

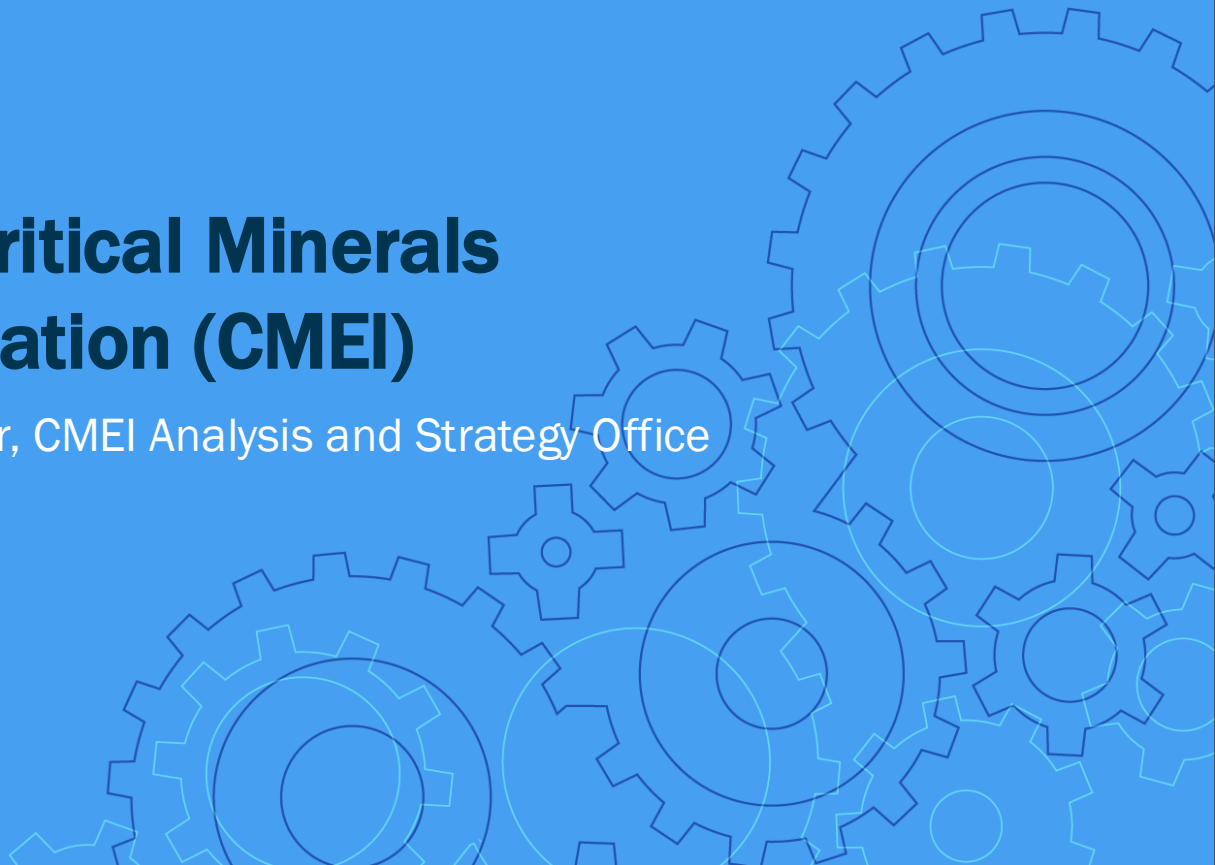


Providing Opportunities for Specialized Education in Critical Technologies (PROSPECT) Planning Prize

Informational Webinar
September 2026

DOE's Office of Critical Minerals and Energy Innovation (CMEI)

Jeff Cullen, Program Manager, CMEI Analysis and Strategy Office



DOE's Office of Critical Minerals and Energy Innovation (CMEI)

