ELECTRI INTERNATIONAL
Research and Education for the Electrical Construction Industry

# Partnership for Career Advancement (PCA) 2024 REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

**Summary Proposal Deadline: Monday, April 15, 2024, 5:00 PM EST**

## Program Objectives

Designing a new vehicle takes a partnership. Conducting a surgery demands a partnership. Every industry and every profession grows when knowledgeable, creative people come together not only to find ways to improve procedures and practices but also to identify and plan for future developments that will impact growth and success – both collectively and individually.

ELECTRI International recognizes the need to identify and partner with qualified researchers who can work with industry leaders to explore construction industry issues and options. It is anticipated that their findings and recommendations will have a dramatic effect on the growth of electrical contracting.

The leaders of ELECTRI have made the decision to enhance its original Early Career Awards program by focusing more on the researchers' education and network within the electrical construction industry. Through this Partnership for Career Advancement (PCA), ELECTRI will identify and award financial grants to new research partners who are interested in investing more time in the electrical construction industry. ELECTRI also intends to increase its investment in the advancement of each researcher's career through closer interactions with electrical contractors and our industry allies.

The ideal candidates for a PCA grant will be researchers who want to grow their professional network and broaden their knowledge of electrical construction. The selected grant recipient should bring new skills to the EC industry, skills that complement our strengths and challenge our weaknesses. Each year, the PCA goal will be to identify and deliver a valuable research project that benefits both the researcher and the electrical construction industry. The grantee will be required to produce an end product that provides value to contractors and other sectors of the construction industry and, equally important, establishes the researcher as a subject matter expert in a field where the EC industry needs to grow.

## Funding for 2024

The ELECTRI Council will select no more than two candidates who will each be awarded a one-year PCA grant at a maximum of $30,000. This includes the cost of two or three trips (ex. ELECTRI meeting or contractor office visit), which will be estimated at $5,000 (airline, hotel, and travel related expenses). Pre-approved travel expenditures incurred by the researcher (outside of the two to three presumed trips) during the conduct of the project will be paid by ELECTRI. A

maximum of 10% may be charged for an indirect cost rate with proper documentation. This may be achieved by requesting a shared cost arrangement with a research entity. This PCA grant is anticipated as a part-time commitment that coincides with the researcher's full-time position.

**Requirements**

ELECTRI will select no more than two candidates who will each be awarded a one-year PCA grant at a maximum of $30,000.

Each PCA grant period will be a **maximum of one year**. During this time, ELECTRI will provide the researcher with mentoring from industry experts who will help support the research efforts. ELECTRI will also invite the selected researcher to participate in ongoing industry events and will provide a stipend to cover the researcher's travel expenses. Projects should be initiated as soon as possible after award of the contract (July 22, 2024). ELECTRI anticipates that each contract will be finalized within 30 days of the award notification.

**Areas of Interest & Example Projects**

Researchers are strongly advised to review the list of research projects that have received ELECTRI funding in the past (see https://electri.org/research-overview/research). It is free to make an ELECTRI.org account. The ELECTRI Council is recommending the following topics for 2024 PCA research proposals. One proposal per researcher may be submitted. ELECTRI is seeking a versatile researcher capable of delivering actionable solutions and practical strategies. The selected researcher should be prepared to undertake any necessary tasks or requests to produce deliverables, which may include but are not limited to periodic whitepapers, instructional videos, webinar series, and other educational materials related to the chosen topic. Additionally, the researcher should be open to fulfilling any other requests by the committee not specified here, with the overarching goal of assisting our contractors as their needs arise.

**Topic 1: Transforming ECs into Energy Service Providers:**

- **From Installation to Integration:** This research should explore a clear roadmap for Electrical Contractors (ECs) to transition beyond traditional installation roles and offer comprehensive **energy auditing, retrofitting, and maintenance services**.
- **Market Analysis and Competitive Edge:** Analyze the current energy service market, identify potential roadblocks and opportunities for ECs, and explore strategies for gaining market share.
- **Business Model Transformation:** Provide practical recommendations for ECs to adjust their business models to effectively deliver energy services, including training and resource allocation considerations.

**Topic 2: Navigating the Mega Project Landscape:**

- **Mega Project Impact Assessment:** This research will build upon existing ELECTRI research on mega projects. Conduct a comprehensive impact assessment, analyzing how mega projects influence market share, workforce dynamics, wages, and overall productivity for electrical contractors.
- **Best Practices for a Changing Industry:** Identify best practices and common themes across various mega projects. Develop actionable strategies for electrical contractors to adapt to the evolving workforce landscape and the increased prevalence of mega projects.
- **Future-Proofing Contractor Success:** Provide recommendations for contractors to **position themselves for success** in the face of mega project trends.

