Southern California Regional Energy Network

SoCalREN E-Contractor Academy Program Implementation Plan

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A. Program Overview

The E-Contractor Academy Program prepares small and diverse contractors to perform energy retrofit and other green infrastructure projects. The training is tailored to contractors to provide hands-on knowledge-based training so that they can effectively pursue and perform energy efficiency (EE) retrofit projects across Southern California.

B. Program Budget and Savings

Table 1. Table 1: Program Budget and Savings

1	Program Name	E-Contractor Academy Program	
2	Program ID Number	SCR-WET-D6	
3	Program Implementer	SoCalREN/County of Los Angeles + Third-Party Implementer	
4	Portfolio Administrator	SoCalREN	
5	Program Implementer Type	REN + Third-Party Delivered	
6	Portfolio Segment[1]	Market Support	
7	Total Program Budget	$1,880,000	
8	Program Budget by Year	2024	$470,000
		2025	$470,000
		2026	$470,000
		2027	$470,000
9	Program Duration (Start Date - End Date)	2024–2027	
10	Total System Benefit (TSB)	N/A	
11	CO_2 (Lifecycle, First Year, Net, Gross)	N/A	
12	KW (First Year, Net, Gross)	N/A	
13	KWh (Lifecycle, First Year, Net, Gross)	N/A	

[1] D.21-05-031 Ordering Paragraph 2

14	Therms (Lifecycle, First Year, Net, Gross)	N/A
15	Program Cost Effectiveness: Total Resource Cost (TRC)	N/A
16	Program Cost Effectiveness: Program Administrator Cost (PAC)	N/A
17	Market Sector	Cross-Cutting Workforce Education and Training (WE&T)
18	Program Type (i.e., Non-resource, Resource)	Non-resource
19	Delivery Type[2]	Downstream
20	Intervention Strategies	Technical Assistance
21	M&V Methods	Other

[2] Database for Energy Efficiency Resources (DEER) 2026 Delivery Types

C. Implementation Plan Narrative

1. Program Description

The E-Contractor Academy Program is a multifaceted program that offers support and guidance to licensed small and diverse contractors as they prepare to compete in the public contracting arena or become qualified in California EE programs to perform retrofit projects. Enrolled contractors can participate in multi-week training academies, and one-day workshops focused on critical industry-related topics. Additionally, the E-Contractor Academy Program offers one-on-one technical assistance to participating contractors. Personalized support is available to contractors seeking assistance with business development, certifications, marketing, bid/Request for Proposal (RFP) review, referrals to resources and partners, project opportunities, project support, and retrofit opportunities through the SoCalREN Residential, Public, Commercial, and Agriculture Programs.

Contractors undergo training through a curriculum designed to achieve maximum outcomes and preparation. Curriculum includes, but is not limited to:

- Bidding and Estimating
- Bonding and Insurance
- Access to Capital
- Labor Compliance and Prevailing Wage
- Project Labor Agreements
- Marketing
- Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA 10/30)
- How to Do Business with SoCalREN Programs
- Decarbonization topics such as: Green Building/Construction Standards and Requirements and Fundamentals of Building Green, Heat Pump Water Heater Installation
- Certification Training: Green Professional Building Skills (GPRO) and Environmental Protection Agency Section 608 (EPA 608 Type II)

Figure 1. ECA Participation Steps



Rationale

SoCalREN believes that small and diverse contractors face barriers to participating in energy efficiency, decarbonization, and public-sector contracting opportunities due to limited access to technical assistance, certification support, industry knowledge, and procurement readiness.

Traditional workforce and procurement systems do not provide the structured technical assistance, certification support, and business development guidance needed for these contractors to compete effectively. As a Market Support Workforce Education and Training program, the E-Contractor Academy Program addresses this gap by strengthening contractor capacity, supporting licensure and certifications, and creating pathways to participate in clean energy and public infrastructure projects across the SoCalREN territory.