U.S. Department of Energy

CMEI

Office of Critical
Minerals and Energy
Innovation



CM3

The Office of Critical
Minerals, Materials, &
Manufacturing



E-TECH

The Office of
Energy Technology



IACC

The Office of
Innovation,
Affordability, and
Consumer Choice

17 National Labs

CMEI orients its planning and operations around six overarching goals:

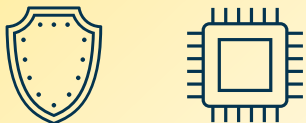
- **Enable** American mining, and ensure stable supply chains
- **Lead** the world in metals, mining, materials science, magnets, batteries, and innovation
- **Drive** growth and innovation in U.S.-based manufacturing and workforce-education programs
- **Steward** federal resources to reduce the cost of energy for Americans
- **Develop** systems needed for nationwide standards, certifications, and validations for buildings, appliances, and energy management
- **Maintain** our position as global leaders

Meeting America's Most Critical Energy Demands

CMEI and the PROSPECT Planning Prize

Critical Minerals and Materials are:

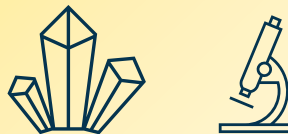
Essential inputs across a wide range of key energy, defense, semiconductor, transportation, and advanced manufacturing technologies.



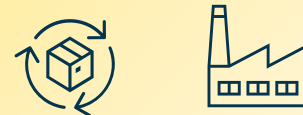
Fundamental needs for the manufacture of advanced energy systems and transportation technologies (e.g., motor systems).



Important for downstream bio-based processing to extract minerals and coproduction of other value-added materials.



Advancing technologies that improve the process efficiency of energy-intensive and waste-intensive industries.



PROSPECT

Providing Opportunities for Specialized Education in Critical Technologies

A DOE initiative to strengthen the nation's educational capacity and develop a durable domestic talent pipeline across the critical minerals and materials value chain.

PROSPECT Vision

Through the PROSPECT initiative, DOE incentivizes eligible academic institutions to develop:

- Multiple accessible education pathways to meaningful mining and related supply chain careers,
- Industry-relevant experiences and career pathways,
- National-laboratory, education, and community collaboration,
- Institution-wide commitment and capacity,
- Thoughtful program execution and durability, and
- Measurable workforce impact.



PROSPECT Goal

Double the number of graduates and other credentialed professionals prepared for mining, mineral processing, metallurgy, materials, manufacturing, recycling, and related supply chains and industries by the end of 2028

Prize Objective

Reward U.S. academic institutions with accredited (or on a path to accreditation) mining engineering programs for an implementation-ready workplan to expand the domestic materials supply chain workforce.

Prize Pool

Up to 16 winners will receive \$1,000,000 each.

Competition Portal:

<https://www.herox.com/PROSPECT-Prize>

PROSPECT Planning Prize

Overview

Sarah Truitt, National Laboratory of the Rockies



AMERICAN MADE

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY

The National Laboratory of the Rockies administers the American-Made program on DOE's behalf.

The **PROSPECT Planning Prize** is part of the American-Made program. American-Made is funded by the U.S. Department of Energy, and includes a range of prizes, collegiate competitions, and opportunities to access a network of experts, helping innovative solutions go **further, faster.**



The American-Made program has run over 100 prizes and awarded more than 1,600 innovative teams since 2018.

What Is a Prize?

Prizes are not grants or cooperative agreements

- The PROSPECT Planning Prize is not a procurement under the Federal Acquisition Regulation 48 CFR 1-99.
- Awards will not result in a grant or cooperative agreement under Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Award 2 CFR 200.
- The PROSPECT Planning Prize recognizes planning work and achievements completed by eligible competitors before the submission deadline.
- Competitors undertake all activities at their own risk. Cash prize payments are not reimbursements or advance funding.
- DOE and NLR will not direct a winner's use of cash prize funds after payment.

