

North Carolina Energy Efficiency Conservation Block Grant (EECBG)

RFP Questions and Answers

QUESTION: I am interested in seeing what a potential grant submission could look like for energy efficiency upgrades for City owned buildings/property. Do you have any ideas/suggestions to help kickstart a potential project idea? I imagine this sub-grant program is a lot more competitive than the standard EECBG program so any pointers on ensuring a successful project would be much appreciated.

ANSWER: We recommend reading DOE's Blueprint 2A site (<https://www.energy.gov/scep/blueprint-2a-energy-efficiency-audits-building-upgrades>) for project inspiration. Think about the city-owned buildings, and how you might be able to update them to promote energy efficiency and lower costs. Also be sure to focus on historically underserved communities when creating your project. A successful application will thoroughly address the criteria listed in the RFP, ensuring that the project is well thought out and explained.

QUESTION: We recently had a group called Waste Reduction Partners complete an energy audit (attached). Would this qualify as a "blueprint" which I see expedites the application? We also had a corresponding benchmark report completed for our buildings that is attached as well. I envision the application including funding new HVAC equipment for our City Operations Center since our current equipment is nearing the end of its lifecycle and is not very energy efficient. This would then reduce the energy burden that taxpayers are paying for and reduce emissions for the surrounding area which is located in a Justice40 tract.

ANSWER: This is an appropriate use of EECBG funding. If utilizing a previous audit, applicants must include the audit as part of the application and demonstrate that the audit has been completed within the last 5 years. The project must implement findings from the audit. This funding cannot back-pay audits that have already been completed. The funding from this opportunity can also be used to pay for a new audit or assessment.

QUESTION: For the purpose of this RFP, what is the definition of a state agency?

ANSWER: For the purpose of this RFP, state agencies include state government entities, UNC system schools, community colleges, and K-12 schools.

QUESTION: Do community colleges and K-12 qualify for this grant?

ANSWER: Yes. Community colleges and K-12 qualify and should apply. They are eligible for the 40% of funding available to state agencies.

QUESTION: Category 14: Programs for Financing, Purchasing, and Installing Energy Efficiency, Renewable Energy, and Zero-emission Transportation (and associated infrastructure) Measures and Capital Investments, Projects, and Programs for Leveraging Public and Private Sector Funds. Does this include electric vehicle infrastructure at government buildings?

ANSWER: Under Blueprint 2A, this is not an acceptable project. However, the RFP may be expanded to include additional Blueprints, which would allow this type of project. Please continue to monitor the RFP for addendums.

QUESTION: Under Category 14 listing of eligible projects, “renewable energy” projects are listed. Can the clean energy produced by a proposed “renewable energy” project be included as an “energy efficiency” outcomes in the scoring criteria of this award?

ANSWER: Under Blueprint 2A, we can provide technical assistance but not the actual implementation. However, the RFP may be expanded to include additional Blueprints, which would allow this type of project. Please continue to monitor the RFP for addendums.

QUESTION: Category 5: Energy Efficiency Retrofit Grants for Government Agencies and Nonprofit Organizations. Does this mean a community can apply for a grant to update their facility to be more energy efficient? The term grant is a bit confusing.

ANSWER: Yes, we will fund upgrades that will make a facility more energy efficient.

QUESTION: Would microgrids be an option for communities who want to apply to EECBG?

ANSWER: Yes, if the specific project fits within DOE’s Blueprint 2A for EECBG. Applicants will have to prove within their application that the project fits within the Blueprint and improves resiliency.

QUESTION: Is there an email group that I can be added to get notified of grant opportunities by SEO?

ANSWER: If you are interested in joining a mailing list to receive emails about SEO funding opportunities, grants and trainings, please email eecbg.seo@deq.nc.gov with "Mailing List" in the subject line.

QUESTION: Are non-profits eligible to apply?

ANSWER: No, just local governments and state agencies.

QUESTION: If the applicant is not specifically sited within a defined disadvantage community, but they serve disadvantage communities as their mission, could that qualify the applicant as meeting Justice 40 criteria and garner scoring points in DAC related questions?

ANSWER: Yes, as long as this project is serving the aforementioned disadvantaged communities.

NOTE: Funding will be awarded based on both total package scores and DOE approval.