|---|
| RESULT: | APPROVED AS RECOMMENDED |
| MOVER: | Hagman |
| SECONDER: | Barajas |
| AYES: | Evans, Hagman, Barajas, Casillas, Barajas, Ruiz |

A. Summary Minutes from the May 16, 2023, Executive Committee Meeting

Action:

1. Approved the minutes from the May 16, 2023, Executive Committee meeting.

B. I-REN Regulatory and Reporting Update

Action:

1. Received and filed.

7. REPORTS / DISCUSSION

A. Discussion of I-REN Executive Committee Meeting Schedule for Fiscal Year 2023/2024

Action:

1. Approved a Fiscal Year 2023/2024 I-REN Executive Committee meeting schedule.

| | |
|------------------|--|
| RESULT: | APPROVED AS RECOMMENDED |
| MOVER: | Barajas |
| SECONDER: | Casillas |
| AYES: | Evans, Hagman, Casillas, Barajas, Ruiz |

B. I-REN Branding and Marketing Update

Action:

1. Received and filed.

C. Update on California Public Utilities Commission Final Decision (d.23-060-055) and True-Up Advice Letter

Action:

1. Authorized the submittal of the True-Up Advice Letter to the California Public Utilities Commission.

| | |
|------------------|--------------------------------|
| RESULT: | APPROVED AS RECOMMENDED |
| MOVER: | Hagman |
| SECONDER: | Barajas |
| AYES: | Evans, Hagman, Barajas, Ruiz |
| ABSTAIN | Casillas |

D. I-REN Strategic Planning Update

Action:

1. Approved the draft Strategic Plan and directed the Executive Director to provide a final version for approval at the next meeting.

| | |
|------------------|-------------------------------------|
| RESULT: | APPROVED AS RECOMMENDED |
| MOVER: | Barajas |
| SECONDER: | Evans |
| AYES: | Evans, Casillas, Barajas, Ruiz |
| NO VOTE: | Hagman was not present for the vote |

E. California Energy Commission Equitable Building Decarbonization Grant Program

Action:

1. Authorized staff to provide a letter of commitment, on behalf of I-REN to partner with So-Cal REN / Los Angeles County in applying for the California Energy Commission Equitable Building Decarbonization Grant Program.

| | |
|------------------|-------------------------------------|
| RESULT: | APPROVED AS RECOMMENDED |
| MOVER: | Evans |
| SECONDER: | Barajas |
| AYES: | Evans, Casillas, Barajas, Ruiz |
| NO VOTE: | Hagman was not present for the vote |

8. REPORT FROM THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE CHAIR

Chair Ruiz reported that she has attended several I-REN orientation meetings, and seven more are still upcoming. There have been 77 attendees from 29 cities and eight other member agencies. Eight Fellows have been placed, and five more are being interviewed. Chair Ruiz acknowledged I-REN staff in both Riverside and San Bernardino Counties, who have worked to get people talking about I-REN. The next set of orientation meetings will take place on August 22, 2023, in both the City of Ontario and City of Riverside, and she encouraged Committee members to attend to get more information about the Program.

9. ITEMS FOR FUTURE AGENDAS

Committee member Curt Hagman asked staff to start looking at creating more energy efficiency programs to be able to apply for more grants and opportunities.

Chair Ruiz asked staff to keep an eye on how Southern California Edison will manage the increased energy use, and how that will affect customers' bills.

10. GENERAL ANNOUNCEMENTS

There were no general announcements.

13. NEXT MEETING

The next I-REN Executive Committee meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, September 19, 2023, at 2:00 p.m., in WRCOG's office located at 3390 University Avenue, Suite 200, Riverside.

14. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 3:16 p.m.



Inland Regional Energy Network I-REN Executive Committee

Staff Report

Subject: I-REN Programmatic Activities Updates
Contact: Karina Camacho, WRCOG Analyst III, kcamacho@wrcog.us, (951) 405-6724
Date: October 17, 2023

Recommended Action(s):

1. Receive and file.

Summary:

Inland Regional Energy Network (I-REN) staff will provide a programmatic update of I-REN activities accomplished as of 2023 to date. Updates include orientation participation and schedule, Public Sector kick-off meetings, iren.gov website launch, Building Upgrade Concierge (BUC) software development, Codes & Standards trainings, I-REN Energy Fellowship, and other I-REN accomplishments.