**Topic 3: Technology Adoption for Sustainable Advantage:**

- **A Success-Driven Approach:** Move beyond simply identifying barriers to technology adoption. Instead, explore successful **case studies** within the electrical contracting industry, focusing on companies that have demonstrably benefited from technology implementation.
- **Key Factors for Sustainable Adoption:** Identify the key factors that contribute to successful technology adoption for electrical contractors. These factors might include leadership buy-in, change management strategies, and ongoing training programs.
- **Technology Needs Assessment Matrix:** Develop a practical **matrix** that electrical contractors can utilize to assess their specific technology needs. This matrix should be tailored to different project types, company sizes, and relevant industry trends.

**Topic 4: Harnessing the Power of Artificial Intelligence in Electrical Contracting:**

- **Unlocking Efficiency with AI:** Investigate the potential of artificial intelligence (AI) in streamlining processes, enhancing productivity, and optimizing decision-making within the electrical contracting industry.
- **Adoption Strategies:** Explore effective strategies for integrating AI technologies into existing workflows and operations, considering factors such as workforce readiness, implementation costs, and long-term benefits.
- **Case Studies and Best Practices:** Analyze successful case studies and best practices of AI adoption in electrical contracting, highlighting key learnings and practical insights for industry stakeholders.

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**Eligibility**

Award recipients will become ineligible for future PCA grants. However, these individuals will be strongly encouraged to submit proposals to other ELECTRI research programs. A PCA grant pilot study might be used as the basis for a subsequent larger scale ELECTRI research project.

Recipients of other ELECTRI International funded programs, e.g., the January awards for full research projects, are not eligible to submit proposals for the PCA grant.

**Selection**

Proposals will be reviewed by the ELECTRI International Program Review Committee and the Committee will select top candidates by April 29, 2024. Top candidates will be invited to an in-person interview in Washington D.C. which will be held on May 30, 2024. Finalists will be notified by June 5, 2024 and be invited to submit an updated 3-minute video detailing their project if they are chosen. The ELECTRI Council will review the videos prior to our July ELECTRI Council meeting. At this meeting, ELECTRI Council members will vote upon the final ranking of proposals and award funding to the top two finalists. The researcher with the highest vote will be notified.

## Proposal Submission Requirements

1. A single PDF file using the attached template submission form (see below)
2. At least one letter of support from department head/chair
3. If applicable, a letter of support from a NECA Contractor, NECA Chapter or an ELECTRI Council member who supports the proposal
4. Resume or 2-page CV
5. A three-minute video via YouTube (include closed captioning) summarizing the research plan.

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## 2024 Competition Schedule

**14 March** **Request for Proposals**

**15 April** **Submission Deadline for PCA Proposals – 5:00 PM EST**
Proposals must be submitted by 5:00 PM EST via email to Amanda Harbison at amanda@electri.org

**29 April** **Selection of Top Candidates**
Submissions will be reviewed and judged by the ELECTRI International Program Review Committee, and the top candidates will be notified. Please note that top candidates will be invited to an in-person interview in Washington D.C.

**30 May** **In-Person Interviews – Washington D.C.**
Top candidates will be invited to an in-person interview. Please reserve this date.

**5 June** **Notification of the Finalists**
Finalists will be notified via email.

**1 July** **Submission Deadline for Finalists' Presentations**

**22 July** **Notification of PCA Winners**
Finalists will be contacted no later than July 22, 2024 regarding the final funding decision by the ELECTRI Council.

**July 2024** **Winner Research Submission**
Final research should be submitted

**July 2024** **Presentation of Findings at ELECTRI Council Meeting**

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**2024 PCA Grant Submission Form**

Last Name _____ First Name _____

Institution _____

Email _____ Phone _____

Project Title _____

Project Description

Specific Project Objectives

Types of interaction the project will create with the Electrical Construction Industry and the faculty/institution. List specific companies and/or NECA Chapters if applicable.

Expected outcomes of this project

List 4-5 milestone activities and completion dates

**Attach 2-page CV or resume, letter of support from department chair/head, and – if available - support letter from electrical contractor/NECA Chapter in a combined PDF.**

**Proposal PDF and three-minute video link must be submitted via email to Amanda Harbison, amanda@electri.org by April 15, 2024, 5:00 PM EST.**