Program Objectives

The E-Contractor Program will achieve the following objectives:

1. Increase contractor capacity by providing technical assistance, business development support, and industry-specific training to contractors participating in energy efficiency and clean energy markets within the SoCalREN territory.
2. Expand participation in energy efficiency and green infrastructure opportunities by equipping contractors with the knowledge, certifications, and compliance tools necessary to compete for public and private sector contracts.
3. Strengthen contractor competitiveness through training in estimating, bidding, project management, marketing strategies, and Request for Proposal (RFP)/ Request for Qualification (RFQ) preparation.
4. Support regional workforce and contractor market development by advancing participation of small, diverse, and locally owned contractors in energy-related and public infrastructure projects.
5. Build a sustainable regional contractor network aligned with public-sector clean energy and infrastructure investments across SoCalREN's 13-county territory.

2. Performance Tracking

Contractual Target Metrics: Unique Value

The metrics to be gathered by the SoCalREN E-Contractor Academy are as follows:

Table 2. Contractual Targets Metrics (UVMs)

Program Goals	2024	2025	2026	2027
Total Unique Participants Served	115	120	200	130
Total Training Engagements	250	275	300	325
Number of Contractors Receiving Technical Assistance/Coaching	10	15	20	25

Program Goals	2024	2025	2026	2027
Number of Training Certificates Earned	15	20	25	30
Number of Coaching/Technical Assistance Hours	20	25	100	110
Number of Education & Training Courses (Workshops, Academies, Training Courses) Events (Training Courses)	6	6	8	8

Supporting Metrics: Indicators

The metrics to be gathered by the SoCalREN ECA program are as follows:

Table 3. Supporting Indicators

Metric	Data Collected
Number of Business Enterprise Certifications Earned	The total number of business enterprise certifications earned by contractors through successful application and approval processes administered by government agencies or trade organizations (e.g., SBE, MBE, WBE, DBE)
Number of Technical Assistance/Coaching Sessions	The total number of technical assistance or coaching sessions provided to contractors, including one-on-one or group support related to project implementation or professional development.(Includes E-CLAP sessions).
Number of Contractors Referred to External Training	The total number of unique contractors who were referred by the program to external training opportunities provided by partner organizations or institutions.
Number of Referrals to External Training	The total number of referrals made to contractors for external training opportunities provided by partner organizations or institutions
Percentage of Contractors Indicating Increased Soft Skills to Conduct EE Projects or knowledge of Energy Efficiency Topics	The percentage of contractors who report improved soft skills or increased knowledge in energy efficiency or its components because of participating in training or program activities.
Number of E-CLAP Contractors Receiving Technical Assistance/Coaching	The total number of contractors enrolled in the E-CLAPP program who received one-on-one or group technical assistance or coaching
Number of E-CLAP Licenses In	Total number of licenses currently being pursued by

Metric	Data Collected
Progress	contractors enrolled in the E-CLAP program through program-supported coaching or guidance.
Number of E-CLAP Licenses Earned	Total number of professional licenses successfully earned by contractors participating in the E-CLAP program through program-supported coaching or guidance.
Number of Bids for EE Projects Submitted	The total count of project bids submitted by contractors with ECA support.
Number of Bids for Non-EE projects Submitted	The total count of project bids for non-energy efficiency projects submitted by contractors who affirm the bid utilized ECA training, coaching, or project guidance.
Number of Contractors/Participants Referred to Business Resources	The total number of unique contractors or participants referred to external business resource programs for further assistance or development.
Number of Referrals to Business Resources	The total number of referrals made to contractors for business support resources.
Number of Contractors Referred to other SoCalREN Programs	The number of contractors referred to other Southern California Regional Energy Network (SoCalREN) programs for additional support or opportunities.
Number of Referrals to other SoCalREN Programs	The total number of referrals made to contractors or participants for other SoCalREN programs.
Number of Outreach Events Attended	The total number of external, public-facing events attended by ECA staff (e.g., conferences, expos, or community stakeholder meetings) for program awareness and recruitment.
Number of Events Hosted or Co-hosted	The total number of events organized, led, or co-hosted by the ECA program for its participants. This includes workshops, academies, job fairs, and information sessions.
Number of Counties Serving	The total number of counties where contractors participating in the program are based.
Number of partner organizations participating in Regional Workforce Alliance meetings.	The count of unique partner organizations that attend or actively engage in Regional Workforce Alliance meetings during a reporting period.