PROSPECT Prize

Providing Opportunities for Specialized Education in Critical Technologies



Prize pool: Up to \$16 million

Number of awards: Up to 16

The prize rewards completed planning activities to addresses the urgent need for expanded mining education, training, and workforce development capacity.

Goal: Substantially increase the number of graduates and other credentialed professionals prepared for relevant mining and supply chain fields by the end of the 2028 calendar year.

\$1M for institutionally endorsed, implementation-ready workplans

The proposed workplan must

- Dedicate at least 50% of the assumed budget to direct student support for U.S. citizens or permanent residents,
- Focus principally on education and workforce-development outcomes,
- Link U.S. industry engagement to current or emerging workforce needs, and
- Primarily benefit the U.S. critical minerals and materials workforce and supply chain.

The proposed workplan must not

- Include plans for new building construction or
- Involve lobbying a federal, state, or local government office.

See Section III.D of the rules document for the full list of program requirements.

Eligibility

- Only U.S. degree-granting academic institutions that satisfy the eligible mining program requirement are eligible to apply to this prize.
- Academic institutions must be based in the US and offer an accredited (or nearly accredited) mining degree program recognized by an ISO-certified accreditation body.
- An eligible academic institution must be the primary submitter and the designated prize recipient.
- Non-academic entities may partner but not submit as the primary competitor.

See Section II.E of the rules document for full eligibility details.



Partners

- Competitors are encouraged, but not required, to identify U.S. industry-partner-leveraged support that would amplify the scale, quality, reach, relevance, or durability of activities in the workplan.
- Private entities must be incorporated in and maintain a primary place of business in the United States.
- Individuals competing as part of a team must be legally authorized to work in the United States.
- Competitors are strongly encouraged to participate in DOE National Laboratory activities.

See Section II.E of the rules document for full eligibility details.



Read the Rules!

Official rules for the PROSPECT Planning Prize can be found on the prize's HeroX page:

<https://www.herox.com/PROSPECT-Prize/resources>

- ✓ Prize background
- ✓ Eligibility details
- ✓ Submission materials
- ✓ Judging criteria

Providing Opportunities for Specialized Education in
Critical Technologies (PROSPECT) Planning Prize

Rules



U.S. DEPARTMENT *of* ENERGY

U.S. Department of Energy (DOE)

Office of Critical Minerals and Energy Innovation (CMEI)

PROSPECT Planning Prize

Submission Requirements

Lance Holly, National Laboratory of the Rockies



Submission Materials

A complete submission package for the PROSPECT Planning Prize includes the following items:

Required

- Cover page
- Eligibility and institutional certification
- Workplan narrative
- Leadership support
- Summary slide

Optional

- Activity timeline
- Budget plan
- Recruitment (R), enrollment (E), matriculation (M), credentialed (C) population metrics
- Additional support

Submission Package Details

Cover Page (Required)

Submit a one-page cover page containing the following information:

- Program plan title and a concise, public-facing summary of no more than 150 words.
- Institution name, city, state, and nine-digit ZIP code.
- Eligible mining engineering program and current accreditation status.
- Primary point of contact, title, email address, and phone number.
- Authorized institutional representative and submission point of contact.
- Participating colleges, departments, administrative units, and key personnel.
- Primary target populations and the principal educational or workforce pathways the plan will create or expand.
- Key U.S. industry, National Laboratory, educational, workforce, and community partners or prospective partners.
- Estimated percentage allocated to direct student supports under each budget scenario.

Submission Package Details

Eligibility and Institutional Certification (Required)

Submit a one-page document that includes the eligibility documentation and institutional certification described in Section II.E of the rules.

Eligible mining program requirement: At the applicable submission deadline, the primary submitting institution must satisfy one of the following:

- Current accreditation.
- Near-term accreditation.

Submission Package Details

Optional Template A

Workplan Narrative (Required)

Submit a technical narrative of no more than 10 pages.

The narrative must use the six criterion headings in Section IV.C.3 of the rules and present one coherent, implementation-ready program vision.