Discussion:

Background

Initiated in 2019, I-REN is a consortium of the Coachella Valley Association of Governments, the San Bernardino Council of Governments (SBCOG), and the Western Riverside Council of Governments (I-REN COG partners) that serve the Counties of Riverside and San Bernardino in the implementation of energy efficiency programs and services to support member agencies and the public. These partners joined together and submitted a Business Plan to the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) in order to establish locally administered, designed, and delivered energy efficiency programs. On November 18, 2021, the CPUC formally approved the I-REN Business Plan through program year 2027.

On February 21, 2023, the Executive Committee approved contract award recommendations for I-REN's Business Plan sector program implementers. The Energy Coalition (TEC) was selected to develop and implement I-REN's Public Sector programs and Alternative Energy Systems Consulting (AESC), was selected for I-REN's Building Upgrade Concierge Software Development Services. Frontier Energy was selected for I-REN's Codes & Standards Sector. WRCOG and SBCOG staff are co-leading the Workforce Education & Training Sector. The final consultant selected was ICF, which will be responsible for providing marketing support across all sectors. Since the contract approvals, I-REN staff and implementers have been diligently working to roll out I-REN programs.

iren.gov Website

On August 24, 2023, I-REN launched its website, iren.gov, which broadcasts information about I-REN, I-REN's Sectors, and houses a calendar of trainings and events that I-REN will host throughout the year.

The website was developed with I-REN's brand palette and is consistent with the marketing materials used throughout the orientations, adding familiarity and trust to member agencies who visit the site. The website will be used as I-REN's one-stop-shop destination for visitors to acquire information on energy efficiency, grant opportunities, available rebates, incentives, and be used as a storage library for a host of trainings, educational videos, and CPUC regulatory filings that I-REN is a party to.

Building Upgrade Concierge (BUC) Software Development

The BUC software has been developed and is now available for use by all agencies within I-REN's service territory. A presentation and live demonstration have been provided at each orientation, showing the versatility and adaptability of the BUC software. It will provide member agencies with the capability to benchmark their existing buildings, allowing them to create a baseline record of energy usage for those buildings, and compare them with similar buildings of size and age. By using the BUC software, member agencies will be able to track energy usage patterns and identify inconsistencies in their buildings, potentially saving them money. The BUC software can also forecast savings of energy projects to help member agencies determine the priority of the deployment of projects.

Codes & Standards Trainings

At the time of writing this Staff Report, I-REN has hosted five Codes & Standards training courses on 2022 Energy Code changes for nonresidential, heat pump water heaters, and residential load calculations. Thirty-nine people participated in the training courses, including building department staff, permit technicians and other local government staff. Participants are also eligible to earn Continuing Education Units for the completion of I-REN Codes & Standards training courses. The Codes & Standards team also provided an Implementation Plan Webinar for the California Energy Efficiency Coordinating Committee, in which eight individuals participated. I-REN is planning to host eight additional Codes & Standards training courses through the end of 2023. Staff anticipates that the I-REN Codes & Standards topics will include residential new construction, residential envelop compliance, electrification, and more updates on the 2022 Energy Code.

Workforce Education & Training

The first round of I-REN Energy Fellows officially started working in late September 2023. At the time of writing this Staff Report, there are nine Fellows currently placed at local agencies. Four other agencies are still interested in hosting a Fellow and have submitted a host application or are in the process of interviewing potential Fellows. The Program Administrator, CivicSpark, is allowing I-REN Energy Fellows to start in January 2024 and complete an 8-month fellowship. I-REN staff are actively recruiting potential Fellow applicants to start in January and engaging future applicants for next year's application cycle. Staff are expecting to attend eight career fairs throughout the region through early October 2023, including the Valley-Wide Employment Expo in Indio, the California State University, San Bernardino, job fair, and the Greater Riverside Chamber of Commerce job fair at the Tyler Galleria Mall. I-REN is also exploring options to expand energy related opportunities for K-12 students.

Orientations

From June to September 2023, I-REN staff have hosted 14 orientations throughout San Bernardino and Riverside Counties. One-hundred and twenty-two agency staff have participated from 36 jurisdictions as well as participation from 15 other agencies. Other agency staff range from a community college district,

unified school districts, water districts, chamber of commerce, and the CPUC. At the time of writing this Staff Report, there are three more pending orientations to be hosted in the Cities of Palm Desert and Rialto, and the County of San Bernardino.

