



**CAPEDD**

OKLAHOMA OFFICE OF  
WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT  
SECTOR PARTNERSHIP GRANTS

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**GRANT APPLICATION**

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**ASSOCIATION OF CENTRAL OKLAHOMA GOVERNMENTS**

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The contents of this grant application reflect the views of the Association of Central Oklahoma Governments (ACOG). ACOG is responsible for the facts and the accuracy of the data presented herein. This narrative does not constitute a standard, specification, or regulation.

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## GRANT NARRATIVE

### NAME OF THE COMPANY OR ORGANIZATION WHO WILL BE RESPONSIBLE FOR CONVENING THE PARTNERSHIP (CONVENER)

The convener and applicant for this grant is the Association of Central Oklahoma Governments (ACOG) serving as an intermediary organization. ACOG is officially designated as the Capital Area Economic Development District (CAPEDD) of Oklahoma for the US Economic Development Administration. ACOG's mission is to ensure competitiveness at the national level by leading the local, regionally driven economic development planning process that leverages the involvement of the public, private, and nonprofit sectors and establishes a strategic blueprint for regional collaboration. In particular, ACOG is completing the update of our region's 4-county (Oklahoma, Cleveland, Canadian, and Logan counties) Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) to reflect the new realities created by the COVID-19 pandemic. This effort focuses on collaboration between regional entities in economic development and working with them to follow through on projects required for economic recovery and resiliency.

ACOG's regional economic development programs are anchored in initiatives and activities designed to successfully implement the goals of the Updated CEDS. Both the [2019 CEDS](#) and the Updated CEDS prioritize support for the region's workforce development partners in strengthening the talent pipeline as one means of achieving economic [resiliency](#). Specifically, innovative partnerships between business and education, as well as efforts to cross-train and upskill employees in critical skill sets—especially as it relates to alternative energy, energy storage, and energy technology—represent an important course of action ACOG encourages and spearheads in our region. We believe that increased training for data science, engineering, modern energy, and battery technology would complement current workforce development efforts and help stabilize the heavily impacted energy sector industries.

### NAME OF EMPLOYERS PARTICIPATING IN THE SECTOR PARTNERSHIP

**Our proposed employer taskforce includes but is not limited to Oklahoma Gas & Electric (OG&E), Spiers New Technologies, Baker Hughes, the Oklahoma Manufacturing Alliance, the Oklahoma Department of Career and Technology Education, and the Greater Oklahoma City Chamber of Commerce.**

A key partner is **OG&E**. Primarily known as an investor-owned electric utility company headquartered in Oklahoma City, OG&E is also an organization profoundly invested in economic advancement through state-of-the-art research and development (R&D) focusing on ways of generating electricity through natural gas, coal, wind, and solar power. Modern energy, which is renewable and sustainable, represents an opportunity for economic development in Oklahoma and offers the potential of creating, sustaining, and developing Oklahoma's workforce. A leading energy employer in Oklahoma, OG&E has over 2,200 employees. The company's approach to workforce development rests in the values they uphold, which include: cherishing the individual's health and well-being; transparency in motives and production; fostering a spirit of teamwork at all levels; delivering respect for character and performance; demanding integrity in all corporate activity; encouraging public service to the broader community; and supporting creativity, difference, and equal opportunity. As a board member of the Oklahoma Energy Workforce Consortium (OWEK),

OG&E thrives on partnerships and collaborations whose goal is to develop and retain the energy workforce. For these reasons, they qualify as the ideal partner for ACOG on this project.

**Spiers New Technologies** offers repair, remanufacturing, refurbishing and repurposing services for advanced battery packs used in hybrid and electric vehicles (EVs). An affiliate member of the Repurposed Battery Alliance and NAATBatt International, [Spiers New Technologies](#) values “bright, hands-on engineers and technicians passionate about advanced batteries, electric vehicles, and energy storage.” Their commitment is to assist in expanding the EV charging station infrastructure in Oklahoma.

An internationally renowned energy technology company, **Baker Hughes** employs more than 58,000 people worldwide. Their mission underscores a specific emphasis on their employees’ quality of life, by committing to safeguarding their health and ensuring safety, environmental protection, and community revitalization. Continuous learning is a key priority at Baker Hughes, where employees are empowered to follow their passion for personal knowledge and domain expertise to develop the skills needed for professional and personal growth. Specifically, Baker Hughes offers leadership accelerator programs such as Aspire (a two-year rotational program for recent graduates), Impact (a three-year leadership accelerator for top performing mid-career employees), and Cultivate (a one-year non-rotational program that fosters the development of high potential women leaders).

