Maeser Allen:

Hello, everyone. Thank you for joining today's virtual information session on the Power Your Future Challenge. My name is Maeser Allen. My pronouns are he/him. And to provide a quick visual description of myself for those who may benefit, I'm a white male with brown hair. I'm wearing a dark green shirt and have a light green virtual Zoom background. I am a senior associate at Luminary Labs. Luminary Labs is a strategy and innovation consultancy based in New York City, and we have been engaged by the U.S. Department of Education to run the Power Your Future Challenge. So that's why we're here today, to share more information about that.

The purpose of this information session is to provide an overview of the Power Your Future Challenge and answer any of your questions that you might have. To start the presentation, The team at the U.S. Department of Education will share background information on the CTE Momentum Challenge series and introduce the Power Your Future Challenge. I will then walk you through some details of the challenge, including components of the submission form, the challenge timeline, selection criteria, and other details.

At the end, we'll have time for a Q&A where we will review the questions that we received ahead of time, as well as the questions that were submitted during the information session. Please feel free to submit any questions at any time during today's presentation using the Q&A function.

On one last note, we are recording today's session, and we'll be publishing the recording of the information session along with the slides and the frequently asked questions page on the challenge website here in the coming days.

First, I'd like to introduce the team behind the Power Your Future Challenge. At the U.S. Department of Education, you'll see on this slide leadership from the department's Office of Career, Technical, and Adult Education, Dr. Amy Loyd and Luke Rhine. Here we have the leadership from the department's Office of Career Technical and Adult Education's, Division of Academic Technical Education, Dr. Sharon Miller, Robin Utz, Daphne Bonaparte, Jenny Lambert, and Jim Means. Just to point out that today we'll be joined by Jenny Lambert, who will be speaking, too, here shortly. And also would like to point out the attendance of Jim Means as well.

On the next slide, you'll see the Luminary Labs team supporting the Power Your Future Challenge. That includes Allana Edwards, Harrison Diskin, Janna Gilbert, myself, Maeser Allen, Natalia Allen, and Rebecca Meyer. The Luminary Labs team is on hand to respond to any questions you might have. Again, if the chat function is not working, please drop those questions in the Q&A function. And we'll also be dropping important links in the chat throughout the session with links that you can use to visit the challenge website and learn more information.

Without further ado, we'll dive into the Power Your Future Challenge and learn a little bit more about how and why you can participate in this challenge. For more, I will turn it over to Jenny Lambert.

Jenny Lambert:

Thanks, Maeser. Hello, everyone. As you said, my name is Jenny Lambert. My pronouns are she/her, and I'm a public servant in the federal government. I have short, blonde hair, wear glasses every day. Today, I'm dressed in a blue and black suit, and I have the same backdrop as Maeser described, a light green.

We're so glad that you've carved an hour out of your busy schedule to attend this info session. We're thrilled that you have an interest in the Power Your Future Challenge. It's the second competition in our CTE Momentum Annual Challenge series, which is sponsored by the U.S. Department of Education. The series' meta theme seeks to prepare high school students for rewarding careers and increase their access to career and technical education. That's where we get the CTE acronym because you know we love acronyms in education.

We designed this series to have a consistent structure and timeline to encourage teachers to plan for and incorporate an annual challenge into their classroom activities. We explored space during our first challenge, and now we're bringing it back home with a focus on energy.

So what's the call to action? The Power Your Future Challenge invites teams to submit innovative action plans that will advance the use of clean energy, and their schools, and communities. A quick but important sidebar. We couldn't do this work without the fabulous support of our contractor, Luminary Labs, and they're leading this info session. We absolutely love collaborating with them, and we know you're in good hands as we proceed with this competition.

Okay. Clearly, we are excited about the topic of this second challenge, and we can't wait to see what the field submits. We do anticipate receiving really innovative ideas. We hope that your team submission is one of the submissions we'll review later on this year. Submission will keep us busy during the holiday season. So, wishing you the best in this competition. Back to you, Maeser.