Public Sector Offerings and Next Steps

TEC is the main implementer for the I-REN Public Sector and is developing a wide array of offerings and services for public agencies. TEC and I-REN staff have been meeting one-on-one with agencies to continue to discuss their unique energy needs. As of September 2023, staff have met with 15 jurisdictions and agencies for an I-REN Public Sector kick-off meeting. Local agencies are currently requesting historical energy data from SoCal Gas and SoCal Edison and sharing with the I-REN team.

Once the data is available, TEC staff will work to analyze energy consumption trends and make recommendations on next steps for long-term energy planning, facility benchmarking, and energy efficiency project services. As part of the energy efficiency project services, TEC will support individual projects with site visits, energy modeling, funding, financing applications, and project management. TEC is developing potential policy options for how to distribute project support throughout the region within the current 2023-2027 budget. These policy options will be presented to the I-REN Executive Committee for consideration, direction, and approval.

Prior Action(s):

August 15, 2023: The I-REN Executive Committee received an update on I-REN Branding and Marketing.

May 16, 2023: The I-REN Executive Committee received an update on the Codes and Standards sector.

April 18, 2023: The I-REN Executive Committee received an update on the Public sector and orientation meetings.

March 21, 2023: The I-REN Executive Committee received an update on the Workforce, Education and Training and the I-REN Energy fellowship.

Financial Summary:

All costs associated with the development and implementation of I-REN are included in WRCOG's adopted Fiscal Year 2023/2023 Agency Budget under the I-REN budget (Fund 180) in the Energy & Environmental Department.

Attachment(s):

None.



Inland Regional Energy Network

I-REN Executive Committee

Staff Report

Subject: Public Sector Technical Assistance and Incentive Structure Discussion
Contact: Benjamin Druyon, WRCOG Program Manager, bdruyon@wrcog.us, (951) 405-6727
Date: October 17, 2023

Recommended Action(s):

1. Provide feedback on the four presented policy options to establish resource allocation for the Public Sector Technical Assistance Program.
2. Approve the proposed Normalized Metered Energy Consumption Incentive Program structure, with the option to adjust after a 12-month evaluation.

Summary:

The I-REN Public Sector Programs offer Technical Assistance services to agencies including staff trainings and facility benchmarking, as well as direct financial incentives for various energy efficiency retrofit projects. The direct financial incentives, known as Normalized Metered Energy Consumption (NMEC), includes over \$10M to be distributed for energy efficiency project monetary incentives.

Combined, the Technical Assistance and NMEC Programs comprise most of the financial assistance available to participating I-REN agencies.

In April 2023, the Executive Committee directed staff to develop a methodology for distributing I-REN's resources equally throughout Riverside and San Bernardino Counties. Four policy options have been developed for consideration. These proposed policies would apply to the Public Sector Technical Assistance services. Staff will also present the proposed NMEC Program financial incentive structure.

Discussion:

Background

In November 2021, the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) approved the I-REN Business Plan with a budget of \$65M for program years 2022 - 2027. The I-REN Business Plan included multiple goals across three program sectors that were developed based on input from stakeholders within Riverside and San Bernardino Counties since 2019.

On April 7, 2022, the CPUC adopted an Environmental and Social Justice (ESJ) Action Plan with a mission to "regulate essential utility services to protect consumers and safeguard the environment, assuring safe and reliable access to all Californians." The ESJ Action Plan establishes a definition of "ESJ Communities" for the purposes of CPUC policy and programs, as "predominantly communities of color or low-income communities that are underrepresented in the policy setting or decision-making process, subject to a disproportionate impact from one or more environmental hazards, and are likely to

experience disparate implementation of environmental regulations and socioeconomic investments in their communities.” These ESJ Communities include Tribal lands, households with incomes below 80% of the area median income, and low-income census tracts where combined household incomes are less than 80% of area or state median income.

Because I-REN is funded from ratepayer dollars approved by the CPUC, the CPUC ESJ Action Plan heavily influences the development and distribution of I-REN’s programs and offerings. Additionally, the topic of equitable distribution of I-REN program resources has been a concern with the I-REN Executive Committee for some time.

At the April 18, 2023, Executive Committee meeting, staff explained how the I-REN Business Plan was written with equity at the center and focuses on disadvantaged and underserved communities.

Examples were given on how I-REN’s resources were available to all communities without regard to geography, such as virtual trainings and webinars, orientation meetings, and the Fellowship Program.

