**STATE OF MAINE**

**Governor’s Energy Office**



**RFA# 202402047**

**Clean Energy Partnership – Workforce Development**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **RFA Coordinator** | *All communication regarding the RFA must be made through the RFA Coordinator identified below*.  **Name:** Tagwongo Obomsawin **Title:** Clean Energy Partnership Manager  **Contact Information:** [tagwongo.obomsawin@maine.gov](mailto:tagwongo.obomsawin@maine.gov) |
| **Informational Session** | *An informational session regarding this RFA will be held on:*  **Date:** 04/24/24 **Time:** 12:00 PM  **Location:** Virtual, join using the following link: <https://mainestate.zoom.us/j/83605409285> |
| **Submitted Questions Due** | *All questions must be received by the RFA Coordinator identified above by:*  **Date:** 04/26/2024, no later than 11:59 p.m., local time |
| **Application Submission Deadline** | *Applications must be received by the Division of Procurement Services by:*  **Submission Deadline:** 05/24/2024, no later than 11:59 p.m., local time.  *Applications must be submitted electronically to:* [Proposals@maine.gov](mailto:Proposals@maine.gov) |

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**RFA TERMS/ACRONYMS with DEFINITIONS**

The following terms and acronyms, as referenced in the RFA, have the meanings indicated below:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Term/Acronym** | **Definition** |
| **CEP** | Clean Energy Partnership |
| **CE&EE** | Clean energy and energy efficiency |
| **Department** | Governor’s Energy Office |
| **GEO** | Governor’s Energy Office |
| **RFA** | Request for Applications |
| **Clean energy job** | A clean energy job is defined as any worker that is directly involved with the research, development, production, manufacture, distribution, sales, implementation, installation, or repair of components, goods, or services related to the following sectors of Clean Energy Generation; Clean Grid and Storage; Energy Efficiency; Clean Fuels; and Alternative Transportation. These jobs also include supporting services such as consulting, finance, tax, and legal services related to energy. For a complete list of clean energy and energy efficiency technologies, see Appendix F. |
| **Maine resident** | For purposes of this application, a Maine resident is defined as anyone who’s primary residence is in Maine. |
| **Wrap around supports** | Assistance to address barriers to participation in training and employment including childcare, transportation, broadband, equipment/uniforms, and other needs that may arise. |
| **Job training** | Job training refers to any training program that’s designed to lead to direct employment or advancement opportunities. Examples of training programs include pre-apprenticeships, short-term workforce training, apprenticeships, internships, or on the job training programs. |
| **Job placement services** | Job placement services includes case management, career advising, job application support, or other related services to support new employment or advancement for project participants. |
| **Stipends** | Direct financial compensation provided to participants for time and effort in a job training program. Potential stipend models could include an earn as you learn program, internship or on the job training program. |
| **BIPOC** | Black, indigenous, and people of color |
| **Under-skilled** | Lacking adequate skills or qualifications for employment or to do a particular job. |
| **Justice involved individuals** | Individuals who have had interactions with the criminal justice system as a defendant. |

**PART I OVERVIEW OF THE GRANT OPPORTUNITY**

## Purpose and Background

The State of Maine Governor’s Energy Office (Department/GEO) is seeking applications for programs that advance workforce development and training for the clean energy and energy efficiency (CE&EE) fields as defined in this Request for Applications (RFA) document. This document provides instructions for submitting applications, defines the procedure and criteria by which the awarded Applicant(s) will be selected, and the contractual terms which will govern the relationship between the State of Maine (State) and the awarded Applicant(s). This RFA, valued at $2,000,000 is supported by the Employment and Training Administration of the U.S. Department of Labor as part of an award amounting to 100% of $2,750,000 financed from federal funds, with 0% of $2,750,000 financed from state, local and/or non-governmental funds.

The Clean Energy Partnership (CEP) is an initiative within the GEO focused on preparing more Maine people for jobs in the growing CE&EE fields, providing avenues for business support, advancing innovation in the clean energy sector, and achieving Governor Mills’ goal of reaching 30,000 clean energy jobs in Maine by 2030. This RFA seeks to address this need by preparing more Maine people for jobs in the CE&EE fields.

