

ROY COOPER  
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Director



North Carolina Department of Environmental Quality  
State Energy Office  
Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grant (EECBG)  
Request for Proposals (RFP)

RFP release date: Monday, October 7, 2024, 2024

RFP deadline to respond: Thursday, November 7, 2024

ALL Applicants:

The enclosed packet contains a "REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS" for an EECBG Program.

**State of North Carolina**

**Request For Proposals RFP # NC40552**

**Title: North Carolina EECBG Energy Efficiency Subgrant**

Using Agency: NC Department of Environmental Quality (NCDEQ), State Energy Office (SEO)

Issue Date: Monday, October 7, 2024

Issuing Agency: NC Department of Environmental Quality, State Energy Office

Send all proposals directly to the Issuing Agency as shown below:

**Proposals should be submitted electronically via email in response to this Request for Proposals.** Please contact North Carolina Department of Environmental Quality State Energy Office directly via email with any inquiries or submission challenges.

Email: [SEO.team@deq.nc.gov](mailto:SEO.team@deq.nc.gov)

**NOTE:** Questions concerning the specifications in this Request for Proposals will be received until **Friday, October 18, 2024. All questions shall be submitted in writing by email. The email address is listed above. No questions will be answered by phone.** A summary of all questions and answers will be posted on the NCDEQ website as an addendum by Friday, October 25, 2024, located under the RFP # NC40552 being modified. **It is the applicant's responsibility to assure that all addenda have been reviewed and, if need be, signed and returned.**



North Carolina Department of Environmental Quality | State Energy Office  
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## Introduction and background

The North Carolina Department of Environmental Quality's (NCDEQ) State Energy Office (SEO) is requesting applications for distribution of the North Carolina EECBG award. The funding for this program was awarded to SEO by the United States Department of Energy (DOE) as part of the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA), also known as the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL). This funding is to be distributed throughout the state of North Carolina for the purpose of supporting building energy assessments, energy audits, and building upgrades.

## Scope of work

Under the federal EECBG Program, there are several categories of Blueprints to serve as models or examples of shovel ready ideas for high-impact projects and programs which fall under one or more of the Blueprint categories. The Blueprint templates from the federal EECBG program cover Energy Planning, Efficiency in Buildings, Renewables, Electric Transportation, Finance and Workforce. Due to the limited amount of funds offered in this RFP, the SEO has selected Blueprint 2A: Energy Efficiency – Energy Audits and Building Upgrades for this RFP. The main focus areas of this Blueprint are building energy assessments, energy audits, and building upgrades. Projects must address at least one of the key focus areas of Blueprint 2A but may address all areas while maintaining a cohesive project scope. Detailed information and ideas for project scopes being solicited under this RFP are listed for each focus area below.

### Building Energy Assessments

Building energy assessments is a key activity for identifying energy savings opportunities in buildings and additionally provide technical and financial information that would allow decision makers to approve funding for any upgrade opportunities. Building energy assessment activities that may be funded under this RFP include but are not limited to 1) gathering utility bills and building specific data, 2) selecting a benchmarking platform and setting up an account, and 3) benchmarking your buildings to identify buildings with poor energy performance to select for an energy audit.

### Energy Audits

Energy audits provide the benefit of setting up a list of potential energy saving opportunities to pursue. Onsite energy audits provide an in-depth analysis of a building's energy performance and energy savings opportunities. Energy audits typically involve an onsite, whole-building evaluation of current energy usage relative to prospective energy usage. Improved energy usage could be achieved through various activities such as improved operations and maintenance procedures and upgrades to building systems, such



as lighting, HVAC, and the building envelope. Under this key area, activities that may be funded include but are not limited to 1) hiring an energy auditor, 2) identifying additional funding sources to complete building energy upgrades, including available tax credits e.g. IRA, and 3) evaluating energy use in building to identify ways to improve energy efficiency and conservation.

### **Building Upgrades**

Under this key activity the entity will select and conduct upgrades identified through energy audits. Audit results are thoroughly evaluated, and potential benefits of implemented upgrades are observed to determine if upgrades can be implemented immediately or require further study. Potential projects that may be funded include but are not limited to: 1) Comprehensive upgrades – typically involving efficiency measures in two or more building systems (e.g., lighting, building envelope, HVAC) with one building-wide energy savings goal, 3) electrification enabling grid-interactivity (e.g., demand response), 4) onsite renewables (solar, wind, geothermal) and battery storage for resilience benefits, 5) retro-commissioning, and 6) a blend of projects with both high and low return on investment to optimize the bundle of measures balancing deferred maintenance needs, energy savings and financial goals.