Committee members mentioned past issues of equitable distribution of funds with other RENs, and Committee members asked staff to provide additional information with options showing how I-REN’s resources would be distributed. Staff have worked with consultant The Energy Coalition (TEC) to develop some Public Sector policy options for consideration.

Public Sector Technical Assistance Policy

I-REN’s Public Sector programs offer a variety of services to agencies including staff trainings and facility benchmarking. The most cost-intensive service is anticipated to be technical assistance and project management support for individual energy efficiency projects. These project services are customized to each agency, but generally include an engineering site visit, an energy model, funding, financing applications, and more.

To ensure these energy efficiency project support resources are distributed in alignment with I-REN goals, the I-REN staff and TEC have developed some policy options to be considered by the I-REN Executive Committee which will guide the I-REN team with the allocation of these resources. The following proposed policies, which optimize various goals, will be presented to the Executive Committee for feedback.

1. Policy: Provide the maximum number of energy efficiency project services within the given budget on a first come, first served basis.
 - a. Goal: Maximize the number of projects supported.
 - b. Outcome: I-REN can deliver support for up to 200 projects between 2023 and 2027 within the given budget.*
 - i. Pros:
 - Will likely be able to meet audit and spend goals.
 - ii. Cons:
 - Could mean some agencies benefit more than others.
 - A small number of agencies could rapidly reserve the budget for these services.
2. Policy: Support a maximum of one energy efficiency project per agency at a time and reserve funding for all eligible agencies.** Assume a high adoption of project services by each agency.
 - a. Goal: Reserve funds for all eligible agencies to be able to complete one project at a time.
 - b. Note: A new project can be supported once agency approves project scope to move forward to construction for the initial project.

- c. Outcome: Support up to four projects per agency between 2023 and 2027.
 - i. Pros:
 - Equal distribution of resources.
 - ii. Cons:
 - If not all agencies want to leverage project services, I-REN could be needlessly capping other agencies that have the resources to move forward with multiple projects at once.
 - It will be difficult to meet I-REN goals if not all agencies leverage project support services.
3. Policy: Support a maximum of two energy efficiency projects per agency at a time and reserve funding for all eligible agencies.** Assume a moderate adoption of project services by each agency.
- a. Goal: Reserve funds for all eligible agencies to be able to complete two projects at a time with the consideration that not all agencies will utilize each project support opportunity available to them.
 - b. Note: A new project can be supported once agency approves project scope to move forward to construction for the initial project.
 - c. Outcome: Support up to eight projects per agency between 2023 and 2027.
 - i. Pros:
 - Equal distribution of resources.
 - Takes into account that not all agencies will be interested in these services (or not each year) and provides more of an opportunity for interested agencies to leverage the services.
 - ii. Cons:
 - If not all agencies want to leverage project services, I-REN could be needlessly capping other agencies that have the resources to move forward with multiple projects at once.
 - If agencies are more active, more funds could need to be allocated to project services.
4. Policy: Support a maximum of two energy efficiency projects per agency at a time and reserve funding for all eligible agencies, but a maximum of four projects for counties.** Assume a moderate adoption of project services by each agency.
- a. Goal: Reserve funds for all eligible agencies to be able to complete two projects at a time with the consideration that not all agencies will utilize each project support opportunity available. Provide more resources for counties with more assets.
 - b. Note: A new project can be supported once agency approves project scope to move forward to construction for the initial project.
 - c. Outcome: Support up to eight projects per agency (16 for Riverside and San Bernardino Counties) between 2023 and 2027.
 - i. Pros:
 - Equal distribution of resources, but more resources for Riverside and San Bernardino Counties due to size.
 - Takes into account that not all agencies will be interested in these services (or not each year) and provides more of an opportunity for interested agencies to leverage the services.
 - ii. Cons:
 - If not all agencies want to leverage project services, I-REN could be needlessly capping other agencies that have the resources to move forward with multiple

- projects at once.
- If agencies are more active, more funds could need to be allocated to project services.
- County resources may not be equally distributed throughout the county areas.

*Total number of projects supported may adjust based on scopes of individual projects. Estimates based on TEC's experience with similar scope.

**Total eligible agencies considered is 51 agencies (54 member agencies less eight agencies served by municipally owned utilities plus an assumed five non-member agencies).

Present situation

Currently, I-REN receives guidance from the CPUC through the ESJ Action Plan and other regulatory decisions on targeting disadvantaged and underserved communities, but has not yet adopted a policy to determine how to equally distribute I-REN's Public Sector resources.