3. Program Delivery and Customer Services

The program is designed to expand business capacity and opportunities for small and diverse contractors by connecting them with industry experts, procurement networks, and technical assistance specialists. The program will pursue the following strategies:

Direct Outreach Strategy

The program will directly reach contractors via contractor associations, minority organizations, chambers of commerce, and industry partners. Once enrolled, contractors will learn firsthand from program staff about the services offered.

Marketing Strategies

The program will implement a coordinated marketing approach to increase awareness, recruit qualified contractors, and promote success stories. Marketing tactics include monthly newsletters, social media posts, informational webinars, community presentations, and more.

Capacity-Building Strategy

The program will provide structured one-on-one coaching and cohort-based learning to help contractors strengthen business operations, obtain certifications, and competitiveness within the construction industry.

Partnership Strategy

The program will continuously develop and maintain partnerships with utilities, public agencies, and prime contractors to connect participants to real project opportunities, including retrofit work through the SoCalREN Residential, Public, Commercial, and Agriculture Programs.

Continuous Improvement Strategy

Personal Enrichment Training (PET) is designed to prepare participants for a successful transition into the workforce. This training covers essential topics such as financial literacy, work ethics, life skills, career exploration, and goal setting.

Technical Assistance

Contractors will work with a Technical Assistance Specialist who will provide one-on-one technical assistance and personalized coaching. Technical assistance and personalized coaching may include developing strategic documents to market, define, and grow the participant's business capacity, and personalized goal-setting.

Bid Support

- A Technical Assistance Specialist will meet with contractors to review all project bid documentation to ensure accuracy and provide suggestions free of charge. Contractors will also receive the information and assistance needed to pre-qualify for and perform energy-efficiency projects.

- Project Delivery methods are also discussed as part of bid support; these include Request for Proposal (RFP)/ Request for Qualification (RFQ) preparation. These are only 2 of the many delivery methods that a public agency will use publish bids.

Project Support

As needed, SoCalREN can assist contractors during a project by providing in-the-field support.

E-Contractor License Assistance Program (E-CLAP)

This program is an extension of the E-Contractor Academy Program. E-CLAP is designed to assist individuals currently working in the construction industry in starting their own companies and obtaining their Contractor's License. This program removes some of the financial barriers to the Contractors State License Board (CSLB) process, CSLB Exam preparation, and business start-up costs. It also creates a pathway for entrepreneurship in the clean energy industry.

Marketing and Advertising Engagement Channels

Marketing Collateral

A program overview and other materials (contractor collateral, resources, etc.) have been developed to provide potential participants with information about the E-Contractor Academy Program and its benefits.

Toll-Free Phone and Email Support

The E-Contractor Academy Program will provide toll-free phone and email support for program inquiries. The toll-free line is available on weekdays from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. PT.

Web-Based Digital Marketing Education & Outreach

The SoCalREN website includes a section dedicated to the E-Contractor Academy Program. In addition, E-Contractor Academy Program is featured on SoCalREN social media platforms and in Quarterly SoCalREN E-Newsletters.