**The Oklahoma Manufacturing Alliance** is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization engaged in strategic efforts to create wealth and enhance the state’s economy. They constitute the primary resource, advocate, and voice for building sustainable and innovative manufacturing in Oklahoma. An important element to our partnership, the Oklahoma Manufacturing Alliance strives to match displaced workers with hiring companies.

**The Oklahoma Department of Career and Technology Education**, locally known as Career Tech, contributes to improving Oklahoma’s economy by offering individuals the training and skills necessary to be successful in the workplace. A significant pioneer in the state’s economic development and quality of life, Career Tech constitutes a comprehensive statewide system of career and technology education, offering programs and services in 29 technology center districts operating on 58 campuses, 394 K-12 school districts, 16 Skills Centers campuses, including 3 juvenile facilities and 32 Adult Basic Education service providers.

Finally, the **Greater Oklahoma Chamber of Commerce** assists businesses in the 10-county Oklahoma City metro area, by creating “a climate that attracts new investment and enhances growth and expansion opportunities for existing companies.”

## WHICH DEMAND INDUSTRY WILL BE THE FOCUS OF THE SECTOR PARTNERSHIPS?

The **modern electric energy industry** represents the demand industry on which our proposed sector partnership would focus. Research indicates that one specific area of effort in the electric energy industry that has the potential to underwrite considerably the workforce development in the ACOG region is **battery technology**. Modern energy can be harvested with the help of solar panels, wind turbines, or natural gas plants. However, climate regulations restrict more and more of the modern energy tools that generate carbon

emissions. Solar panels require a constant stream of sunlight, and wind turbines are reliant on significant wind velocity. Given that nature does not provide these relentlessly, sustaining the electricity grid necessitates the technological development of highly capable batteries. Notwithstanding the technological challenges and opportunities that lie ahead, the employer taskforce outlined above is committed to the development of the energy industry in Oklahoma and its corresponding workforce.

The advancement in battery technology is closely connected to the evolution of electric vehicles (EVs). Between 2012-2015, Oklahoma witnessed a spike in the development of the EV industry, that coincided with a noticeable decrease in greenhouse gas emissions from charging an EV on the grid. In 2015, the Tesla Model S, Chevrolet Volt, and Nissan Leaf (all mass marketed EVs) ranked first, second and third for [most satisfying commuter car](#). EVs are affordable and reliable, require low maintenance, offer top performance, and issue zero emissions. Despite the remarkable benefits of driving EVs and despite the astounding infrastructure of EV charging stations across the state<sup>1</sup>, only 0.08% of the vehicles driven in Oklahoma are EVs. People's reticence comes in large part from the suspicion that EV batteries or the charging infrastructure are inadequate.

New developments in [battery technology](#), however, are very promising. We have already witnessed the ways in which the pandemic, with its push to turn work virtual and its contribution to increasing the burden onto the electric grid, has prompted researchers and developers to design stronger and better technologies to support a potential breakage in the grid.<sup>2</sup> Add to this the constant weather-related threats in Oklahoma—with the frequency of tornadoes and ice storms that have left many people in the literal dark in the past, including in 2020. An emphasis on battery development and the modern energy industry at large constitute important sources of wellbeing and income for the regular Oklahoman. However, economic prosperity cannot be achieved without an adequately trained and sustaining workforce.

Unfortunately, our regional workforce has been heavily impacted not only by the COVID-19 pandemic, but also the recession of 2008 and its ripple effects. If in 2018, employment in the energy sector recorded a total of 650,228 individuals in the ACOG region (2019 CEDS), the pandemic caused massive unemployment recorded at 11,000 jobs lost in April 2020 and 7,000 in August 2020. Across the nation, transportation, warehousing, and utilities have suffered [a loss of about 100,000 jobs](#) between October 2019 and October 2020. [The US Bureau of Labor Statistics](#) predicts a looming shortage of skilled workers in the energy sector that is expected nationwide and in Oklahoma by 2025.

