



September 14, 2026

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

Agency	U.S. Department of Energy (DOE), Office of Critical Minerals and Energy Innovation (CMEI); administered by the National Laboratory of the Rockies (NLR) on behalf of DOE		
Program Description	The PROSPECT Planning Prize is a single-phase prize competition, part of DOE's \$100 million PROSPECT initiative, that rewards implementation-ready plans from universities to develop the skilled workforce required to produce, process, recover, and recycle critical minerals on American soil. PROSPECT is intended to substantially increase, with the immediate objective of doubling by the end of the 2027–2028 calendar years, the number of graduates and other credentialed professionals prepared for work across mining, mineral processing, metallurgy, materials, manufacturing, recycling, and related supply chains. Competing institutions must submit plans for novel programs aimed at substantially increasing the number of graduates and other credentialed professionals prepared for relevant mining and supply chain fields, and must present one coherent proposed PROSPECT program under three comparable, scalable illustrative budget scenarios of \$4 million, \$7 million, and \$10 million; at least 50% of each scenario budget must be dedicated to direct student support, which is limited to U.S. citizens or permanent residents. The prize recognizes completed planning work only; it does not fund implementation and does not commit DOE to future funding. It is not a procurement under the Federal Acquisition Regulation 48 CFR 1-99 and will not result in a grant or cooperative agreement.		
Application Due	October 5, 2026, 5:00 p.m. Eastern Time		
Total Funding	\$16,000,000 (up to)	Max Award: \$1,000,000	Min Award: \$1,000,000
Award Amount	Up to 16		
Local Match:	No		
Eligible Applicants	Only U.S. degree-granting academic institutions that satisfy the eligible mining program requirement are eligible to submit an application to this prize. An eligible institution must be the primary submitter and the designated prize recipient. The institution must either (1) offer a baccalaureate-level mining engineering program that is currently accredited by an International Organization for Standardization (ISO)-certified accreditation body (e.g., ABET); or (2) currently offer an active baccalaureate-level mining engineering program and demonstrate (a) institutional-level leadership commitment to attaining accreditation for the mining engineering program by an ISO-certified accreditation body (e.g., ABET) and (b) a plan to attain such accreditation by the start of the academic year in 2033. Non-academic entities may participate as partners but cannot submit as the primary competitor or receive prize funds. Participants must be legally authorized to work in the United States; DOE employees and contractors, federal employees and entities, debarred or suspended parties, participants in malign foreign talent recruitment programs, and entities owned by or subject to the jurisdiction of foreign countries of concern or appearing on restricted entity lists are not eligible.		
Eligible Activities/Projects	Education and workforce development plans that expand access to training, upskilling, and experiential learning opportunities. The workplan may include applied learning, research experiences, and targeted modernization of existing instructional laboratories, equipment, or software; student recruitment and support services (direct student support examples include tuition scholarships, stipends, required fees, and professional development travel); curriculum development and validation; faculty and instructor development; career-connected experiences such as internships, co-ops, apprenticeships, and capstones; and partnership and collaboration activities. Target populations may include mining engineering and supply chain discipline students, other engineering and science undergraduates, community college and trade school students, high school students, graduate students and early-career professionals, incumbent workers, and faculty, instructors, and trainers. Activities must be performed in the United States and principally benefit the U.S. critical minerals workforce. New building construction is outside the intended scope; activities dependent on new federal, state, or local legislation or policy, and lobbying activities, are not eligible.		
Review Criteria	(1) Baseline, Workforce Need, Targeted Measurable Impact – 20%; (2) Student Support, Recruitment, Accessible Pathways In – 25%; (3) Industry-Relevant Curriculum, Experiential Learning, Pathways Out – 15%; (4) Faculty, Instructional, Institutional Capacity – 15%; (5) Collaboration, Commitments, Governance, Readiness – 15%; and (6) Implementation, Measurement, Budget, Risk, Sustainability – 10%. A designated DOE federal employee serves as the prize judge with final decision-making authority. DOE may conduct a research, technology, and economic security due diligence review. Use of AI is permitted but must be disclosed, and competitors are responsible for the accuracy of their submissions.		
Link:	https://www.herox.com/PROSPECT-Prize		
Application Submission	Register the eligible institution and submit all required materials through https://www.herox.com/PROSPECT-Prize before the PROSPECT Planning Prize deadline. All submissions become DOE records subject to the Freedom of Information Act.		
BAC Partnership Opportunity	The Build America Center (BAC) is a technical assistance program funded by the USDOT, offering grant development services to localities at NO CHARGE. For more information, please visit our websites: https://bac.umd.edu/ and https://billlaunchpad.com/		

If your agency is interested in exploring this opportunity, contact us at bac@umd.edu for details on collaboration