Workforce development and training are essential to support the growth of the CE&EE fields in Maine. Qualified entities are encouraged to submit applications to provide clean energy job training, job placement services, stipends, equipment, and curriculum to Maine residents 16 years and older related to clean energy careers.

The services/programs resulting from this RFA will support one or more of the following objectives: 1) enhance the pipeline of skilled workers entering the clean energy sector, 2) develop strong partnerships between clean energy businesses and the workforce development system and 3) increase understanding and awareness of the breadth of good jobs in the clean energy sector.

## General Provisions

1. From the time this RFA is issued until award notification is made, all contact with the State regarding this RFA must be made through the RFA Coordinator identified on the cover page of this RFA. No other person/State employee is empowered to make binding statements regarding this RFA. Violation of this provision may lead to disqualification from the application process, at the State’s discretion.
2. Issuance of the RFA does not commit the Department to issue an award or to pay expenses incurred by an Applicant in the preparation of a response to the RFA. This includes attendance at personal interviews or other meetings, where applicable.
3. All applications must adhere to the instructions and format requirements outlined in the RFA and all written supplements and amendments (such as the Summary of Questions and Answers), issued by the Department. Applications are to follow the format and respond to all questions and instructions specified in Part III of the RFA.
4. Applicants will take careful note that in evaluating an application submitted in response to this RFA, the Department will consider materials provided in the application, information obtained through interviews/presentations (if any), and internal Departmental information of previous contract history with the Applicant (if any). The Department also reserves the right to consider other reliable references and publicly available information in evaluating the Applicant’s experience and capabilities.
5. The application must be signed by a person authorized to legally bind the Applicant and must contain a statement that the proposal and the pricing contained therein will remain valid and binding for a period of 180 days from the date and time of the bid opening.
6. The RFA and the awarded Applicant’s proposal, including all appendices or attachments, will be the basis for the final contract, as determined by the Department.
7. Following announcement of an award decision, all submissions in response to this RFA will be public records, available for public inspection pursuant to the State of Maine Freedom of Access Act (FOAA) ([1 M.R.S. § 401](http://www.mainelegislature.org/legis/statutes/1/title1sec401.html) et seq.).
8. The Department, at its sole discretion, reserves the right to recognize and waive minor informalities and irregularities found in applications received in response to the RFA.
9. All applicable laws, whether or not herein contained, shall be included by this reference. It shall be the Applicant’s responsibility to determine the applicability and requirements of any such laws and to abide by them.

## Eligibility to Submit Applications

1. Applicants must submit documentation certifying that the applicant is organized, chartered, or incorporated (or otherwise formed) under the laws of a particular state or territory of the United States.
2. In accordance with Section 18 of the Lobbying Disclosure Act of 1995 (Public Law 104- 65) (2 U.S.C. § 1611), non-profit entities incorporated under Internal Revenue Service Code section 501c(4) that engage in lobbying activities are not eligible to submit applications.

## Awards

## The Department anticipates making multiple awards as a result of this RFA process, including partial awards. The total estimated grant funds available are $2,000,000, with a maximum award size of $500,000.

## The number and size of awards will depend on the number of proposals received, the quality of the proposals, and available funds. The Department reserves the right to eliminate the lowest scoring applications and/or make awards at amounts less than that requested, whichever is in the best interest of the State.

## Projects will have a period of performance of 18 months. Please note, the dates provided below are estimated and may be adjusted, as necessary, to comply with all procedural requirements associated with the RFA and the contracting process. The actual contract start date will be established by a completed and approved contract.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Period of Performance (dates) | Period of Performance (months) |
| July 2024 - December 2025 | 18 |

1. **Appeal of Contract Awards**

Any person aggrieved by the award decision that results from this Request for Applications may appeal the decision to the Director of the Bureau of General Services in the manner prescribed in 5 MRSA § 1825-E and 18-554 Code of Maine Rules, Chapter 120 (found here: [Chapter 120](https://www.maine.gov/dafs/bbm/procurementservices/policies-procedures/chapter-120)).  The appeal must be in writing and filed with the Director of the Bureau of General Services, 9 State House Station, Augusta, Maine, 04333-0009 within 15 calendar days of receipt of notification of contract award.

