

EECBG Formula Grants Review Training

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Sponsored by DOE/EERE/Office of Weatherization and Intergovernmental Programs

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OVERVIEW

- Program top goals: create jobs, reduce energy use. Create demand for EE products and services. Noted that developing major amounts of private financing is needed to bring EE to every home and business.
- We conduct “technical reviews” of applications. Reviewer goals: Identify application weaknesses and holes, categorize applications for further review by EERE. We are allowed to make suggestions for strengthening proposal – through conversation with EERE counterpart.
- EERE is calling on national labs personnel to review EECBG applications as a “second set of eyes” for EERE, but we’ll actually be laying our eyes on them first.
- 2300 entities are eligible for non-competitive formula grants: States, Cities, Counties, Tribes. All entities will receive the grants; this is not a competitive process.. See website for more information about eligibility.
- Marcy Beck is LBL’s primary contact between EERE and the lab for process flow.
- Each lab reviewer is to be assigned a counterpart at EERE for discussion and handoff of the reviewer’s applications.
- Most entities have never received funds directly from DOE before. Many may be new to EE.
- EERE is desirous of projects which lay the foundation for sustained economic growth, as opposed to one-time retrofits, but one-time projects are eligible.
- EERE personnel approve the awards with input from Labs. EERE staff are the points of contact with the recipients. DOE Procurement sets up the awards contracts.
- . EERE (Becky Garland) is developing online metrics and forms now for monitoring and evaluation.
- NEPA review of certain types of projects is done between review and final award.

Schedule

25 June	Applications due (late applications do not disqualify)
2 July	Application reviews start at labs. Goal is 80% of applications received on time to be delivered to reviewers by 2 July. Reviewers have 10 days from receipt of application to complete.
16 July	Reviews of first round of applications receive on-time completed by labs
16 Aug	EERE decisions on suitability of projects
13 Sept	Award 80% of applications that were received on time
30 Sept 2010	No ARRA funds can be obligated after this date
2015	All ARRA funds must be spent by the end of 2015

REVIEW PREPARATION

- Read Federal Opportunity Announcement that communities responded to and training Presentation PPTs in electronic binder
- In Program Resources folder, read EECBG fact sheet and skim a few of the sample application and Activity Sheets
- Understand eligibility guidelines
- Understand funding amounts per entity
- Understand required documentation. Understand the 14 eligible areas and details about each (listed in the FOA)

**Eligible Projects (List on Page 6 of FOA. NEPA requirements on page 19 of FOA).
Module 4 from training goes into more detail about eligibility issues.**

1. Development of an energy efficiency and conservation strategy
2. Technical consultants – Recipients may choose to use a portion of their allocations to retain a consultant to help them develop their plan within 120 days.
3. Building energy audits and retrofits, including weatherization
4. Financial incentive programs for energy efficiency such as energy savings performance contracting, on-bill financing, and revolving loan funds
5. Energy efficiency retrofits
6. EE and conservation programs for buildings and facilities
7. Transportation programs to conserve energy
8. Building code development, implementation, inspections, enforcement
9. Installation of distributed energy technologies including combined heat and power and district heating and cooling systems
10. Material conservation programs including source reduction, recycling, and recycled content procurement programs
11. Reduction and capture of greenhouse gas emissions generated by landfills or similar waste-related sources
12. Installation of energy efficient traffic signals and street lighting
13. Installation of renewable energy technologies in or on government buildings. **The key to eligibility is that at least some of the power generated by such projects must feed into the government building that it's on.** A number of RE applicants may be ineligible.
14. Any other appropriate activity that meets the purposes of the program and is approved by DOE. Anything under this should automatically be rated a Category 2. Review is done. DOE needs to review further. (Grantees not advised to use this category as it will slow down award process).

Notes and tips on project eligibility

- Vehicles are fundable but only the incremental EE costs, i.e., the extra cost of a hybrid over a conventional car. Transportation project.
- Transportation – standalone solar signs on roads/highways are eligible
- Training programs for developing EE workforce are eligible

- Beware – funds going to utilities for project they were going to do anyway are not eligible. However they do encourage governments to partner with utilities and other private organizations.
- EERE does want to encourage innovative projects. Even projects that appear to be challenging for the entity to complete are encouraged and eligible. We'd probably want to flag those as a 2 for more information and/or they'll require technical assistance.
- For renewables projects, look for interconnection costs information.
- Sequestration projects are not eligible
- It can be OK to use Block Grants for the last bit of money needed to fund a project that's say 90% completed, if they couldn't complete it otherwise.
- School projects are eligible if they are owned by applicant entity.
- To note: the difference between a consultant and a subgrant recipient. Consultant provides direct service to grantee. Subgrant recipient is allowed to implement own program using pass through funds.

