



DOE'S REBUILD AMERICA PROGRAM TRANSITIONS DRAMATICALLY

By Steve Glazner

After more than a decade of partnership with APPA, the U.S. Department of Energy's Rebuild America program has undergone a major shift. Effective May 2, 2005, the administrative management of the Rebuild America program has been transferred from the DOE to the State Technologies Advancement Collaborative (STAC).

Rebuild America is a network of hundreds of community-based partnerships that are saving energy, improving building performance, easing air pollution through reduced energy demand, and enhancing the quality of life through energy efficiency and renewable energy technologies. The goals of Rebuild America were to:

- increase the number of high performance buildings,
- implement energy efficiency and renewable energy improvements, and
- provide technical assistance tools, resources, and services.

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STAC is a collaboration of DOE, the National Association of State Energy Officials (NASEO), and the Association of State Energy Research and Technology Transfer Institutions (ASERTTI). According to the STAC website (www.stacenergy.org), the transition of the Rebuild America program to STAC management "will be accomplished primarily through multi-state solicitations that facilitate projects and 'on-the-ground' results. The program will continue to provide centrally-managed technical assistance, coordinate stakeholder activities, and disseminate results."

It is too early to know how this transition will affect APPA member institutions and any current or pending projects under the Rebuild America banner. Nonetheless, APPA wishes to thank the following individuals for their support and assistance of Rebuild America over the years: Mark Bailey, Nick Keller, Pat LeDonne, and Dan Sze. They made great strides to better understand the K-12 and higher education markets and to find their best fit within Rebuild America.

Following is more information on the Rebuild America transition, taken directly from the Rebuild America website.

As the transition of management responsibilities for the Rebuild America program commences, clarification of impacts on several areas related to program partnerships and support going forward are necessary. The following Q&A format is intended to provide guidance to the Regional Offices, Program Team members, State Representatives, Partnerships, and others.

Question #1: Will Rebuild America continue to solicit or accept new partnerships into the program after May 1, 2005, when the Program will transition to STAC management?

Subject to guidance laid out in 1a through 1e below, The Department of Energy through Rebuild America (or its designated successor) will continue to accept new partnership applications with the following caveats:

- The online application process will be the only valid form for applying as a new community partnership; paper/fax submissions will no longer be honored.
- New and existing partnerships will shift to becoming predominantly self-service.
- New partnerships will be ratified and accepted by the designated DOE point of contact.

a. Will guidance be established and issued nationally with regard to the creation of new Rebuild America partnerships? Especially as they relate to DOE-funded activities, non-funded activities, and potentially, future STAC-funded activities.

This guidance continues to take shape as plans for completing the transition are finalized, including how existing and new Partnerships will be serviced. As additional issues are addressed that may affect this guidance, clarifications and further information will be distributed accordingly. This office pledges to provide the most accurate information available up to and beyond the period of transition to STAC.

b. How will this guidance be shared? By who? By when?

Guidance on the transition and clarifying information will be distributed to the Regional Offices in writing and through ongoing conference calls. Similar information will be shared with the larger Rebuild America community through a combination of email notices and postings to the Rebuild America website.

There are plans for at least two major transition information updates, in early April 2005 and another closer to the planned transition date of April 30. Other communications and information impacting the transition will be issued to the appropriate individuals as needed.

c. DOE currently has funded numerous grants (i.e., Special Projects) to state energy offices which have, in part, as their statement of objective the identification and creation of new partnerships - the results of which will be energy efficiency projects. In order for said grantees to fulfill their current financial agreements to DOE (and their anticipated

financial agreements under the FY '05 Special Projects as currently written), how will Rebuild America address these requirements?