**PART II ACTIVITIES AND REQUIREMENTS**

1. **Required Activities**

Qualified individuals and entities are encouraged to submit proposals to provide clean energy job training, job placement services, stipends, equipment, and curriculum to current and potential energy efficiency and clean technology employees, and/or other services related to clean energy and energy efficiency workforce development and training. Cross-sector partnerships between industry, workforce, education, and social services are encouraged to leverage resources and expertise and maximize collective impact.

The following types of services and activities may be included as part of the project design. This is not an exclusive list of all possible eligible services sought by this RFP:

1. Designing and implementing CE&EE curriculum
2. Developing and implementing internships, apprenticeships, or on the job training programs for CE&EE careers
3. Implementing new/and or improved CE&EE short-term workforce training programs or pre-apprenticeships
4. Supporting job placement or advancement into the CE&EE fields
5. Offering stipends through earn-as-you-learn models
6. Addressing barriers to participation in employment and training through wrap around supports or other methods
7. Implementing new and/or improved methods for raising awareness of CE&EE career pathways
8. Equipment purchases for CE&EE education and training purposes

The services/programs resulting from this RFA will serve Maine residents 16 years old and above and will support one or more of the following objectives: 1) enhance the pipeline of skilled workers entering the clean energy sector, 2) develop strong partnerships between clean energy businesses and the workforce development system and 3) increased understanding and awareness of the breadth of good jobs in the clean energy sector.

Proposed projects must address the items below, and be described in the Application Form in **Part V** of the RFA:

* 1. **Identify the category of workforce development**: Applicants will indicate which of the following services their proposed project includes:
     + 1. Job training and/or job placement services leading to employment or career advancement in the clean energy sector.
       2. Education and outreach to raise awareness of clean energy career pathways.
  2. **Identify the number of participants:** The number of participants (unique individuals) served throughout the period of performance (18 months).
  3. **Identify current and potential barriers:** Project design identifies current and potential barriers for participants including barriers that lead to underrepresentation of various population groups in the CE&EE fields. Applications will demonstrate how the project will address and/or resolve the identified barriers, including, but not limited to wrap around supports to address needs related to childcare, transportation, equipment, technology, uniforms, supplies, etc. Applicant can address these barriers directly or through referrals to partner organizations.
  4. **Integrate employability skills, relevant academic skills, and English language acquisition as needed**: Training content should develop customized curriculum and integrate supports, as needed, that help participants from target populations develop the skills and competencies to succeed in the program.
  5. **Place participants on an identified career pathway**: Projects must support participant entry or advancement in CE&EE careers by providing additional education, training, or job placement services. Job training programs and placement services must include a plan to connect participants to employment or advancement opportunities.
  6. **Include partners:** For greater assurance of success, authentic partnerships must be included in the project design and implementation. Examples of partners include employers, community-based organizations, unions, associations, social service providers, adult education programs, postsecondary institutions, or state agencies. Applicants should include a minimum of two letters of support from identified partners.
  7. **Increase diversity and equity in the CE&EE workforce**: Projects must include strategies to recruit, retain, and advance Maine residents 16 years and older from underrepresented groups including women, BIPOC individuals, individuals with disabilities, those with lower educational attainment (high school diploma/equivalent or less), those who are under-skilled, and justice-involved individuals.
  8. **Ensure equitable access**: the project must ensure equitable access for participants, including:
     + 1. There is no inherent conflict of interest if the applicant is both the supplier and a recipient of workforce development services. Awarded applicant employees shall not have preferential access to trainings.
       2. Eliminating bias in training topics to the awards applicant’s employees.
       3. All services comply with the [Americans with Disabilities Act](https://www.ada.gov/).
       4. Program design accounts for removal of barriers and structures that contribute to inequities across, but not limited to, age, gender, race, ethnicity immigration status, sexual orientation and sexual identity.
  9. **Lead to quantifiable participant outcomes**: The project must include metrics and measures of success for participants that are appropriate and realistic for the project. Applicants must complete the Project Outcomes table in the application form.
  10. **Consider sustainability:** The project must include steps to keep successful projects operating and adapted to new needs when supplemental funds have been expended.

