

ASU to help Arizona Army installation improve energy, lower costs

Agreement opens door to support Army installations across US

By Mikala Kass, ASU News
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In a move that will support resilient energy systems in the places that keep our nation safe, Arizona State University signed a special agreement with the U.S. Army Installation Management Command on Jan. 30. The agreement will allow Army installations across the U.S. to tap into the university's innovation for energy services.

Fort Huachuca, located in Cochise County, Arizona, will be the first to partner with ASU under the new agreement.

The agreement, known as a Regional Intergovernmental Support Agreement (RIGSA), allows ASU to offer utilities monitoring, auditing and preparedness (U-MAP) services to Army installations in the continental U.S. for the next 10 years.

At Fort Huachuca, ASU's energy services will include expert meter readings of historical buildings and energy efficiency assessments. The insights will help the fort make informed decisions regarding energy improvements that can boost reliability and lower costs. Additionally, ASU will collaborate with the nearby Cochise College to teach students valuable career skills and strengthen the local workforce.

ASU is the only university in the nation to lead an energy services RIGSA with the Army. It is the latest example of the university's long legacy of creating energy solutions as well as supporting our nation's military.

[Learn more about
ASU's other
Intergovernmental
Support Agreement](#)

Sustainable beginnings

The partnership started when Fort Huachuca reached out to ASU [LightWorks](#), a unit of the [Julie Ann Wrigley Global Futures Laboratory](#) that creates sustainable energy solutions, for help with its energy efficiency challenges.

Many buildings on the base date back to the late 1800s, making it difficult to manage energy use and keep things up to code. As a military cybersecurity hub, Fort Huachuca requires reliable energy.

“What the conversations opened up was the awareness of a bigger challenge they had with the energy system writ large on the installation,” says [Ryan Klenner](#), assistant director of business development at LightWorks.

Klenner connected the fort with ASU’s [Energy Efficiency Center](#), which is part of the U.S. Department of Energy’s [Industrial Training and Assessment Centers](#) program. The center provides energy assessments for industrial and institutional facilities, where the team finds opportunities to save energy, increase efficiency and lower costs. A central mission of the program is workforce development — giving students professional training so they are ready for careers in energy efficiency.

“We’re putting them into this essentially company-like experience where we have real clients, and they’re getting real hands-on experience addressing real needs while still in the safety of a classroom environment,” says [Ryan Milcarek](#), assistant director of the center and an associate professor in the [School for Engineering of Matter, Transport and Energy](#).

“What was neat is the elements that make up this program, everything from providing the energy audits and information all the way through to the experiential learning that the students received, really touched on multiple needs that Fort Huachuca was sharing,” Klenner adds.

In 2023, the Energy Efficiency Center was approved by the DOE to collaborate on a pilot energy assessment at the fort. It was such a success that the fort proposed creating a RIGSA for ongoing energy services. LightWorks served as a connector, bringing all the stakeholders together to help the agreement take shape.

Under the agreement, local students from Cochise College will join ASU students from the Energy Efficiency Center to visit Fort Huachuca, collect data from meter readings, analyze it and write up their recommendations in professional reports.

This will help meet another need at the fort: a skilled workforce in its surrounding community. Broadly, working with local community colleges across states will allow ASU to expand its energy service offerings to Army installations around the nation.

“If we train local learners near these installations and give them the expertise they need, once they graduate, the fort will have its own energy workforce,” Milcarek says.

For service members transitioning out of the military, the program also offers a pathway to a locally based career in a thriving job sector.

"In past summers, Cochise College students have had valuable experiences doing energy efficiency work with ASU, putting skills in data analysis to work in the real world. The opportunity at Fort Huachuca will be a great one — students will gain valuable experience while working locally and supporting the fort," says Eric Malm, instructor of business and economics at Cochise College.

"We're thrilled to be able to help community colleges move students through who can go to places like Fort Huachuca to learn. We want to train and educate them so they can meet the needs of the facility," adds [William Brandt](#), director of strategic integration at LightWorks.

Going forward, Milcarek and Klenner hope to see ASU not only expand the breadth of energy services at Fort Huachuca, but also to use ASU's work at the fort itself as a model that can be applied to other Army bases around the country.

This story originally appeared on [ASU News](#).

Main image



Energy Efficiency Center students and Associate Professor Ryan Milcarek tour ASU Tempe Central Plant. One of the center's main goals is to give students professional training so they are ready for careers in energy efficiency. Photo by Andy DeLisle/ASU

Gallery



Energy Efficiency Center students Haider Nadeem and Guthrie Demers evaluate boiler pipes at ASU Tempe Central Plant. The center provides energy assessments for industrial and institutional facilities, where the team finds opportunities to save energy, increase efficiency and lower costs.



Energy Efficiency Center students Mark Masiello and Natalie Edgington take measurements on the pump motors at ASU Tempe Central Plant. Under the new agreement, students from Cochise College will join ASU students to visit Fort Huachuca, collect data from meter readings, analyze it and write up their recommendations in professional reports.



Energy Efficiency Center students Haider Nadeem, Brian Daw III and Guthrie Demers look at an overview display of ASU Tempe Central Plant.