Blueprint 2A: Energy Efficiency – Energy Audits and Building Upgrades will be funded under this RFP. The main focus areas of this Blueprint are building energy assessments, energy audits, and building upgrades. For more information regarding the specifics of Blueprint 2A, visit the following web pages:

- [https://www.energy.gov/sites/default/files/2023-04/Upgrades\\_Blueprint\\_v04\\_508.pdf](https://www.energy.gov/sites/default/files/2023-04/Upgrades_Blueprint_v04_508.pdf)
- <https://www.energy.gov/scep/articles/blueprint-2a-how-guide-energy-efficiency-energy-audits-building-upgrades>

The project period for this subgrant must conclude no later than December 2026. Applicants should keep in mind that funding likely will not be awarded until the first quarter of 2025 when creating their project timelines. This is due to the timeline of state and federal processes. More information on award timelines will be shared with entities selected for funding and as it becomes available.

### **Funding source and amount**

North Carolina has been awarded EECBG funding from DOE for the purpose of encouraging energy efficiency throughout the state. Approximately \$2,800,000 of the funding will be put toward subgrant distribution under this RFP. The project proposal range for this RFP is \$100,000 to \$500,000. This will ensure that projects are of a sufficient scope to address the purpose of this grant and that a reasonable number of projects receive funding.

### **Prioritization of funding awards**

At least 60% of funding (\$1,800,000) is allocated for eligible local government entities that did not receive direct EECBG funding from DOE. The remaining funding is able to be awarded to all eligible entities listed below. Similarly, at least 40% of funding must go to disadvantaged communities (DAC) as described in the Justice40 Initiative, with the remaining funding available to all eligible entities. A DAC refers to an area that suffers from



a combination of environmental, economic, and health stressors. These challenges may include poverty, high unemployment, air and water pollution, hazardous waste, and high incidents of diseases such as asthma and heart disease. DAC may be also susceptible to climate change impacts. This RFP will qualify DAC by the DOE-recognized definition: Climate and Economic Justice Screening Tool (CEJST). This map shows all CEJST communities and will assist in demonstrating DAC impacts:

<https://screeningtool.geoplatform.gov/en/#3/33.47/-97.5>.

Groups that do not fit these priority criteria are still highly encouraged to apply for funding through this RFP.

## Eligibility

### Eligible entities

Eligible entities include North Carolina towns, cities, counties, and state agencies. Please note the funding prioritization listed above that is associated with EECBG funding. All eligible entities are strongly encouraged to apply regardless of prioritization status.

### Eligible use categories

DOE provides applicants with a list of fourteen eligible use categories for EECBG funding. Of these, five are applicable for technical assistance within Blueprint 2A. These are:

- Category 2: Retaining Technical Consulting Services
- Category 3: Residential and Commercial Building Audits
- Category 5: Energy Efficiency Retrofit Grants for Government Agencies and Nonprofit Organizations
- Category 6: Energy Efficiency and Conservation Programs for Buildings and Facilities
- 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

For the full list of eligible use categories, as well as detailed information about each category, visit the following web page:

<https://www.energy.gov/scep/articles/energy-efficiency-and-conservation-block-grant-eligible-activities-and-program>

## Application information

Submit all application materials in one email to [SEO.team@deq.nc.gov](mailto:SEO.team@deq.nc.gov) before the deadline of this RFP. Include “EECBG” and your project location in the subject line of your email.

The application package will include a title page, distinct narrative responses to four prompts, and additional required documentation. See detailed information in the Evaluation Criteria section. Application packages are limited to five pages of narrative plus additional attachments, such as budgets, maps, and appendices. Relevant and appropriate supplemental information, such as diagrams, will also be accepted.



## Evaluation criteria

Funding distribution for this RFP is a competitive process. Each application will be scored out of 100 points. Point values assigned to each section are listed below. For single-point sections, points will be awarded based on completion of all requirements. For multi-point sections, points will be awarded based on completion and quality of narrative. Applicant with higher scores have a greater chance of receiving funding. As a result, applicants should thoroughly, and in as much detail as possible, address all areas in each of the following four prompts and provide required application material.

### Title page (5 points)

- Project name
- Project location
- Project county(s) and [County Distress Ranking\(s\)](#)
- Project description (provide a brief summary of the proposed project activities and outcomes)
- Funding amount requested
- Point of Contact
  - Name
  - Title
  - Email address
  - Phone number
- Entity's legal name
- Entity's primary place of business
- Recipient UEID number

### Prompt 1 – Program Importance (25 points)

In a cohesive narrative, include the following information, along with supplemental information as the applicant deems appropriate.