1. **State Resource for Applicants**:
2. [Strengthening Maine’s Clean Energy Economy](https://www.maine.gov/energy/sites/maine.gov.energy/files/inline-files/StrengtheningMainesCleanEnergyEconomy_Nov92020.pdf) report
3. [2022 Maine Clean Energy Industry Report](https://www.maine.gov/energy/sites/maine.gov.energy/files/inline-files/2021%20ME%20Clean%20Energy%20Industry%20Report.pdf)
4. [2022 Maine Energy Summary and Assessment](https://www.maine.gov/energy/sites/maine.gov.energy/files/inline-files/GEO_EnergyAssessment_2022_FINAL.pdf)
5. [State of Maine Renewable Energy Goals Market Assessment](https://www.maine.gov/energy/studies-reports-working-groups/current-studies-working-groups/renewable-energy-market-assessment)
6. Maine Offshore Wind Roadmap
7. [Maine Energy Storage Market Assessment](https://www.maine.gov/energy/studies-reports-working-groups/current-studies-working-groups/energy-storage-assessment)
8. [Maine Clean Energy Workforce Analysis](https://www.maine.gov/energy/sites/maine.gov.energy/files/inline-files/2022%20Maine%20Clean%20Energy%20Workforce%20Report.pdf) report
9. [Maine Offshore Wind Talent Analysis](https://www.maine.gov/energy/sites/maine.gov.energy/files/inline-files/2022%20ME%20OSW%20Talent%20Analysis.pdf) report
10. [Maine](https://www.maine.gov/decd/sites/maine.gov.decd/files/inline-files/DECD_120919_sm.pdf) Economic Development Strategy

Other reports available from the Governor’s Energy Office ([website link](https://www.maine.gov/future/initiatives/climate/climate-council/reports))

Other reports available from the Maine Climate Council ([website link](http://climatecouncil.maine.gov/reports))

**PART III KEY PROCESS EVENTS**

## Informational Session

The Department will host an informational session concerning the RFA beginning at the date, time and location shown on the RFA cover page. The purpose of the Informational Session is to answer and/or field questions, clarify for Applicants any aspect of the RFA that may be necessary, and provide supplemental information to assist potential Applicants in submitting responses to the RFA. Although attendance at the Informational Session is not mandatory, it is strongly encouraged that interested Applicants attend.

## Submission of Questions

* 1. **General Instructions:** It is the responsibility of all Applicants and other interested parties to examine the entire RFA and to seek clarification, in writing, if they do not understand any information or instructions.
     1. Applicants and other interested parties should use **Appendix A** (Submitted Questions Form) for submission of questions. The form is to be submitted as a WORD document.
     2. Questions must be submitted, by e-mail, and received by the RFA Coordinator identified on the cover page of the RFA as soon as possible but no later than the date and time specified on the RFA cover page.
     3. Submitted Questions must include the RFA Number and Title in the subject line of the e-mail. The Department assumes no liability for assuring accurate/complete/on time e-mail transmission and receipt.
  2. **Question & Answer Summary:** Responses to all questions will be compiled in writing and posted on the State’s Division of Procurement Services [Grant RFPs and RFAs](https://www.maine.gov/dafs/bbm/procurementservices/vendors/grants) website. It is the responsibility of all interested parties to go to this website to obtain a copy of the Question & Answer Summary. Only those answers issued in writing on this website will be considered binding.

## Amendments

All amendments released in regard to this RFA will be posted on the Division of Procurement Services [Grant RFPs and RFAs](https://www.maine.gov/dafs/bbm/procurementservices/vendors/grants) website. It is the responsibility of all interested parties to go to this website to obtain amendments. Only those amendments posted on this website are considered binding.

## Application Submission

* 1. **Applications Due:** Applications must be received no later than 11:59 p.m. local time, on the date listed on the cover page of the RFA.
     1. Any e-mails containing original application submissions or any additional or revised application files, received after the 11:59 p.m. deadline, will be rejected without exception.

1. **Delivery Instructions:** Applications must be submitted electronically to the State of Maine Division of Procurement Services at [proposals@maine.gov](mailto:proposals@maine.gov).
   1. Only applications received by e-mail will be considered. The Department assumes no liability for assuring accurate/complete e-mail transmission and receipt.

Application submission e-mails that are successfully received by the [proposals@maine.gov](mailto:proposals@maine.gov) inbox will receive an automatic reply stating as such.