Strategic Initiative

Regional Workforce Alliance (RWA)

The Regional Workforce Alliance, a project of the e-contractor program, convenes on a quarterly basis to strengthen partnerships, to share innovative programs and opportunities for collaboration, and to align public, private, and community-based programs in the development of quality career jobs and business opportunities for disadvantaged communities of color in the clean energy sector. The stated mission of the RWA is to strengthen regional collaboration between workforce, contractor, industry, education, and public-sector partners to increase participation in energy efficiency, and clean energy opportunities across the SoCalREN territory. Participants include community-based organizations, chambers, workforce boards, labor unions, industry leaders, elected officials, employers, students, job seekers, and local governments.

Held at a new location within the SoCalREN territory every quarter, the RWA invites experts and community leaders to speak on a panel, inspiring robust conversations on issues relevant to the targeted region. In addition, the Regional Workforce Alliance assists with information sharing on career/business pathways, sharing relevant opportunities with participants and providing touchpoints for continued connection.

Through its quarterly convening, the RWA addresses the following:

- Discusses existing and emerging occupations and skills requirements for workers performing energy efficiency work in a rapidly changing market
- Discusses the development of curricula and workforce development pathways for youth, disadvantaged adults, and incumbent workers
- Identifies opportunities for targeted local workers or small contractors to participate in energy efficiency projects
- Elevates recommendations for regional energy workforce investments
- Shares information on training options, certificated programs, access to construction technologies, equipment/materials, and capital, bonding, and insurance for small and diverse businesses
- Provides input to public agencies and institutions to help achieve local clean energy goals, such as the Los Angeles Community College Sustainability Vision 2040 Plan;
- Provides resources such as training, expertise, and marketing/outreach strategies to achieve shared goals
- Discusses marketing and outreach to maximize program awareness via channel partners, websites, and social media;
- Is a forum for sharing lessons learned and best practices; and
- Is an opportunity for joint initiatives.

4. Program Design and Best Practices

Table 4. E-Contractor Program Barriers

Barrier	Solution
Lack of small and diverse , minority contractors with green building knowledge and skills	Host workshops to increase SMWDVBEs small and diverse contractor's basic information and knowledge
Access to capital, bonding, and insurance	One-on-one Technical assistance, participation in workshops to provide resources to advise and refer contractors to 'access to capital, bonding, and insurance providers/resources
Access to green building technologies and equipment/materials	Participants will receive training options, certification opportunities, access to construction technologies, and equipment materials resources
Public procurement policies and requirements	One-on-one technical assistance and RFP development Assist public entities with language that is inclusive of SMWDVBE small and diverse business participation

5. **Innovation**

Decarbonization Academy

The E-Contractor Decarbonization Academy is a new pipeline offering on Building Decarbonization and is being developed in partnership with SoCalGas, SCE, and other energy industry partners. Training in development will include the following pathway tailored to small and minority contractors:

Green Building Technologies: Focusing on energy-efficient practices innovative technologies and methodologies that enhance building efficiency.

Decarbonization Best Practices: strategies for reducing carbon emissions with construction/retrofit projects.

EPA 608 Type II Certification: Mandatory certification for HVAC technicians who will work with high-pressure refrigerants. Installation, maintenance, service, repairs, and disposal of high-pressure refrigerant equipment.

Hands-on Training: Heat Pump Water Heater Installation

6. **Pilots**

N/A

7. **Workforce Education and Training**

Describe how the program will support workforce, education, and training to:

a. Expand/initiate partnerships with entities that do job training and placement;
    i. Partnerships will include contractor associations, minority organizations, industry-related organizations, and labor/trades for collaboration and training. These partnerships will support coordinated outreach, technical upskilling, certification preparation, and workforce development activities aligned with energy efficiency market needs. Through these collaborations, the program will expand access for underrepresented contractors and strengthen alignment with industry standards and workforce requirements.
b. Require placement experience for any new partners in the workforce, education, and training programs and new solicitations.
    i. N/A
c. Require “first source” hiring from a pool of qualified candidates, before looking more broadly, beginning with self-certification; and
    i. N/A
d. Facilitate job connections, by working with implementers and contractor partners, and utilizing energy training centers.
    i. Our collaboration with the IOUs provides participants the opportunity for further specialized training through the energy training centers.