Explain how the program would be shaped under three illustrative budget scenarios:

1. \$4 million scenario should define the core program.
2. \$7 million scenario should build on that core vision and identify the incremental activities, capacity, reach, and outcomes enabled at this level.
3. \$10 million scenario should further build on the core vision and identify the incremental activities, capacity, reach, and outcomes enabled at this level.

The scenarios must outline how the visions can be planned for implementation in calendar years 2027 and 2028.

Submission Package Details

Optional Template A

Workplan Narrative (Required)

Six criterion to be addressed:

1. Baseline, workforce need, and measurable impact.
2. Student support, recruitment, and accessible pathways in.
3. Industry-relevant curriculum, experiential learning, and pathways out.
4. Faculty, instructional, and institutional capacity.
5. Collaboration, commitments, governance, and readiness.
6. Scenario design, implementation, measurement, risk, and sustainability.

Submission Package Details

Leadership Support (Required)

Submit the following documents:

Institutional Leadership Letter—1 page

- Signed letter of commitment by institution's top leadership official.

Departmental or college leadership letter—1 page

- Signed by the responsible dean, department chair, or comparable academic leader.
- See Section IV.C.4 for additional letter content requirements.

Submission Package Details

Optional Template F

Submission Summary Slide (Required)

Submit a one-slide submission summary. The slide must include the academic institution's name, primary point of contact, email address, and phone number.*

The slide must summarize:

- Program vision
- Measurable impact
- Accessible pathways in and pathways out
- Collaboration and relevance
- Institutional commitment
- Implementation snapshot
- Budget and support.

**Contact information will be removed if the slide is made public.*

Submission Package Details

Optional Template B

Activity Timeline (Optional)

Submit an activity timeline of no more than three pages. The timeline must cover calendar years 2027 and 2028. Group related tasks into no more than 10 major activities or offerings. For each row:

- Major activity or offering.
- Scenario scope, identifying the \$4 million core and additions at \$7 million and \$10 million.
- Applicable population ID (from REMC population metrics document)
- Principal pathway into and out of the activity.
- Consequential milestone or achievement expected in 2027 or 2028.
- Responsible institutional lead and relevant partner names.
- Expected impact on access, relevance, capacity, credentials, experiences, continued education, employment, or other program outcomes.

Submission Package Details

Optional Template C

Budget Plan (Optional)

Submit a budget scenario estimate of no more than two pages. The budget is an estimate for planning and evaluation purposes.

1. Complete a program-component table for each illustrative support scenario of \$4 million, \$7 million, and \$10 million.
2. For each scenario, at least 50% of the amount must be dedicated to direct student support.
3. Any additional committed or contingent resources must be reported separately by source, type, status, and intended use (complementary resources are not required and do not replace the requirement to explain use of the full assumed budget).

Submission Package Details

Optional Template D

REMC Population Metrics (Optional)

Submit a population metrics table of no more than one page. For each population, report the current annual baseline and the cumulative additional unique participant target above the expected baseline for the full 2027–2028 period under each of the \$4 million, \$7 million, and \$10 million scenarios.

- **R—Recruitment reach:** Unique individuals participating in a substantive outreach awareness or introductory activity.
- **E—Enrollment or structured participation:** Unique individuals participating in a course, module, credential, degree, experiential-learning activity, faculty or trainer development activity, or other activity.
- **M—Matriculation or formal pathway entry:** Unique individuals formally entering a defined degree, certificate, minor, microcredential, professional development pathway, or other education or training pathway
- **C – Credentialed:** Unique individuals that have formally completed a defined degree, certificate, certificate, minor, microcredential, or other recognized education or training pathway

Submission Package Details

Optional Template E

Additional Support (Optional)

Submit the following one-page document: Partners table

- Identify substantive partners and prospective partners.
- Partners may include U.S. industry, DOE National Laboratories, community colleges, trade schools, K–12 systems, workforce organizations, state or local entities, professional societies, community organizations, or other educational or training partners.
- For each partner, identify the role, specific contribution, relationship status, population or pathway supported, timing, and available evidence.