Staff is seeking initial feedback from the Executive Committee on the four policies presented above, but is not seeking a vote at this time. Staff will return to the Executive Committee in January with a final policy recommendation. Regardless of which policy is ultimately selected, staff will provide periodic updates on the progress of the Program and will provide, at minimum, an annual review of the completed projects and the available remaining resources to ensure I-REN is spending its resources equitably, effectively, and efficiently.

Normalized Metered Energy Consumption (NMEC) Program Incentive Structure

Background

I-REN has allocated over \$10M to be distributed for energy efficiency project monetary incentives (to be used between program launch and 2027). The I-REN NMEC Program must follow the [NMEC Rulebook 2.0](#), but can also be customized to reflect I-REN program priorities as outlined in the business plan and through direct feedback from agencies collected via survey during I-REN orientations. Based on these findings (described below), the I-REN team recommends the below incentive structure to maximize the impact of the I-REN NMEC Program and its benefit to the community.

Orientation Survey Findings: In May of 2023, the I-REN team began conducting orientation meetings with its member agencies. By September 2023, most of the orientation meetings had been completed and one-on-one follow-up meetings were scheduled to continue the discussion and gather information from the agencies on their specific needs and projects. Member agencies completed surveys after participating in the I-REN orientation meetings, which included several questions related to funding and financing prioritization. In their responses, member agencies opted for monetary incentives to prioritize reducing overall energy consumption, replacing equipment at community cooling centers or resiliency centers, and achieving a higher percentage of energy savings. The proposed incentive structure takes this feedback into account.

NMEC Incentive Structure: The proposed incentive rates are intended to offer a competitive incentive rate in comparison to other similar programs while still allowing flexibility in the budget should project

savings go beyond what is forecasted. The incentive rate takes into account the maximum incentive amount possible based on the four-year savings forecasted. If every project were to be eligible for the maximum incentive rates, there would still be funds leftover in the four-year total incentive budget. It is important to leave some incentive budget "unclaimed" because the savings forecasted are conservative and it allows I-REN to have a reserve of incentives for projects if forecasted savings are exceeded. Also, incentive rates can be adjusted as additional program data from real projects becomes available.

Base Rate: Projects will be incentivized based on claimable energy savings achieved.

| Energy Savings Measure | Base Incentive Rate |
|------------------------|---------------------|
| kWh | \$0.50 |
| kW | \$200.00 |
| therms | \$1.00 |

Incentive Kickers: Tiered kWh incentive “kickers” will also be available to encourage deep energy savings (over 15% total savings at the meter) and holistic projects. Additionally, kWh incentives will be doubled for projects that occur at a critical cooling or resiliency center.

| Total Savings Percentage | Incentive Rate | Critical / Cooling / Resiliency Center Rate |
|--------------------------|----------------|---|
| Up to 15% | \$0.50/kWh | \$1.00/kWh |
| 16-30% | \$0.60/kWh | \$1.20/kWh |
| 31-50% | \$0.70/kWh | \$1.40/kWh |
| Over 50% | \$1.00/kWh | \$2.00/kWh |

Present situation: In May of 2023, the I-REN team began conducting orientation meetings with its member agencies. By September 2023, most of the orientation meetings had been completed and one-on-one follow-up meetings were scheduled to continue the discussion and gather information from the agencies on their specific needs and projects.

Staff is requesting the Executive Committee approve the proposed NMEC Program Incentive Structure as presented, along with direction to staff to return annually with an update on the progress evaluation report.

Prior Action(s):

None.

Financial Summary:

Activities related to this are included in the approved WRCOG Fiscal Year 2023/2024 budget under the I-REN Fund (180).

Attachment(s):

None.



Inland Regional Energy Network

I-REN Executive Committee

Staff Report

Subject: Workforce Education & Training Update - Workforce Request for Proposal
Contact: Tyler Masters, WRCOG Program Manager, tmasters@wrcog.us, (951) 405-6732
Date: October 17, 2023

Recommended Action(s):

1. Receive and file.
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Summary:

In April 2023, the Inland Regional Energy Network (I-REN) Executive Committee approved the Fiscal Year (FY) 2023/2024 Agency Budget. The approved FY 2023/2024 Workforce Education & Training (WE&T) Sector budget, which is roughly \$2.51M, currently includes line items for the I-REN Energy Fellowship, energy certification, and workforce training programs, as well as participation of I-REN member agencies in California's Energy Efficiency Landscape through paid membership(s) in the Local Government Sustainable Energy Coalition (LGSEC). These line items leave roughly \$440,000 in an unallocated budget for additional programs and support within the I-REN WE&T Sector. During the April 2023 I-REN Executive Committee meeting, it was mentioned that staff would return later to discuss and receive direction for these unallocated funds.