8. Workforce Standards

N/A

9. Disadvantaged Worker Plan

N/A

10. Market Access Programs

The E-Contractor Academy Program supports the broader SoCalREN energy efficiency portfolio by preparing contractors to participate in downstream energy efficiency and decarbonization opportunities across the Residential, Public, Commercial, and Agriculture Programs. Through technical assistance, certification support, workforce training, bid preparation, and business development services, the program strengthens contractor readiness and awareness of energy efficiency project opportunities throughout the SoCalREN territory.

11. Additional Information

N/A

D. Supporting Documents

1. Program Manual and Program Rules

Eligible Measures

The E-Contractor Program is a Non-Resource Workforce Education & Training and contractor capacity-building program and does not deliver or claim energy efficiency measures. Eligible activities include technical training, industry-recognized certifications (e.g., EPA 608, GPRO, OSHA 10/30), business development training, contractor licensing preparation (E-CLAP), and one-on-one technical assistance aligned with energy efficiency and public-sector contracting opportunities.

Customer Eligibility Requirements

Eligible participants include licensed contractors, contractor business owners, and individuals working in the construction industry within the SoCalREN territory seeking participation in energy efficiency. Participants must complete the program enrollment process and submit required documentation prior to receiving services.

Contractor Eligibility Requirements

Participating contractors must hold a valid California contractor license or be actively pursuing licensure through the E-Contractor License Assistance Program (E-CLAP). Contractors may be required to maintain appropriate bonding and insurance and comply with applicable state and local regulations depending on the services received.

Participating Contractors, Manufacturers, Retailers, Distributors, and Partners

The E-Contractor Program operates as a downstream Workforce Education & Training program. Participating partners may include contractor associations, minority and industry organizations, labor unions, public agencies, training providers, certification bodies, workforce development organizations, IOUs, and Energy Training Centers.

Additional Services

The program provides multi-week academies, workshops, certification preparation, OSHA safety training, decarbonization training, one-on-one technical assistance, bid review support, project guidance, business enterprise certification assistance, and referrals to SoCalREN and external partner programs.

Audits

Not applicable. The E-Contractor Program is a Non-Resource Workforce Education & Training program and does not conduct pre- or post-installation energy audits or claim energy savings.