Prompted by this disconcerting reality, the Oklahoma Energy Workforce Consortium (OEWFC) has recently launched the addition of a new career cluster called “The Energy Career Cluster” to the Oklahoma Department of Career and Technology Education’s [instructional framework](#), in order to promote the benefits of pursuing careers in energy, which [was endorsed by Oklahoma Governor, Kevin Stitt](#). Indeed the main [strategies](#) of recovering and/or developing a solid workforce require primarily increasing attention on transferable skill sets and improving training programs for potential job candidates. While OEWFC’s scope is to create a pipeline of talented, diverse individuals who can meet future needs in Oklahoma’s energy

<sup>1</sup> So far, the DEQ has managed projects to establish an EV charging infrastructure in Oklahoma, totaling \$4.2 million dollars, <https://www.deq.ok.gov/air-quality-division/volkswagen-settlement/chargeok-oklahoma-electric-vehicle-charging-program/>.

<sup>2</sup> Spiers New Technologies, Ten-Nine Technologies, for instance.

sector, by collaborating with the above outlined employer taskforce, ACOG's contribution is crucial in achieving the following goals:

- promoting and advancing interest in modern energy, particularly in battery technology development, refurbishment, recycling, repurposing, and remanufacturing;
- enhancing the visibility of educational programs across our region that can help students develop transferable skillsets;
- supporting a pipeline of potential local employees;
- securing partnerships with adjacent industries (i.e. the electric car industry, the oil & gas industry, defense and aviation, agricultural machinery, etc.);
- fostering government agility in overcoming workforce deficits and adapting to face future disasters with preparedness and resiliency.

Despite COVID-19 or perhaps thanks to the pandemic, the technology sector across industries is adequately prepared to adapt quickly to a fundamentally different paradigm by being [agile](#), that is knowing how to adjust and trusting that creativity can lead to some worthy discoveries. Battery technology in particular has the potential to revitalize our regional economy and to improve the local workforce. Not only through industry stars like SpaceX and Tesla, but also through local utility companies, energy corporations, educational organizations, and community partners, we can ensure this plan is successful both in its blueprints and in actual consequences for workforce development in our state. In addition, the engagement of educational institutions tasked with workforce development in general is crucial: The Oklahoma Department of Career and Technology Education and ELocker represent two powerhouses in orienting the future workers in Oklahoma towards sustaining careers and endowing workers with transferable skills. Along with our selected main employers, they represent important collaborators in this project.

### **HOW WILL THE APPLICANT ENGAGE AND CONVENE REGIONAL EMPLOYERS WITHIN AN INDUSTRY AND OTHER COMMUNITY PARTNERS TO DEVELOP AND IMPLEMENT SECTOR PARTNERSHIP STRATEGIES?**

ACOG will engage and convene employers in the battery-led energy sector, educators, economic development, workforce development, government and community organizations, and other stakeholders. Together, we will identify workforce gaps, barriers to employment, and other talent pipeline or industry needs. This will specifically include meeting space, supplies, travel expenses, facilitation, time and effort. Apart from the key partners outlined above, other entities whose input and collaboration are valuable are listed below:

#### Industry

- *OG&E<sup>3</sup>*
- *Baker Hughes*
- ELocker
- *Spiers New Technologies*
- Local electrical service businesses such as LLCs, minority-owned and women-owned businesses

<sup>3</sup> The entities in Italics are the main employers we identified in the answer to question 2.

#### Local government and community organizations

- *The Oklahoma Manufacturing Alliance*
- The Greater Oklahoma Chamber of Commerce
- The Oklahoma Department of Transportation (ODOT)
- The Oklahoma Department of Commerce (ODOC)
- The Oklahoma Chamber of Commerce and its departments serving minority- and women-owned businesses
- The Oklahoma Energy Workforce Consortium

#### Educational institutions

- University of Oklahoma
- *The Oklahoma Department of Career and Technology Education*
- University of Central Oklahoma

#### We plan to develop:

- roundtable events to engage the above-listed entities
- a workshop to propose potential solutions to workforce development
- (If COVID-19 restrictions and precautionary approaches should continue, we may need to identify multiple ways of conducting these, which may entail organizing the same event twice to accommodate schedules and virtual meeting demands.)
- a final report/white paper on the needs and gaps identified that recommends viable solutions

ACOG will also conduct an assessment of employers' workforce needs and requirements to develop a strategic plan for implementing strategies that meet demonstrated industry demand for skilled workers. The findings of this assessment will be included in the final report.