* 1. E-mails containing links to file sharing sites or online file repositories will not be accepted as submissions. Only e-mail application submissions that have the requested files attached will be accepted.
  2. Encrypted e-mails received which require opening attachments and logging into a proprietary system will not be accepted as submissions. It is the Applicant’s responsibility to check with its organization’s information technology team to ensure that security settings will not encrypt its application submission.
  3. File size limits are 25MB per e-mail. Applicants may submit files across multiple e-mails, as necessary, due to file size concerns. All e-mails and files must be received by the due date and time as described above.
  4. Applicants are to insert the following into the subject line of their e-mail submission: “**RFA# 202402047 Application Submission – [Applicant’s Name]**”.

1. **Submission Contents**
2. Application submissions must include the Applicant’s completed **Application Form** (found in Part V of the RFA) and all required information and attachments as stated in the form.
3. The Application Form must be submitted as a single, typed, PDF file.
4. Applicants are not to provide additional attachments beyond those specified in the RFA or Application Form for the purpose of extending their response. Materials not requested will not be considered part of the application and will not be evaluated.

**PART IV APPLICATION EVALUATION AND SELECTION**

1. **Evaluation Process – General Information**
   1. An evaluation team, composed of qualified reviewers, will judge the merits of the proposals received in accordance with the criteria defined in the RFA.
   2. Officials responsible for making decisions on the award selection will ensure that the selection process accords equal opportunity and appropriate consideration to all who are capable of meeting the specifications. The goals of the evaluation process are to ensure fairness and objectivity in review of the applications and to ensure that all contracts are awarded to the Applicants that provide the best value to the State of Maine.
   3. The Department reserves the right to communicate and/or schedule interviews/presentations with Applicants, if needed, to obtain clarification of information contained in the applications received. The Department may revise the scores assigned in the initial evaluation to reflect those communications and/or interviews/presentations. Changes to applications, including updating or adding information, will not be permitted during any interview/presentation process and, therefore, Applicants must submit proposals that present their rates and other requested information as clearly and completely as possible.
   4. Failure to respond to all questions and instructions throughout the RFA may result in the application being disqualified as non-responsive or receiving a reduced score. The Department, and its evaluation team, has sole discretion to determine whether a variance from the RFA specifications will result either in disqualification or reduction in scoring of a proposal.
2. **Scoring Process:** The evaluation team will use a consensus approach to evaluate and score all sections listed below. Members of the review team will not score those sections individually but, instead, will arrive at a consensus as to assignment of points for each of those sections.
3. **Scoring Weights:** The score will be based on a 100-point scale and will measure the degree to which each application meets the following criteria.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Scoring Criteria** | | **Points Available** |
| Eligibility/General Information/Completeness | Pass/Fail | |
| Organization Qualifications and Experience | *Demonstrates skills and experience pertinent to this RFA* | 20 |
| Proposed Project | *Proposed Project* | 30 |
| *Implementation - Workplan* | 15 |
| *Project Outcomes* | 5 |
| *Letters of Support* | 5 |
| Cost Proposal |  | 25 |
| **Total Points** |  | **100 points** |

1. **Selection and Award**
   1. Notification of conditional award selection or non-selection will be made in writing by the Department.
   2. Issuance of this RFA in no way constitutes a commitment by the State to award a contract, to pay costs incurred in the preparation of a response to the RFA, or to pay costs incurred in procuring or contracting for services, supplies, physical space, personnel, or any other costs incurred by the Applicant.
   3. The Department reserves the right to reject any and all applications or to make multiple awards.
2. **Contract Administration and Conditions**
   1. The awarded Applicants will be required to execute a State of Maine Service Contract with the appropriate riders as determined by the issuing Department.
   2. Allocation of funds is final upon successful negotiation and execution of the contract, subject to the review and approval of the State Procurement Review Committee. Contracts are not considered fully executed and valid until approved by the State Procurement Review Committee and funds are encumbered. No contract will be approved based on an RFA which has an effective date less than fourteen (14) calendar days after award notification to Applicants. (Referenced in the regulations of the Department of Administrative and Financial Services, [Chapter 110, § 3(B)(i)](https://www.maine.gov/dafs/bbm/procurementservices/policies-procedures/chapter-110)). This provision means that a contract cannot be effective until at least 14 calendar days after award notification.
   3. Following the award, a Contract Administrator from the Department will be appointed to assist with the development and administration of the contract and to act as administrator during the entire contract period. Department staff will be available after the award to consult with the awarded Applicants in the finalization of the contract.
   4. In providing services and performing under the contract, the awarded Applicant must act as an independent contractor and not as an agent of the State of Maine.
   5. Equipment purchases with a per unit cost of more than $5,000 will be contingent upon approval by the GEO and the US Department of Labor.
   6. Reporting Requirements:Applicants are required totrack and record all data/information necessary to complete the required reports listed in in the tables below.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Name of Report** | **Description** |
| Quarterly Performance Progress Report | Includes information on performance metrics, success, challenges, and progress |
| Quarterly Financial Report | Includes information on quarterly expenditures as detailed in the grant application |