Program Quality Assurance Provisions

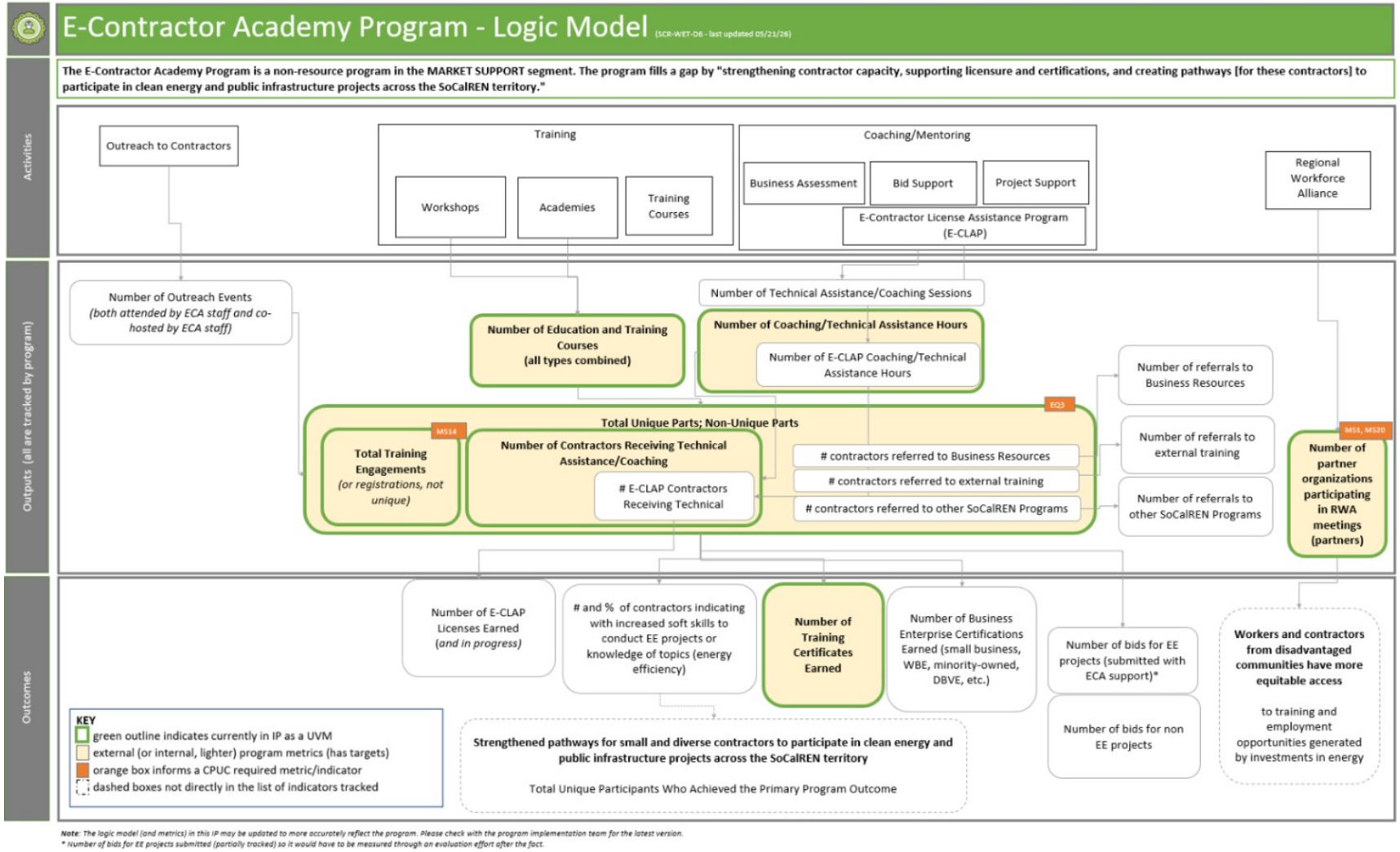
Quality assurance includes participant eligibility verification, license validation, training and certification tracking, documentation of technical assistance sessions, monitoring of Unique

Value Metrics (UVMs), Quarterly At-Risk Assessments, and internal data validation to ensure compliance with SoCalREN reporting requirements.