REVIEW PROCESS

Entities should generally submit one overall grant application; however each may include more than one Activity Worksheet, e.g., a city may have one activity to convert streetlights to LEDs and another activity to do a revolving loan fund for small business energy efficiency upgrades. Each requires a separate Activity Worksheet and budget.

- DOE Procurement Process Overview is shown in training Module 2 Part 1.
- Review Process is shown in training Module 2 Part 2

Use the Application Review Checklist: O:\EECBG Electronic Binder\Checklist and Evaluation Form\EECBG Application Review Chklst.xlsx

When review is complete, you'll fill out the Proposal Review document. O:\EECBG Electronic Binder\Checklist and Evaluation Form\Review Template 06.04.09.docm

1. Check for required documents
 - Application
 - Strategy. Note: States must include the strategy document with first application. Other entities may submit without the strategy document if their initial Activity is strategy development
 - Activity Worksheet – describes individual project
 - Budget or budget information
 - Form SF-424 – Application for Federal Assistance
 - Project/Performance Site Locations (may already be attached to application, not sure)
 - Optional: Form SF-LLL - Disclosure of Lobbying Activities
2. Check all documents for completion.
3. Check if mandatory and optional documents listed in page 1 of application are included in package

4. Work through questions from checklist. Note that states have different requirements from the other entities; some of the checklist questions only apply to states.
 - a. Special note not called out in checklist: Is the projected project timeline reasonable for the activity(ies)?
 - b. Note on reporting section: There's no required standardized reporting process; many different methods can be acceptable
 - c. In NEPA assessment section, apply common sense. And if we don't know, we're allowed to state: "Don't know enough or don't have enough information from applicant to make NEPA assessment."
5. As needed, ask for technical assistance from LBL personnel with applicable expertise in specific technologies with regard to assessing feasibility of proposal in regard to such things as timeline, budget items and amounts, approach.
6. Determine if a conversation with your EERE counterpart is needed at this point to discuss category, missing information, suggestions for strengthening the proposal.
7. Project Rating and Comments. Place project in 1 of 3 categories of readiness or eligibility. Regardless of which category we assign a proposal, if we think the entity is capable of completing the project, but the project itself is lacking, we are encouraged to discuss with our EERE counterpart
8. Fill out Proposal Review document. O:\EECBG Electronic Binder\Checklist and Evaluation Form\Review Template 06.04.09.docm
 - Category 1: Application looks good, no or little additional information required to support award of funds. Project looks well within entities' capabilities.
 - Category 2: Problems identified, but timely additional information can resolve. Project may be challenging but looks doable by entity.
 - Category 3: Substantial information missing, ineligible project, non-traditional approach, legal or policy issues, substantial revisions needed. Project seems out of scope of entity's capabilities.

The official process is that we will not be in contact with the grant applicant; we'll just be in contact with our EERE counterpart, though we suspect it's possible that rule may end up getting broken. It also may change when post-award TA kicks in.

A few from EERE's "Top 10" projects they'd like to see

- Revolving loan funds
- Residential retrofits funded through municipal bonds (like Berkeley FIRST)
- Energy services contractors in residential
- Projects that are about creative ways to provide capital financing
- Energy codes – adoption, training, enforcement
- Encourage projects that create sustained economic benefit (ongoing job creation), capacity, demand and supply for EE services and products.
- Ideally minimize projects that spend federal funds on one time capital improvements, though many of these types will come in and they are eligible.

More best practices are here along with sample applications:

<http://www.eecbg.energy.gov/solutioncenter>

Resources

Private email for labs to ask questions of EERE: eecbgreview@ee.doe.gov

Program site:

www.eecbg.energy.gov

<http://www.eecbg.energy.gov/solutioncenter>

http://www.eecbg.energy.gov/downloads/WIP_EECBG_Fact_Sheet_FINAL_Web.pdf

<http://www.energy.gov/recovery/index.htm>

www.energycodes.gov

recovery funds by state

<http://www.energy.gov/california.htm>

funding news by state

http://apps1.eere.energy.gov/states/state_specific_information.cfm/state=CA

My questions for EECBG

- How much access will labs have to the projects info and monitoring data? This will be great fodder for EE market research! We would like access to all the data.
- Is there online tracking system in which EERE/labs can check status of all applications?
- Are there overall program targets for jobs created and energy saved?
- Does OWIP have a 'best practices' kinds of projects list available in addition to the 'Top 10' discussed at the training?
- How much grounding do we require for the proposals' metrics estimates?
- How much leeway do we have for improving or steering proposals for better long term impact. (Answer – discuss with EERE counterpart).
- How does program monitoring work? Will success against benchmarks be tracked and verified?
- What happens to OWIP after ARRA? Most of its budget this year is ARRA funds.
- Is EERE concerned with EE supply/workforce development (I can search their site)?