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Name of Report** | **Period covered by report** | **Deadline** |
| Quarterly Performance Progress Report | Each quarter | 30 days after each quarter end date |
| Quarterly Financial Report | Each quarter | 30 days after each quarter end date |

**PART V APPLICATION FORM**

## Applicants must use the Application Form embedded below to submit their application in response to this RFA.

## The Application Form may be obtained in a Word (.docx) format by double clicking on the document icon below.



**APPENDIX A SUBMITTED QUESTIONS FORM**

This form should be used by Applicants when submitting written questions to the RFA Coordinator.

If a question is not related to any section of the RFA, enter “N/A” under the RFA Section & Page Number. Add additional rows as necessary. Submit this document in WORD format, not PDF.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Organization Name:** |  |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **RFA Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
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**APPENDIX B** **CLEAN ENERGY TECHNOLOGY LIST**

**RENEWABLE ELECTRIC POWER GENERATION**

* Solar Photovoltaic Electric Generation
* Concentrated Solar Electric Generation
* Wind Generation
* Geothermal Generation
* Bioenergy/Biomass Generation, including Combined Heat and Power
* Low-Impact Hydroelectric Generation, including wave/kinetic generation
* Traditional Hydroelectric Generation

**GRID MODERNIZATION & ENERGY STORAGE**

* Electric Power Transmission and Distribution
  + Electric Power Transmission, Control, and Distribution
  + Smart Grid
* Storage
  + Pumped Hydropower Storage
  + Battery Storage, including battery storage for solar generation ▪ Lithium Batteries
    - Lead-Based Batteries
    - Other Solid-Electrode Batteries
    - Vanadium Redox Flow Batteries
    - Other Flow Batteries
  + Mechanical Storage, including flywheels, compressed air energy storage, etc.
  + Thermal Storage

**ENERGY EFFICIENCY**

* Traditional HVAC goods, control systems, and services
* High Efficiency HVAC and Renewable Heating and Cooling
  + ENERGY STAR Certified Heating Ventilation and Air Conditioning (HVAC), including boilers and furnaces with an AFUE rating of 90 or greater and air and central air conditioning units of 15 SEER or greater
  + Solar Thermal Water Heating and Cooling
  + Other Renewable Heating and Cooling (geothermal, biomass, heat pumps, etc.)
* ENERGY STAR® and Efficient Lighting
  + ENERGY STAR Certified Appliances, excluding HVAC
  + ENERGY STAR Certified Electronics (TVs, Telephones, Audio/Video, etc.)
  + ENERGY STAR Certified Windows and Doors
  + ENERGY STAR Certified Roofing
  + ENERGY STAR Certified Seal and Insulation
  + ENERGY STAR Certified Commercial Food Service Equipment
  + ENERGY STAR Certified Data Center Equipment
  + ENERGY STAR Certified LED Lighting
  + Other LED, CFL, and Efficient Lighting
* Advanced Building Materials/Insulation
* Other Energy Efficiency
  + Recycled Building Materials
  + Reduced Water Consumption Products and Appliances

**RENEWABLE FUELS**

* Woody Biomass
* Other Ethanol and Non-Woody Biomass, including biodiesel

**ALTERNATIVE TRANSPORTATION**

* Plug-In Hybrid Vehicles
* Electric Vehicles
* Hybrid Electric Vehicles
* Hydrogen and Fuel cell Vehicles