Summary: Submission Materials

Recap: A complete submission package for the PROSPECT Planning Prize includes the following items:

Required

- Cover page
- Eligibility and institutional certification
- Workplan narrative
- Leadership support
- Summary slide

Optional

- Activity timeline
- Budget plan
- Recruitment (R), enrollment (E), matriculation (M), credentialed (C) population metrics
- Additional support

All materials must be uploaded on the HeroX site by 5 p.m. ET on the submission deadline.

Planning Prize Assessment

Criterion	Weight	Assessment Considerations
Baseline, workforce need, and measurable impact	20%	The baseline and need are specific and evidence-based. Targets quantify incremental, unique students and workers added at key stages of the pathway; avoid double-counting; and demonstrate material impact beyond existing or already-planned activity.
Student support, recruitment, and accessible pathways in	25%	The strategy reaches multiple populations through practical, affordable, and accessible entry points. Training materials, courses, and credentials are available in appropriate modalities, and participant journeys credibly connect awareness, entry, progression, and completion.
Industry-relevant curriculum, experiential learning, and pathways out	15%	Content responds to current and emerging U.S. industry and National Laboratory needs. Career-connected experiences are specific and appropriately scaled, and the plan credibly connects participants to employment or continued education.
Faculty, instructional, and institutional capacity	15%	The plan addresses the faculty, instructor, equipment, laboratory, student-service, data, and administrative capacity required to deliver the proposed pathways and support participants at the intended scale.
Collaboration, commitments, governance, and readiness	15%	Institutional units and material partners have specific, authorized, and documented roles tied to workforce relevance, access, experiences, and participant outcomes. Governance and readiness make execution credible.
Implementation, measurement, budget, risk, and sustainability	10%	The roadmap and budget are realistic and connected to incremental outcomes. Measurement and verification are credible, risks are understood, and the sustainability and replication approach identifies durable owners, resources, and commitments.

Review and Selection

- Qualified federal and/or non-federal reviewers will score eligible submissions using the criteria published in the official rules.
- DOE may request clarifications, source documentation, or interviews.
- A designated federal prize judge considers reviewer scores and comments, program policy factors, available funds, and any clarification, verification, or interview findings and determines the winners.
- Once selections are approved, DOE will direct NLR to make award payments to winners.
- DOE and NLR will not direct the use of prize funds after payment is made, but DOE will provide feedback on the workplans submitted by eligible competitors.

How Do Prize Payments Work?

What NLR does:

- NLR contacts winning teams when winners are announced.
- NLR will award a single cash-prize amount to the eligible primary academic institution in approximately 30 days (once NLR receives all accurately completed documentation).

What winners do:

- Winning schools will need to complete a prize acceptance form, ACH and W-9 documents to NLR to receive payment.
- The winning institution is solely responsible for its internal allocation or use of prize funds and for any arrangements with participating university units or external partners.*

*DOE and NLR will not divide a prize among partners or arbitrate, intervene, advise on, or resolve disputes among team members or partner organizations.

PROSPECT Planning Prize

The HeroX Platform



How to Register and Compete

PROSPECT Planning Prize

Enabling leading academic institutions in the United States to develop strategies that rapidly expand the minerals and materials workforce.

Education

Energy, Environment & Resources

Engineering

Stage:
Pre registration

Prize:
\$16,000,000

FOLLOW CHALLENGE



HeroX Prize Page:

<https://www.herox.com/PROSPECT-Prize>

- Click the “Follow Challenge” button, then click “Solve This Challenge”
- Sign in or create a HeroX account
- Agree to the Terms of Use
- Confirm your email address
- Accept the Challenge-Specific Agreement.

Submit your materials before the deadline.

Submissions can be **saved and returned to** at any time prior to the deadline, even if they have been submitted.

Follow, Read, Submit!