As I-REN has deployed its first WE&T Sector program, the I-REN Energy Fellowship, it continues to build relationships with educational institutions, community-based organizations (e.g., Goodwill Career Resources Center, James Irvine Foundation, etc.) and trade association groups, and have identified some initial gaps between existing programs in either student engagement and interest, training opportunities, or employment connections. As part of this report, staff is presenting the information about the development and release of a future Request For Proposals (RFP) to identify services that can assist staff and the I-REN Executive Committee to determine the workforce gaps within both Riverside and San Bernardino Counties to help guide the implementation and deployment of existing WE&T resources as well as support and identify the best use of the remaining unallocated WE&T budget. Staff will develop and release an RFP in October / November 2023. Once RFP proposals have been evaluated, staff will bring back an item to the Executive Committee for consideration and approval.

Discussion:

Background

In November 2021, the CPUC approved the I-REN Business Plan with a budget of \$65M for program years 2022 - 2027. The I-REN Business Plan included multiple goals across three program sectors (Public Sector, Codes & Standards, and WE&T) that were developed based on input from stakeholders within Riverside and San Bernardino Counties since 2019.

One of these program sectors identified within I-REN service territory is WE&T. The total budget for the WE&T Sector through 2027 is \$15.1M. The goal of this Sector is to ensure there is a trained workforce to support and realize energy efficiency savings goals across all sectors. I-REN is uniquely positioned to effectively support these initiatives through the direct connections to local governments and stakeholders that I-REN, and its Council of Government member agencies, have with the communities within Riverside and San Bernardino Counties. The intent of this Sector is not to duplicate initiatives already under delivery by Investor-Owned Utilities (IOUs) or various workforce organizations, but to supplement and tailor programs to fill gaps, with a focus on enhancing energy and energy efficiency knowledge and understanding.

Present Situation

On September 18, 2023, I-REN's WE&T Sector launched its first program, the I-REN Energy Fellowship. In partnership with CivicSpark, this paid Fellowship provides students and job seekers an opportunity to work up to 1,700 hours on important energy initiatives at a local public sector agency.

Additionally, during development of other WE&T Sector program initiatives (energy certification, and workforce training programs), staff continue to meet and develop relationships with various educational institutions, workforce organizations, and community-based organizations specialized in support job paths in energy fields. Staff have met with approximately 30 local organizations to date. One key takeaway from these meetings is that there are many deep and impactful workforce programs in the Inland Empire; however, due to the specific nature of various workforce programs most focus either on 1) engaging students, 2) training the current workforce, or 3) connect recently trained students to employers, but there are few programs that connect one of these important components of the job pathway process to the next.

The various components of the WE&T Sector and job pathways connections are technical in nature. It is important to engage and connect interested job seekers to the training resources to help upskill and further develop into their careers and provide the expertise and knowledge specific to meet the demands of employers within both Riverside and San Bernardino Counties. Staff believe it will be useful for the long-term growth and development of the WE&T Sector programs to solicit a workforce subject matter expert / consultant to provide I-REN with the following services:

1. Develop a workforce market assessment (including but not limited to the analysis of current K-12, community colleges, Career Technical Education, universities, apprenticeships, pre-apprenticeships, trade and union program opportunities) - estimated \$75,000 one-time contract amount.
 - This assessment will include a needs and gap analysis, and develop WE&T Sector services territory recommendations.
2. Implement and facilitate focus group discussions, working group roundtables, and event participation and facilitation - estimated \$50,000 budget annually.
3. Utilize market assessment to develop scopes of works for future RFP needs (including but not limited workforce training programs, and curriculum enhancement and development) - estimated \$10,000 annually for on-call support.

Staff will develop and release an RFP in October / November 2023. Once RFP proposals have been evaluated, staff will bring back an item to the Executive Committee for consideration and approval.

Prior Action(s):

None.

Financial Summary:

Activities related to the Workforce Education & Training Sector are included under the I-REN Budget in Fund 180, under the Workforce Education & Training subprogram.

Attachment(s):

None.