To frame the white paper, ACOG will conduct industry research to determine strategies to be implemented as a part of the sector partnership and will begin to carry out such strategies as those identified through the sector partnership. This research will also be included in the final report.

### **WHAT ARE THE GOALS OF THE APPLICANT IN CONVENING A SECTOR PARTNERSHIP, INCLUDING ANY PRELIMINARY PLANS, MILESTONES, ACTION ITEMS OR OUTCOMES IF ALREADY IDENTIFIED?**

#### **GOALS**

ACOG seeks to serve and implement the following goals outlined in our 2021 Updated CEDS. This update has been coordinated through our CEDS Advisory Committee and approved by the ACOG's Board of Directors, both composed of city and county leaders, planners, business professionals, researchers and educators, well aware of community needs and willing to deliver on these needs for their community.



One of the CEDS goals we plan to accomplish through this partnership is RESILIENCY. With this goal, we aim to build a modern energy-centered economy through business development and attraction, diversification of the economic base, and development to address social, economic, and environmental disruptions. Through this partnership, we would emphasize the following:

- **Business Growth and Recruitment.** The 2019 CEDS prioritizes the support of the region's business retention and expansion (BRE) and recruitment programs to ensure local businesses have the tools and support they need to thrive.
  - Partnerships and collaborations with organizations providing vital resources and support for businesses operating in the energy and technology sectors.
- **Workforce Development.** The 2019 CEDS prioritizes support for the region's energy, technology, and manufacturing workforce development partners in strengthening the talent pipeline. Additional emphasis should be placed on innovative partnerships between business and education, as well as efforts to cross-train and upskill employees in critical skill sets, especially as it relates to alternative energy, energy storage, and technology.
  - Support for Career Tech's high school "Work Keys" certification program and their Energy Career Cluster will prepare students for technical jobs. Increased training for data science, engineering, and battery technology would complement current workforce development efforts and help stabilize energy sector industries which have been heavily impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic.
  - Support efforts for equitable access to remote work equipment as well as regional collaboration for teacher attraction and retention to support strong workforce development in the energy, energy storage, manufacturing, and technology sectors.
  - Enhance availability and access to training and certification programs for small, minority-owned, and women-owned businesses, particularly in the energy, energy storage, manufacturing, and technology sectors.
- **Talent Attraction.** Grow the regional talent pool of skilled workers and remote workers. Despite a high quality of life and varied employment opportunities, the region loses highly skilled talent to other parts of the US. This is due, at least in part, to the perception that the region does not have high-wage tech opportunities.
  - Ensure the region has the resources needed to attract and support remote workers focusing on battery technology and manufacturing.
  - Support regional marketing efforts to attract talent.
- **Equity and Diversity.**
  - Promote the importance of diversity in the energy sector, supplier diversity, and business diversification; create the potential for greater innovation and productivity to help realize the business benefits of this potential;
  - Support fair treatment in access, opportunity, and advancement for all individuals by identifying and working to eliminate barriers to equitable treatment for disadvantaged groups.

Another goal this partnership would help bring to fruition is INNOVATION. Specifically, we aim to promote the following:

- **Business Adaptation.** Support the adaptability of business models for current and future needs, localization and shortening of supply chain, innovative solutions, ecommerce, etc.
  - Facilitate communication between business and community leaders to inform policy responsiveness as it pertains to the energy sector.

- Provide support for cooperative competitiveness and networking groups where entrepreneurs can share ideas.

Finally, we also seek to ensure GOVERNMENT AGILITY, through the following:

- **Partnerships and Collaboration.**
  - Key Partners. ACOG’s energy cluster partnership should be strengthened as a backstop for organizational leadership resiliency, community assessments, and sharing of tools and methods. Collaboration with energy companies, battery technology and manufacturing industry leaders should be emphasized. Alliance with educational programs to promote the upskill, training, and retention of the workforce should also be underscored.
- **Policy Responsiveness.** Policy and ordinance flexibility are vital to economic recovery. Local governments must remain agile to the changing needs of communities, especially as it relates to business development in the energy sector.

