

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS
FOR THE BETTERBUILDINGS FOR MICHIGAN
NON-ENTITLEMENT COMMUNITY PILOT PROGRAMS

1. Is there a match required?

There is no direct "match" required; however, DOE has indicated that "leveraged" dollars are expected with this program at a ratio of 5 to 1. Many funded programs can be considered "leveraged" dollars including Weatherization Assistance Program funds, targeted grants through the MPSC "Low Income Energy Efficiency Funds" (LIEFF), other federally funded programs, municipally funded programs, foundation funded programs etc. Proposals from non-entitlement communities should show how leveraged dollars in the community will be incorporated into their BetterBuildings program.

2. Can any of the funds be used on municipal buildings?

DOE's focus with the BetterBuildings program is on residential and commercial buildings. Michigan's statewide project proposal to DOE narrowed the program focus to residential only (outside of a designated Detroit commercial corridor). Municipal buildings are not part of the BetterBuildings program for the non-entitlement communities.

3. Is the regional coordinator a state employee, or has it been bid out?

The regional coordinator (that will serve all nine of the non-entitlement community sweeps) will be a person or entity who will contract with the Bureau of Energy Systems / Department of Energy, Labor and Economic Growth. A forthcoming RFP will be released from the Bureau of Energy Systems sollicitating proposals from applicants interested and qualified for the regional coordinator position.

4. Is the scope of work for the communities to conduct marketing and outreach with the program budget?

Yes

5. Is there any pre-sweep weatherization, education, or direct install activities involved with this portion.

Pre-sweep education is a fundamental component of the BetterBuildings neighborhood sweep program. Pre-sweep weatherization and direct install activities, however, would not be components of the BetterBuildings neighborhood sweep program.

6. Is it correct that these communities are supposed to prep the neighborhood (420 homes) to participate in the sweep?

This is correct.

7. Is this a correct assumption? Each home has an approximate \$350 attributed to it, to ensure they are ready for a MI Saves contractor to assess their home during the sweep.

I'm uncertain of your reference to \$350.00 per home. The available amount to non-entitlement communities for marketing and outreach for a neighborhood sweep consisting of an estimated 420 homes is \$157,500.

8. Is this program supposed to be a combination of an Energy Fitness/In-Home Seminar/ Community Outreach/Marketing for MI Saves programs, or is it simply a marketing program that only requires information to be communicated and coordinate efforts of the MI Saves programs?

The BetterBuildings for Michigan program is not modeled after the Energy Fitness or In-Home Seminar programs. BetterBuildings does feature an outreach & marketing component as addressed in the projected grant award amount (\$157,500 to the selected community for a neighborhood sweep consisting of an estimated 420 home region). As the RFP indicates, other resources to the non-entitlement communities include an estimated \$373,033 distributed through the Michigan Saves Inc. organization (or other locally designated finance partner that meets the stated minimum standards stated in the RFP) for the base package weatherization measures applicable to participating homes (which are described in the RFP as "supplemental loan loss reserve funding and energy efficiency rebates"). Another resource to the selected non-entitlement communities is program assistance from the designated "Regional Coordinator" who will serve all nine of the selected neighborhood sweep focus areas.

9. Looking at the budget form provided it doesn't seem to allow for a staff person to be hired to administer the program. Is this correct?

A technical problem has been identified with the budget form and will be addressed right away. The corrected budget form will be web posted to replace the former budget form. The revised budget form will allow for personnel expenses.

10. Are we only allowed to hire consultants? Can a consultant be hired to implement the program?

The corrected budget form will allow applicants to show projected personnel costs. It is the applicant's choice to assign marketing & outreach responsibilities to personnel or contractors.

11. Can additional consultants be hired to provide energy audits?

The non-entitlement communities selected for grant awards will be required to hire diagnostic and weatherization contractors through a "request for proposal" process. Eligibility criteria have been established for diagnostic and weatherization contractors who will participate in the BetterBuildings program. These eligibility criteria will be shared with all communities selected for grant awards.

12. Can our County act as the lead agency and apply for three neighborhood sweeps, one for each of our cities and a third that would allow for rural homeowners to participate? This would allow for a concerted education effort and to provide a lead staff person to coordinate the implementation of the programs. OR does each City have to apply on their own?

If Counties were not eligible for EECBG direct "entitlement" funding, then they are eligible for this non-entitlement funding. An eligible county can submit a proposal that identifies more than one city or focus that will serve as a neighborhood sweep.

13. What does the following mean? "Within each sweep, the financing partner (Michigan Saves, Inc., or a locally designated partner if selected by the community) will direct approximately \$373,033 in supplemental loan loss reserve funding and energy efficiency rebates on behalf of non-entitlement communities". Our County was not included in the Michigan Saves Program. Is the \$373,033 a type of Guarantee to a local financing partner against bad loans? It is money that can be used to lessen the cost of retrofits to the homes? Can it be used to create a revolving loan fund for retrofits?