Maeser Allen:

Great. Thank you, Jenny. As Jenny shared, we are very excited about the topic of the Power Your Future Challenge, which is clean energy. After many decades of underinvestment, Congress has approved $1.7 trillion to rebuild the nation's infrastructure. One of the very important aspects of modernizing the nation's infrastructure is advancing clean energy. This congressional funding has created immense opportunities in clean energy generation, transmission, and storage, and efforts to transition to clean energy have accelerated across the nation.

Workforce gaps, however, in critical fields like construction, plumbing, and renewable energy installation threaten to stall the progress that has already been made. And a robust talent pipeline of skilled tradespeople is crucial for implementing renewable energy projects and achieving America's clean energy goals.

CTE students gained valuable hands-on skills in construction, manufacturing, engineering, and other trades that align with clean energy careers. The Power Your Future Challenge taps into CTE students' unique knowledge, drive, and creativity to develop real-world solutions that advance clean energy adoption in their communities. CTE students are uniquely positioned to become the next generation of clean energy leaders, and we hope this is an opportunity for them to gain that experience.

The purpose of the Power Your Future Challenge is threefold. First, the challenge is an opportunity to create engaging learning opportunities for students to explore the benefits and challenges of clean energy. It invites students to reflect on what clean energy looks like at their school and in their community, as well as what it could look like in the future.

The second objective of the challenge is to connect CTE programs with a wide variety of infrastructure-related careers. As I previously mentioned, CTE students are uniquely positioned to contribute to important trades and careers that will improve and strengthen our nation's infrastructure.

And third, to inspire students to make an impact in their schools and in their communities. Students can be powerful change-makers in their communities, and this challenge provides an opportunity for students to make a lasting impact on their schools and in their local communities.

To reiterate the call to action, the challenge invites high school students, high school teams to submit action plans to advance the use of clean energy at the school or community level. The submission form, what teams will be completing as their participation in the challenge, is primarily made up of short response questions that will all contribute to the team's action plan.

For the sake of this challenge, a team does not need to already be engaged in clean energy practices or have already implemented clean energy technologies at their school. We would like to see your vision of what your team will advance or how your team will advance the use of clean energy at your school and in your community. Obviously, every community is unique and has unique needs, so we invite you to reflect on what clean energy strategies might make sense in your local context.

The submission form itself includes some key components that I'd like to provide a quick overview on. The first is the team, the team overview. This includes some information related to your school, the team composition, and the connections to CTE programs and opportunities.

The next component is the action plan itself. These are the short-form response questions that will make up the bulk of the plan, and this includes an overview of your plan and the solution that your team would like to implement, key project milestones and activities to implement your action plan, as well as a budget for your plan.

The next component I'd like to highlight is the visual asset. This is a 90-second video, a gallery of images, or a rendering, a 3D rendering, or some sort of visual rendering of the project. There's a lot of flexibility here as to what format your visual representation can take. We would just like to see some sort of visual take on what your action plan looks like, how your team worked together, or the solution that your team would like to implement at your school or in your community.

Then lastly, the principal and administrator approval. This takes the form of a written approval from a principal or administrator stating your team has permission to participate in the challenge. On the challenge website, on the resources page, you can access an approval letter template that you can use and upload to your submission form once your principal or administrator has signed off your participation in the challenge.

The full submission form itself is available now to review on the Power Your Feature challenge website under the submit tab. So, we invite you to review the submission form as you begin to assemble your team and begin work on your action plan in order to understand all of the components that will be included as part of your team's submission.

Great. Let's learn a bit more about the details of the Power Your Future Challenge. Looking here at the challenge timeline, the Power Your Future Challenge launched on August 6th of this year, and we are currently in the open submissions period of the challenge. Teams have until November 19th to submit their action plans. Please note that submissions must be received by 8:00 PM Eastern Time on that day, November 19th.