- Describe the existing infrastructure and what upgrades are needed for the proposed project. Describe how would receipt of funds improve energy efficiency? Include details that will help reviewers understand the magnitude of need for assistance. At a minimum, applicants should provide the type of energy currently used in the community (electric, natural gas, propane, other) that the project could affect.  
Clearly stated need for assistance based on existing infrastructure and required upgrades, and how funds will improve energy efficiency: **5 points**
- Explain the importance of this project as it relates to energy efficiency, including the impacts to the surrounding community and how this project will enhance energy efficiency. Include projected energy savings and/or reduced greenhouse gas emissions this project may implement. Describe clean energy savings in terms of kilowatts, kilowatt hours, therms, gallons of gasoline, etc. Applicants may also use the EPA Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Equivalencies Calculator: <https://www.epa.gov/energy/greenhouse-gas-equivalencies-calculator> to estimate greenhouse gas emissions reductions (carbon, other GHGs, etc.) from the proposed project. **5 points**



- Discuss potential issues that could arise during the project period and how they will be addressed and/or avoided. **1 point**
- Discuss any community engagement, community outreach, and community impact that this project will include. **2 points**
- Provide information about the way the proposed project supports the entity’s current energy efficiency and/or decarbonization plan. **2 points**
- Be sure to include detailed descriptions of how the proposed project meets Blueprint 2A requirements. Specify which aspect of the Blueprint the project will address. Why is the selected aspect relevant and critical to the project? **10 points**

Applicant should describe how their project falls under one or more of the activities of Blueprint 2A: 1) Building Energy Assessments, 2) Energy Audits, and 3) Building Upgrades. Applications should, at minimum, address how their project will carry out the following checklist items under the applicant’s selected activity:

- 1) Building Energy Assessments:
  - Gather utility bills and building specific data.
  - Set up a benchmark platform and select an account.
  - Benchmark your buildings to identify buildings with poor energy performance to select for an energy audit.
- 2) Energy Audits:
  - Hire an Energy Auditor
  - Determine available funding sources.
  - Evaluate energy use in building to identify ways to improve energy efficiency and conservation.
- 3) Building Upgrades:
  - Review results of the energy audits. Identify the ideal sequence of upgrades, which items can be implemented immediately, and which upgrades need further study or should be incorporated into longer-term plans.

For further information on Blueprint 2A criteria and checklist items please refer to the following link: [https://www.energy.gov/sites/default/files/2024-02/EECBG Blueprint 2A%20How-to%20Guide 0.pdf](https://www.energy.gov/sites/default/files/2024-02/EECBG%20Blueprint%202A%20How-to%20Guide%200.pdf)

## Prompt 2 – Community Impacts (25 points)

In a cohesive narrative, include the following information, along with supplemental information as the applicant deems appropriate.

- Provide details about the communities that will be served by this proposed funding. Include information about how the project will provide benefits to specific DAC in the area. For assistance, reference the CEJST map provided on page 3 of this document. This information will be used to determine entity prioritization. **17 points distributed as shown below.**



- Project entity is a local government that did not receive direct EECEBG funding. **7 points**
- Projects located in CEJST specified DAC area. **5 points**
- Provide details on how the project will provide direct benefits to the local community. **5 points**
- Explain why this project will be transformative to the community, highlighting both short- and long-term impacts. **2 points**
- Detail jobs created/retained by this project, including expected impacts to historically underserved communities. **2 points**
- Discuss planned community engagement and outreach that will be conducted as part of this project. **2 points**
- Include information about community partner organizations, including nonprofits and local businesses. **2 points**

### **Prompt 3 – Technical Information (25 points)**

In a cohesive narrative, include the following information, along with supplemental information as the applicant deems appropriate.

- Detail the project plan, highlighting the technical aspects in this narrative section. Such as provide details on how many buildings are being assessed or audited, provide technical details on upgrades to buildings and proposed energy efficient technologies to be installed. **8 points**
- Discuss energy savings, including metrics for calculation and anticipated savings. This information should include the type of energy used and how potential energy savings and/or GHG emission reductions were calculated. Include the current baseline energy expenditures and/or GHG emissions. Applicants may, but are not limited to, refer to the EPA Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Equivalencies Calculator: <https://www.epa.gov/energy/greenhouse-gas-equivalencies-calculator> to estimate potential GHG emission reductions from the proposed project. **10 points**
- Project Objectives and Metrics. The applicant should provide specific, measurable objectives that describe the desired results of the project. For each objective, identify metrics to measure progress and success of the project.
- Provide information about long-term project success and sustainability and how this project will impact future energy reductions. **2 points**
- Define when the program will be ready to start and when it will be completed. Note that projects must be completed by December 2026. **1 point**
- Include information ensuring that the project will follow all relevant federal requirements, detailed in Reporting Requirements for Accepted Projects on page 8 and Additional Information for Applicants on page 8. **1 point**
- Provide justification for parts and labor needs to supplement vendor quote attachment. If vendor quote is not available when application is submitted, provide estimated timeframe for vendor quote submission. **3 points**





## Prompt 4 – Financial Assistance (10 points)

In a cohesive narrative, include the following information, along with supplemental information as the applicant deems appropriate.