**PRELIMINARY PLAN**

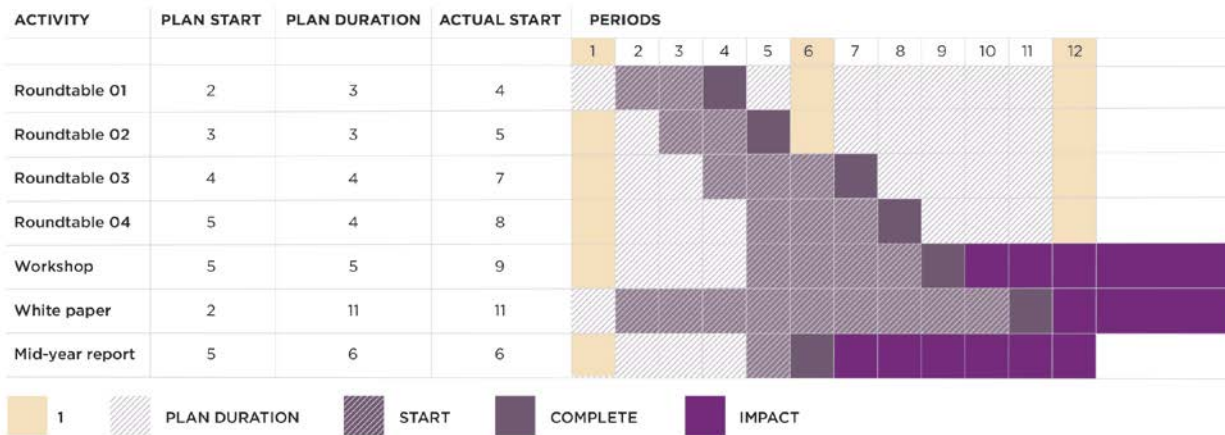
We plan to begin the partnership with a study of the gaps in the workforce in consultation with our regional industry partners, community and educational organizations. Based on those, we would draft agendas for the planned roundtable events, and we would begin approaching collaborators. We would first schedule the roundtable events; after analyzing their results, we would then proceed to organizing the workshop. We plan to report our findings in the white paper and make this document available to all partners. We would also host this paper on our website/dashboard.

**MILESTONES**

Please see the Gantt Chart below.

**SECTOR PARTNERSHIP PROJECT PLANNER**

*The legend describing the charting is to the right.*



**EXPECTED OUTCOMES**

Typically, Councils of Government (COG) are regional planning and coordinating bodies controlled by their member local governments. COGs offer planning, coordination, and technical assistance to their members, administer programs at a regional level, and act as intermediaries between the local government members and state/federal agencies. A typical COG addresses specific regional issues such as air quality planning, transportation planning and administration, public safety and 9-1-1, community and economic development, pollution control, water use, etc. ACOG, however, intends to rebrand itself as the leading voice for

regional collaboration in Central Oklahoma. ACOG is interested in supporting economic development, workforce development, small, minority-owned, and women-owned businesses, innovation and technology, commercial district and historic revitalization efforts, and sustainability in our 4-county region.

Through past projects, an updated CEDS, and the launching of a new and very promising [Community Economic Resiliency Initiative \(CERI\)](#) program, ACOG hopes to solve mutual problems and promote efficient government services; improve the quality of life in Central Oklahoma; and assure competitiveness at a national level. Completion of a Sector Partnership project would open multiple avenues for collaboration with emphasis on small business development, inclusive and reflexive communities, modern energy, equity and diversity, and healthy communities. This project would also demonstrate what government agility can do for a community, particularly when that community must overcome a disaster (be it an economic recession, a natural catastrophe, or a pandemic). This partnership will also help us build a bundle of robust resources for our communities that will benefit not only businesses but also individuals.

## HOW WILL THE SECTOR PARTNERSHIP WILL SUPPORT THE COMPETITIVENESS OF THE INDUSTRY?

Because of the increasing demand for energy in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, competition in the modern energy sector is primarily based on ensuring energy security. A priority in energy policy debates, energy security discussions revolve around four main pillars referred to as the 4 A's: Availability, Affordability, Accessibility, and Acceptability. While Availability and Affordability are self-explanatory, Accessibility refers to an economy's sustained ability to deliver energy resources in proportion to the energy demand in ways that ensure the reliability of the energy supply. Lastly, Acceptability describes the environmental, political, and societal implications of harvesting and utilizing a certain type of energy. Given energy's high demand, energy companies must pledge to provide energy security to their customers. While consumer choices are increasingly driven by considerations of sustainability, the energy sector overall must address issues such as handling competitive advantage, attracting investors mindful of the environmental footprint of their capital investments, and creating reduced energy costs.