Once the submission period closes, the judging process will begin. Judges will review and score submissions based on the selection criteria that we will review here shortly. Then, once the judging process has been completed, the U.S. Department of Education anticipates to announce up to 10 winners in February of next year, so February 2025. Those winners will receive an equal share of the $50,000 prize pool, so at least $5,000 per winning team.

Moving on into eligibility and who can participate in the challenge. Eligible teams must meet at least one of the following eligibility criteria. One, the school is an eligible recipient as defined in Perkins V and is eligible to receive Perkins V funding. Or, as the team is a state or local, public or private nonprofit entity that has partnered with at least one eligible recipient to connect high school students to clean energy careers and career opportunities. All information on eligibility, including links to relevant information, can be found on the official rules terms and conditions page of the Challenge website. I believe that has been dropped here in the chat.

Additionally, each team must be led by a CTE teacher, coordinator, or director that is employed at the eligible recipient school, meaning the eligible participating school, or be employed by the state or local, public or private nonprofit entity partnering with the eligible recipient. Team leads also must be at least 18 years of age. Again, for all information on team eligibility and information related to the team lead, please visit the official rules, terms, and conditions page on the challenge website. We invite you to review that page if you have any questions related to eligibility.

Let's talk about selection criteria. Once the submission period has closed and the judging process begins, submissions will be evaluated by an independent judging panel who select up to 10 winners. When reviewing submissions, judges will assign up to five points in each of the following categories.

The first category, first selection criteria, is impact. That is the extent to which the action plan demonstrates an innovative solution that advances clean energy use while considering broader applications. The second is feasibility, the extent to which the action plan demonstrates a practical solution to advance clean energy use at the school or in the community, learning the extent to which the action plan improves students' academic, technical, and collaboration skills, as well as awareness of clean energy related careers.

Fourth is collaboration, the extent to which the action plan demonstrates cross-disciplinary partnership, including at least one CTE program. And fifth, student engagement. This is the extent to which the action plan involves a broad cross section of students, including students from special populations and underserved students. There's some additional information that you can visit once these slides are posted on the challenge website. Additional information can also be found on the official rules terms and conditions page of the challenge website. These criteria are listed on the challenge website, so I encourage you to please visit this page and review these closely as you work on your submission.

All right. Let's talk about prizes. The prize pool is $50,000, and up to 10 teams will win and receive an equal share of this prize pool, totaling at least $5,000 each. Winning teams may also receive in-kind prizes. This could include mentorship opportunities, classroom equipment, site visits, or other experiences. We invite you to stay tuned and check the challenge website for any updates on the prize pool. Those updates will most likely be coming through the Challenge newsletter, so we invite you to sign up for that newsletter. That's where we share a lot of announcements and updates regarding the challenge, but specifically here about the prize pool.

If today you are joining and you're interested in getting involved in the Power Your Future Challenge, but you are not eligible to join as a team, we would love to hear from you. We can explore opportunities to collaborate, and we can share more information about those opportunities. If this applies to you, please contact us at the challenge email hello@ctemomentum.com, and we'll get in touch and start to explore those opportunities.

In terms of next steps, you can contact the challenge team at hello@ctemomentum.com with any additional questions you might have. I would recommend adding the hello@ctemomentum.com email address to your contacts just to make sure those important messages are not being marked as spam and are getting into your inbox.

And lastly, please be sure to visit the challenge website, poweryourfuture.ctemomentum.com, to sign up for the newsletter, browse resources, and start working on your submission. All of the information that we have shared today is on the challenge website, so you'll be able to access it there as well.

Thank you all so much for tuning in to learn more about the Power Your Future Challenge, as I mentioned before, the recording of today's information session along with the slides and the FAQ page will be published on the challenge website in the coming days. A big thank you to Jenny Lambert and the team at the U.S. Department of Education for their leadership and support. And we're very excited for you and your team to participate in the Power Your Future Challenge, and we can't wait to see how you will advance the use of clean energy in your communities. Thank you again for attending today's information session, and I hope you all have a great day. Thank you.