On the HeroX prize page, you can:

- Follow the page to **receive important updates** from prize administrators.
- Read the **official rules document**.
- Access resources like **optional templates** and this webinar recording.
- **Post questions** to the forum.
- Read frequently asked questions and prize administrator responses.
- **Submit** your required submission materials.

<https://www.herox.com/PROSPECT-Prize>

PROSPECT Prize
Providing Opportunities for Specialized Education in Critical Technologies

AMERICAN
MADE
AN INITIATIVE OF HEROX



PROSPECT Planning Prize

Enabling leading academic institutions in the United States to develop strategies that rapidly expand the minerals and materials workforce.

FOLLOW CHALLENGE

Stage:
Pre registration

Prize:
\$16,000,000

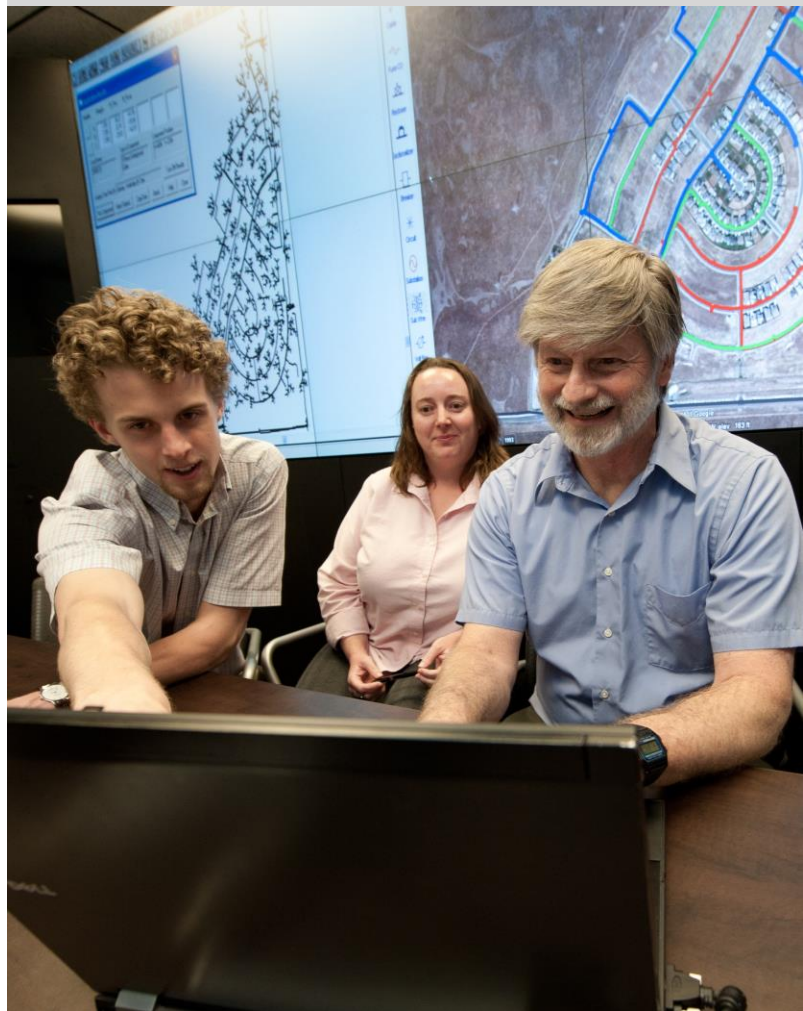
Reminders

Submission Period Opens: [Sept. 14, 2026](#)

Submission Period Closes: [Oct. 5, 2026](#)

Winners Announcement: [Oct. 20, 2026](#)
(anticipated)

- [Read the rules](#) to learn more about the prize, check eligibility, and find complete details about submission materials.
- Send any questions to our team at PROSPECTprize@nlr.gov.





Thank You!

<https://www.herox.com/PROSPECT-Prize>

PROSPECTprize@nlr.gov

