

GAIN vouchers Offer New Opportunities to Nuclear Industry Developers

March 17, 2020

Although researchers at national laboratories have traditionally thought in terms of getting "awards" to fund their projects, a U.S. Department of Energy program is taking a new approach to keeping the nuclear energy research and development fires stoked.

Since 2016, the Gateway for Accelerated Innovation in Nuclear (GAIN) has been providing vouchers to help companies engaged in nuclear research, streamlining commercialization efforts by offering the resources of DOE's national labs for much less than what they would typically cost.

"In an ideal case, a young startup company has run into an issue that it doesn't have the resources to solve," said John Jackson, GAIN's technical interface. "We view ourselves as a high-end technical service to benefit the United States."

Of the 47 vouchers that have been issued since 2016, work has been done for small companies such as Oklo, of Sunnyvale, California, and Creare, of Hanover, New Hampshire. Yet giants such as Westinghouse and GE-Hitachi have also benefited from GAIN vouchers.

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GAIN announces 2nd-round FY-2020 Nuclear Energy Voucher recipients

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The Gateway for Accelerated Innovation in Nuclear (GAIN) announced today that two nuclear companies will be provided GAIN Nuclear Energy (NE) Vouchers to accelerate the innovation and application of advanced nuclear technologies. NE vouchers provide advanced nuclear technology innovators with access to the extensive nuclear research capabilities and expertise available across the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) national laboratory complex. This is the second set of awards in FY 2020.

The GAIN NE Voucher Program accepts applications on innovation that supports production and utilization of nuclear energy (e.g., for generation of electricity, supply of process heat, etc.) in the following general topic areas:

- Analysis and evaluation of, and for, advanced reactor concepts and associated designs, including development of licensing information or strategies
- Structural material and component development, testing and qualification
- Advanced nuclear fuel development, fabrication and testing (includes fuel materials and cladding)

May 12, 2020

- Development, testing, and qualification of instrumentation, controls, and sensor technologies that are hardened for harsh environments and secured against cyber intrusion
- Modeling and simulation, high-performance computing, codes and methods
- Technical assistance from subject matter experts and/or data/information to support technology development and/or confirm key technical or licensing issues

The businesses selected to receive GAIN nuclear energy vouchers for Round 2 FY 2020 are:

GAIN 2020 2nd Round NE Voucher Recipient	Awarded Proposal	Partner Facility
Neutroelectric, LLC Williamstown, NJ	Combined Effects Testing of High-Temperature and Neutron Fluence to Support the Qualification of NE-300, a High-Temperature Neutron Shielding Material	Oak Ridge National Laboratory
Oklo, Inc. Sunnyvale, CA	Addressing Gaps in Legacy Data on Fuel Steel Interactions	Idaho National Laboratory

GAIN NE voucher recipients do not receive direct financial awards. The GAIN nuclear energy vouchers provide access to national laboratory capabilities at no cost to the voucher recipients. All awardees are responsible for a minimum 20 percent cost share, which could be an in-kind contribution. Further information on the GAIN nuclear energy voucher program as well as current and all past awards may be found [here](#).

The U.S. Department of Energy Office of Nuclear Energy (DOE-NE) established GAIN to provide the nuclear community with the technical, regulatory and financial support necessary to move innovative nuclear energy technologies toward commercialization while ensuring the continued safe, reliable and economic operation of the existing nuclear fleet. Through GAIN, DOE is making its state-of-the-art and continuously improving RD&D infrastructure available to stakeholders to achieve faster and cost-effective development of innovative nuclear energy technologies toward commercial readiness.

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U.S. Nuclear Industry Council (USNIC) Policy Brief - Advanced Nuclear Reactor Development Benefits from Versatile Test Reactor

January 24, 2020

To maintain U.S. global advanced nuclear leadership, it is important to have a versatile, high-energy neutron source. The U.S. Versatile Test Reactor (VTR) can provide that capability to accelerate research and test nuclear materials, fuel, and other components. The VTR can assist in developing innovative nuclear energy technologies that have inherent safety features, lower waste yields, the capability to consume waste materials, the ability to support both electric and non-electric applications, and other improvements over the current generation of reactors. Furthermore, the success of the VTR will advance the U.S. industry by not having domestic nuclear developers relying upon Russian or Chinese test facilities and allowing the U.S. to be a competitive international resource for irradiation and testing services. In addition, constructing the VTR will enable the U.S. government to demonstrate advanced reactor technologies.

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Christine King Named Director of Gateway for Accelerated Innovation in Nuclear (GAIN)

INL News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Jan. 23, 2020

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IDAHO FALLS, IDAHO – Dr. John Wagner, associate laboratory director of Idaho National Laboratory's Nuclear Science & Technology Directorate, has announced the selection of Christine King to serve as director of the **Gateway for Accelerated Innovation in Nuclear** (GAIN) initiative, effective Feb. 17. As director, King will lead efforts on behalf of the Department of Energy (DOE) Office of Nuclear Energy to provide the nuclear community with access to the technical, regulatory and financial support necessary to move innovative nuclear energy technologies toward commercialization.

"There is a growing number of nuclear innovators in the private sector that require access to the unique assets of the DOE's national laboratory complex to achieve their commercialization goals," said Wagner. "Christine's experience in engaging with the nuclear community, particularly helping startups find their footing by connecting them with appropriate resources, makes her the ideal candidate to take on this unique leadership role."

In her new position, King will work closely with the DOE Office of Nuclear Energy, now led by former GAIN Director Dr. Rita Baranwal, to develop strategic plans and associated actions promoting GAIN's essential role within the energy complex. She will play a pivotal role in helping stakeholders access the technical, regulatory and financial support necessary to enable emerging technologies to come forward on the energy production market.

King joins INL with 26 years of experience in the nuclear energy industry, including a history of leading strategic initiatives with multimillion-dollar budgets, fostering relationships and expanding programs. She most recently served as the operations director for Nucleation Capital, an emerging venture capital firm based in Silicon Valley focused on bringing private capital into the developing advanced nuclear sector to help speed these disruptive technologies to market. There, she began to build relationships with advanced nuclear entrepreneurs and members of the investment community and developed an appreciation of the challenges facing emerging nuclear technologies in being able to compete within the broader energy and capital markets for funding. She has also held several senior leadership positions in consulting firms and nonprofit organizations within the energy industry, including the Electric Power Research Institute. She is well known for her ability to lead teams and execute innovative programs, developing and streamlining processes to eliminate obstacles and achieve organizational success. She holds a bachelor's degree in chemical engineering from North Carolina State University and an MBA from Lynchburg College.

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