Technology holds the potential to address the issue of energy security, and in Oklahoma, we have already begun to notice the impact of technology on the increasing interest in EVs and electrically operated mass transit, state-funded incentives for home utilizations of solar panels, the exploration of modern energy sources, and the development of battery technology. So that these changes continue in Oklahoma and render the state competitive nationally, we must prepare and sustain a workforce able to affect technological advancements. Educational institutions alone cannot ensure this because graduates often leave the state. The industry alone cannot sustain a workforce without support from the community, educational institutions, and local government. ACOG is uniquely situated as the conduit for such collaboration. Especially when partnering with collaborators like OG&E, The Oklahoma Manufacturing Alliance, and Career Tech, to mention only a few, ACOG can facilitate the development of opportunities for a workforce capable to contribute their expertise and sustain competitive energy markets.

## BUDGET OUTLINE

Please see the table below.

EXPENSES	COST
Personnel	\$16,163.00
Fringe Benefits	\$6,457.00
Travel	\$1,500.00
Supplies	\$3,000.00
Contractual	\$50,000.00
Other	\$5,000.00
Total Direct Charges	\$82,120.00
Indirect Charges	\$14,840.98
<b>Total Project Budget</b>	<b>\$96,960.98</b>
<b>Indirect Cost Calculator</b>	
Cost Base (Personnel + Fringe)	\$22,620.00
Rate	65.61%
Allowable Indirect Cost	\$14,840.98

## BUDGET NARRATIVE

### PERSONNEL

The program will require a Project Manager to devote 20% of their total time worked to this project. Calculated based on their authorized annual rate less release time, this charge would be \$11,031. The Program Manager position will be assigned to the Community & Economic Development Manager within the Community & Economic Development Department at ACOG. Their responsibilities will be coordinating the logistics for convening the collaborators, gathering and organizing research data, organizing, hosting, and collaborating with a consultant on designing and facilitating the roundtable events and the workshop. They will also work as a liaison between industry, educational, and community partners. Mid-year and final reporting of this grant (white paper) will be the responsibility of the Project Manager. They will also ensure the preparation, submittal, and distribution of the white paper.

The Administrative Assistant will devote 15% of their total time worked to this project, and their salary for this project is calculated based on their authorized annual rate less release time as \$5,132. Their responsibility will be to coordinate and manage communication; assist the Project Manager in coordinating, organizing, and hosting all the events; taking meeting minutes; assist with final report/white paper preparation.

### FRINGE BENEFITS

Fringe Benefits encompass ACOG's share of Social Security and Medicare taxes on the salaries paid to the Project Managers and Administrative Assistant, as well as group insurance, retirement contributions, holidays and various types of leave as detailed in the FY 2021 ACOG Budget available [here](#). The Fringe Benefits rate changes annually. The Fringe Benefits rate for FY 2021 is established at 39.95%.

**TRAVEL**

Considering that the pandemic will allow physical travel, these funds (\$1,500) will be used for travel to meetings established by the industry partners outlined in this grant narrative. All this travel should be local, except for potential travel to Tulsa, OK.

**SUPPLIES**

Particular supplies to be used for the purposes of the events proposed can include: office products such as papers, pens, clips, notepads, software access subscriptions, etc. This is calculated at a rate of \$250 x 12 months.

**CONTRACTUAL**

This charge will be used to hire the expertise of consultants in preparing, designing, and facilitating the roundtables and workshop, as well as collecting and managing data resulting from these events. The consultants may be asked to assist with the design and creation of the reports. We allocate a cost of \$50,000 for contractual services.

**OTHER (EVENT EXPENSES)**

Calculated at the rate of \$1000 X 5 events, this cost will be used to offer brown-bag lunches and refreshments to participants in the roundtable events and the workshop. We would also use these funds to prepare for the events (space rental and arrangement, equipment, coordination).

**INDIRECT CHARGES**

According to the FY 2021 ACOG Budget, Indirect Costs are costs that benefit all programs and need to be allocated proportionally. These costs include rent for office space, general office supplies, etc. The rate for calculating Indirect Costs has been established at 65.61% of Salaries plus Fringe Benefits in the FY 2021 ACOG Budget.

**W-9 FOR THE APPLICANT ORGANIZATION**

Please see attached.

**COMPLETED APPLICANT NON-COLLUSION FORM**

Please see attached.

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# ATTACHMENTS