Although Michigan Saves Inc. has recently launched their program in selected Michigan Counties, the Michigan Saves partnership with the BetterBuildings program is a separate effort. All selected non-entitlement communities for the BetterBuildings program will have access to Michigan Saves program services. The \$373,033 amount referenced in the RFP can be thought of as the amount designated for base package weatherization treatment to the homes in the selected sweep neighborhoods.

14. Page 29 III-D Tasks requests that a grantor provide metrics and program results. What type of metrics and results are you looking for? GHG reduction estimates, number of energy audits conducted? Other?

DOE is in the process of identifying all metrics that program partners will be required to report on. A non-entitlement regional coordinator will assist all of the nine selected non-entitlement communities with program implementation issues, including metric reporting requirements.

15. Do we have to specifically identify the neighborhood in the application? We are a rural area and allowing for 420 homes within the City limits would allow for a higher success rate – possibly allow for reaching the 80% participation rate. Or allow for 420 homes outside of the cities in villages and townships so as to not exclude older homes throughout our rural county.

Following the grant award process, the non-entitlement regional coordinator will work with the selected communities to help select particular neighborhoods that are best suited for the sweeps. Neighborhood selection criteria information will be available for all non-entitlement communities which will help with the neighborhood selection process.

16. Do you really expect an 80% participation rate? The Community Action Agencies are giving away the upgrades and cannot meet this number.

As part of the experimental design of the Michigan program, there is a predicted 80% participation rate in the selected sweep neighborhoods. The implementation of the BetterBuildings program will likely provide a more accurate participation rate.

17. The "eligible applicants" link did not work in identifying our County as a non-entitlement community. I have applied as non-entitlement in the past for our County and two of our cities. Can you please verify that we are eligible to apply?"?

If your community did not qualify for direct funds from the Department of Energy for EECBG funds as an entitlement community described at the link, you should qualify as a non-entitlement community.

18. We are a non-profit agency that would likely administer this grant for a city. How would you like us to illustrate that in this application? i.e. are we the applying organization?

Non-entitlement municipalities (cities, towns, townships, counties etc.) are the only entities eligible for the BetterBuildings for Michigan Non-Entitlement Community Program. An eligible non-entitlement community may choose to work with a contractor or contractors, which would be reflected in their proposed budget "contractor" line item.

19. On page 35 of the RFP it states that there are several lettered attachments, but they are not included in the RFP. Can you please direct me to the following?

The attachments have been corrected in an updated RFP which is available online at: <http://www.michigan.gov/dleg/0,1607,7-154-25676---,00.html> Correlating letters referenced on page 35 are: G = Attachment 10; A & D = Attachment 4; E= Attachment 3. There is also a separate copy of Attachment 10, the Cover Page, available online.

20. Will the non-entitlement sweeps include: Base, Group 1, Group2 and Group 3 levels of retrofits as outlined in the original Michigan Better Build grant?

Yes

21. Will the non-entitlement communities also follow the basic outline as Southeast Michigan in terms of the RFP proposals for contractors? Will the process, incentives and retrofit amounts will be standardized across all programs.

The selected non-entitlement communities will issue RFP's to prospective contractors for the diagnostic and weatherization services needed for the neighborhood sweeps.

22. Is the \$157,500 spread across all years of contract evenly or can it be front end loaded since more outreach is needed in pre-launch phase?

Payments to selected non-entitlement communities will be distributed in accordance with the "financial status reports" that are submitted to the Bureau of Energy Systems along with the appropriate expense documentation. These financial status reports can be submitted as frequently as once a month. It would seem logical that communities will incur more expenditures in the first phase of the program, which would be reflected in their financial status reports that they submit. In addition, section I-P of the RFP document outlines the details of an initial advance payment that the grantee is eligible to receive.

23. What type of marketing and outreach is being done in the Southeast Michigan and Grand Rapids regions? Who is doing this outreach?

Designated Regional Coordinators are responsible for managing the outreach in Southeast Michigan (Southeast Michigan Regional Energy Office through the Michigan Suburbs Alliance), and Grand Rapids (Grand Rapids Community Development Office). It is best to contact these Regional Coordinators for details on their marketing and outreach efforts.

24. Will the municipality have to go out for bid again (if they receive grant) if they identify a subcontractor in the application that will assist them with outreach? Did Southeast Michigan and Grand Rapids do RFP's for outreach?

It is a generally accepted practice to not require a bid process when a specific sub-contractor is identified within an applicant's proposal to deliver a function like "outreach". The applicant's proposed budget will need to identify the costs associated with the sub-contractor. When the applicant's proposal does not specify the sub-contractor, then selecting the sub-contractor would require an RFP bid process.

25. If a City identified another organization as the entity responsible for completing outreach and marketing tasks related to the project, would the City then include that entity under the "salary" line item in the proposed budget?

The organization handling the outreach & marketing tasks would be featured under the budget line item "contractual" and not "personnel". Eligible "personnel" expenditures are limited to the salaries and fringes for the grantee's staff.