Grantees in the State Energy Offices may contact the appropriate Federal representative to modify the grant language, with an eye toward de-emphasizing the formation of new Rebuild America partnerships as a focus for the grant. To the extent that the formation of new partnerships is required to achieve the grant's objectives, they may be created according to the terms laid out in Question #1.

d. For both the creation of new partnerships (i.e., partnership application) and the reporting of project metrics, the Rebuild America Web site serves as the mechanism to accomplish these tasks. Will this tool continue to be supported? If not, what mechanism will the State Energy Offices use to create/establish new partnerships and report partnership progress for the purpose of satisfying their grant requirements?

The Rebuild America website (or its designated successor) will continue to exist and serve as a tool and resource for new and existing partnerships and others. The Regional Offices will not be held accountable for the FY05 data pull for reporting program metrics beyond the end of second quarter fiscal year 2005 (March 2005) data collection.

e. If program metrics are sought from those projects and partnerships which DOE does not have financial contractual agreement with, who will initiate, facilitate, and provide the necessary technical support to accomplish this task?

The voluntary reporting of projects and metrics will continue to be available through the website. The website (or its designated successor) will continue to publicize accomplishments and best practices online as they become available. As stated above, there are no plans for bi-annual data collection initiatives as there have been in the past. Any focused efforts to collect or update project information, apart from mandatory grant responsibilities, will be at the discretion of the States and/or the Regional Offices, or by the Community Partnership.

Question #2: What commitment does DOE have to a Rebuild partnership under the current Partnership Application? Likewise, what expectations, if any, are implied?

The portion of the Rebuild America Partnership Agreement, as available through the website, that is most directly impacted by the transition is the section entitled "Basic Principles of Agreement." Specifically, there are five bullets that spell out the entirety of the DOE commitment in entering into this agreement. The agreement shall be modified to alter the first DOE commitment, as follows:

- Change the language "Assign a Program Representative who will be the point of contact for the Partnership with DOE" to read, "Assign a point of contact for the Partnership with DOE."

- This modification will allow the Regional Offices, working with their respective States to assign and establish partnership points of contact through their offices as needed.

As noted above in Question 1, the States and Regional Offices will have the authority and ability to ratify new partnership applications submitted through the website going forward. It is at this point that partnership points of contact can be coordinated for new partnerships.

For existing partnerships, States and Regional Offices may coordinate the transition of existing partnership contact with outgoing Program Representatives through the remainder of the program transition period, or before April 30, 2005.

All other commitments laid out in the Partnership Agreement will continue to be met, in whole or in substantial part, such that further modification of the agreement is not required at this time. As necessary, at a point in time after the transition to STAC, the Program Manual will be updated to reflect the new protocols.

Question #3: What, if anything can we say about how we see the quality and types service to the Rebuild America community in a post-STAC transition world. How will the new model operate?

The full functionality of the Rebuild America website will be preserved; the online Solution Center is the home for resources,

guidance, and technical information related to the spectrum of energy projects for Rebuild America.

- Fulfillment of requests will continue to be honored in the most cost-effective manner. This will mean that shipments will no longer be shipped by priority carriers and there will be limits placed on number of items available at any one time. As stocks are exhausted, product reprints from online digital files will be the responsibility of the requestor.
- Current and new Allied Partnerships in the private sector and strategic national associations will continue to be listed.
- Our partnership with those in the business community remains strong and we will rely upon the private sector to deliver the bulk of requested technical assistance. We will do everything possible to enable requests for technical seminars to be done directly by the partnerships.
- Success Stories and best practices will continue to be available; new material will depend to a large extent to the willingness of the partnerships and program participants to submit materials.

Question #4: If STAC anticipates capturing future relationships (i.e., partnerships) and resulting project metrics via the Rebuild America website (i.e., those project/activities to be funded under their upcoming STAC solicitation) the above may need to be further refined to account for this. Having two separate applications and reporting mechanisms would not be desirable, especially since it is most likely that those activities currently funded by DOE would overlap with financial support to be provided by STAC.

As stated above, the Rebuild America website will remain available going forward. This is the home for partnership and project information and results. The details for handling information or any potential reporting requirements of the STAC grant solicitation is outside the scope of this guidance. 🏠

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