- Describe the need for financial assistance in completing this project by including why the project has not yet been implemented, including the impact to the community and why earning this award would be transformational. **5 points**
- In addition to a clearly organized budget spreadsheet, applicants must include a budget narrative that justifies the need for funding in this section. **5 points**

## Required documentation (10 points)

- Budget spreadsheet (template included at the end of this RFP). **5 points**
- Program timeline (Please note that all projects must be completed by December 2026). **2 points**
- Vendor quote for parts and labor (Strongly recommended but not required with initial application, but will be required prior to funding award and agreement)
- A written assurance that the applicant is not a debarred or suspended entity. **1 point**
- A written assurance that all required award provisions will be flowed down in the resulting applicant agreement. **1 point**
- [If applicable] Environmental questionnaire for National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA).
- Key Partners and Stakeholders. Identify and provide the roles and responsibilities of all partners or key stakeholder groups who will take part in the project implementation. **1 point**
- Any additional information that applicants feel is pertinent to their proposed project.

## Additional application information

- Multiple applications are permitted.
- Cost matching is not required for this funding opportunity.
- System for Award Management (SAM.gov) Registration. Applicants must register with SAM.gov and obtain a Universal Entity Identifier (UEID) prior to receiving a grant award. A UEID number is a unique twelve-character alphanumeric ID, generated by SAM, used to identify your organization. Applicants should complete this process as soon as possible to provide the UEID number with the application. SAM is a web-based, government-wide application that collects, validates, stores, and disseminates business information about intended federal grant recipients and other partners.

## RFP timeline

This RFP is open for applications from Monday, October 7, 2024 to Thursday, November 7, 2024. All application materials must be submitted via email to [SEO.team@deq.nc.gov](mailto:SEO.team@deq.nc.gov) by the due date to be considered. See below for more detailed information.

Comments and questions must be submitted by Friday, October 18, 2024 and SEO will release responses to comments by Friday, October 25, 2024.



Selected award recipients will be shared with DOE. Award recipients will receive notice of award following DOE approval. During this time period, it is not uncommon for DOE to request additional documentation from potential award recipients. Please continue to monitor emails for such requests.

Upon approval from DOE, selected recipients will complete signed agreements with the SEO.

## Reporting requirements for accepted projects

Be advised that special terms and conditions shall apply to projects funded by BIL for this RFP relating to, but not limited to, the following:

- Reporting, tracking, and segregation of incurred costs
- Reporting on job creation and preservation
- Publication of information on the Internet
- Access to records by Inspector General and the Government Accountability Office
- Requiring all the iron, steel, manufactured goods, and construction materials used in infrastructure projects are produced in the United States, Build America Buy America (BABA) requirements, not applicable for projects under \$250,000
  - “Build America, Buy America Act (BABA) applies a domestic content procurement preference requirement to federally funded public “infrastructure projects. When necessary, recipients may apply for, and DOE may grant, a waiver from the Buy America requirements. DOE may grant a waiver if it determines that the request meets one of the following justifications: Public Interest, Non-Availability, and Unreasonable Costs” For additional information about BABA requirements, please go to:  
<https://www.energy.gov/management/build-america-buy-america>
- Ensuring laborers and mechanics employed by contractors or subcontractors on BIL-funded projects are paid wages equivalent to prevailing wages on similar projects in the area
- Protecting whistleblowers and requiring prompt referral of evidence of a false claim to an appropriate inspector general.

## Additional information for applicants

All entities that receive award funding must comply with the following during their project period:

- 2-CFR-200 as amended by 2-CFR-910 requirements (<https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-2/subtitle-B/chapter-IX/part-910>)
- Justice40 Initiative guidelines (<https://www.energy.gov/justice/justice40-initiative>)
- Davis Bacon Act requirements (<https://www.dol.gov/agencies/whd/government-contracts/construction>)
- [If applicable] Environmental review in compliance with National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) (<https://ceq.doe.gov/>)



## Budget template

Applicants are encouraged, but not required, to utilize the budget template provided below. Vendor quotes will be required prior to funding award but are not required to be submitted with the initial application. Please ensure that all calculations are accurate prior to submission. Add or delete rows as needed.

<b>Entity Name</b>			
<b>Project Name</b>			
<b>Project Location</b>			
<b>Total Amount Requested</b>			
<b>Funding category</b>	<b>Line Item</b>	<b>Cost</b>	<b>Brief description (if needed)</b>