Other Program Metrics

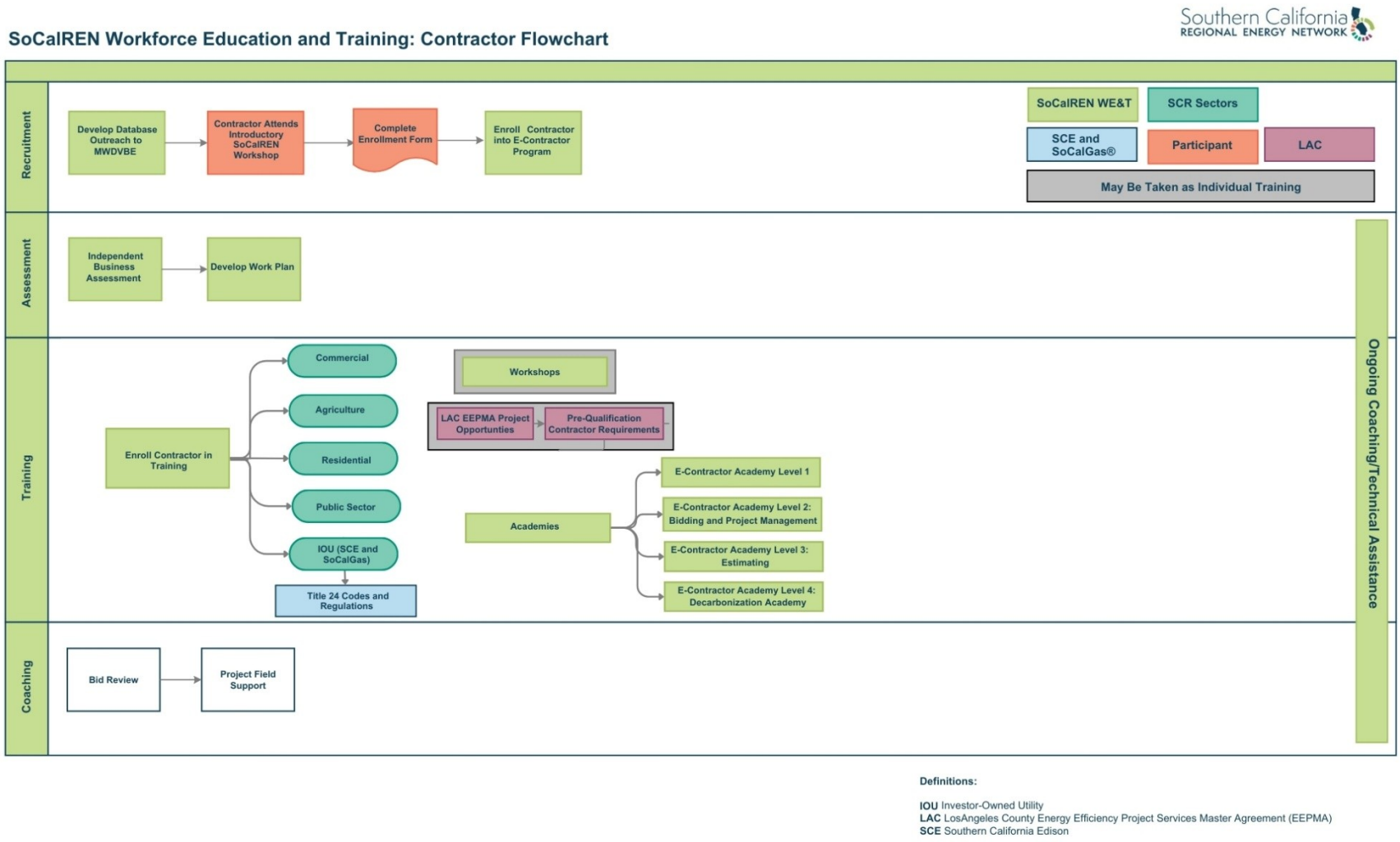
Program metrics are supported by enrollment records, license verification, training completion documentation, certification records, coaching and technical assistance logs, referral tracking, and established Unique Value Metrics (UVMs) and Supporting Indicators.

2. Program Theory and Program Logic Model



Note: The logic model (and metrics) in this IP may be updated to more accurately reflect the program. Please check with the program implementation team for the latest version.
** Number of bids for EE projects submitted (partially tracked) so it would have to be measured through an evaluation effort after the fact.*

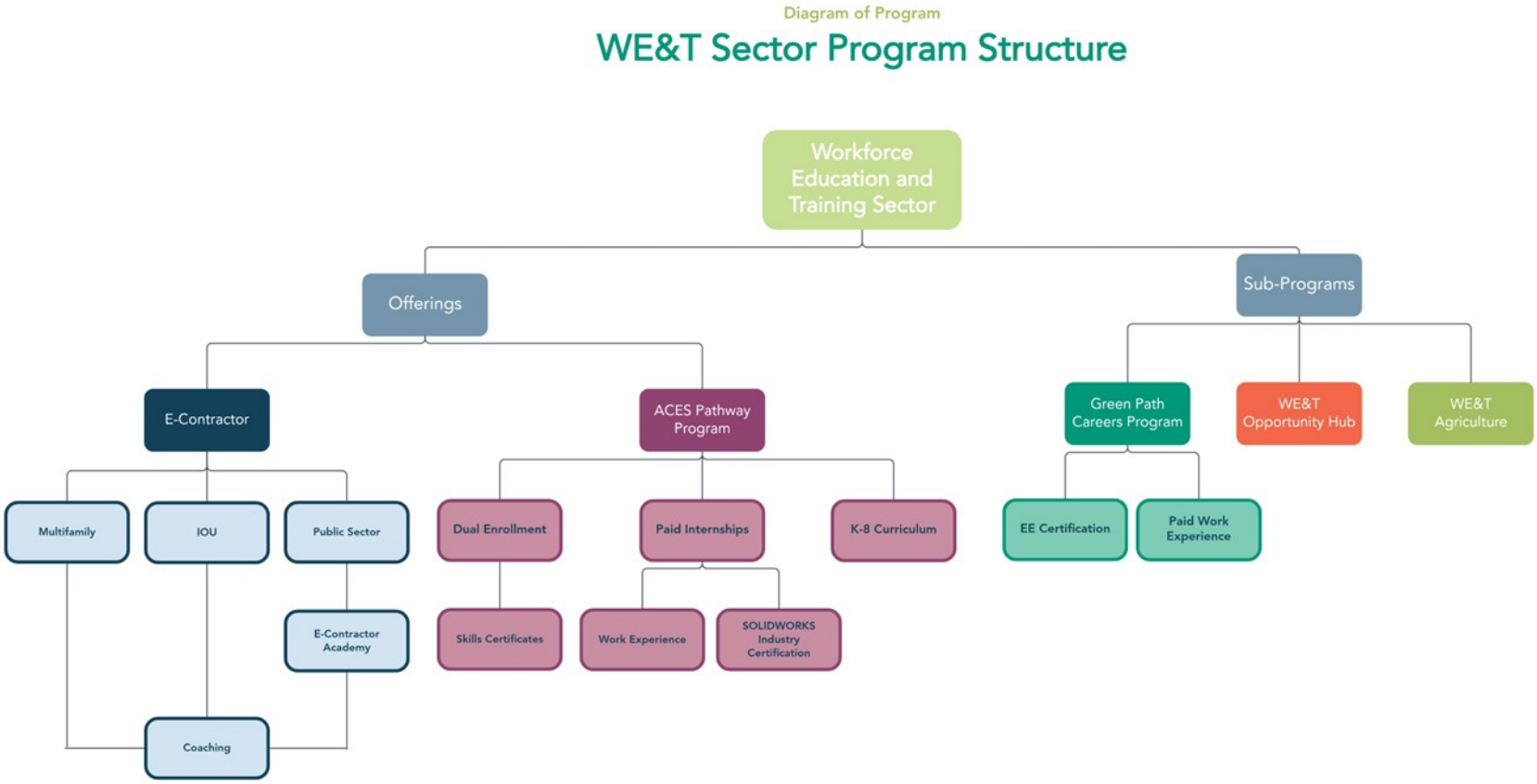
3. Process Flow Chart



4. Measures and Incentives

N/A

5. Diagram of Program



6. Program Measurement and Verification

The E-Contractor Academy program completes ongoing evaluation to ensure the goals and targets are met while keeping stakeholders fully informed of program operations and outcomes. Quarterly At-Risk Assessments are conducted using established performance thresholds to monitor progress toward annual goals and implement corrective actions, as needed. A comprehensive workplan will be developed by SoCalREN's third-party EM&V team at the beginning of each year to identify the study needs in the portfolio, determine the timeframe and allocate the budget per study.

7. Normalized Metered Energy Consumption (NMEC) Program M&V Plan

N/A