

Michigan Energy Efficiency & Conservation Block Grant

Advanced Lighting Technology Demonstration RFP

Frequently Asked Questions (F.A.Q.)

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State of Michigan EECBG F.A.Q.

Eligibility

1. Our community is a general law township. Given that this is a block grant program, are we still eligible?
 - **Yes.**
2. We would like to begin construction work on our project by Sept/Oct of 2011. Does this coincide appropriately with the program's intended release of funds?
 - **Yes, the grants are expected to commence on August 1st 2011. Ability to begin reimbursable work will depend on the diligence of the local project manager who should review the provisions outlined in the RFP when coordinating such a project.**
3. Are the communities that previously received EECBG funding eligible to apply for this grant as well?
 - **Yes.**
4. Would a City Light and Power Company or a school district be eligible for the Advance Lighting Technology Demonstration Grant?
 - **Only cities, townships, villages and county governments are eligible to apply for EECBG grants. Other entities can participate as project partners that contribute to and/or benefit from the project(s) installed.**
5. Could this grant cover street lighting that is owned and operated by a power company?
 - **Yes, if applicant/grantee is an eligible local government, the lighting is for the public thoroughfare and all relevant federal requirements can be met.**
6. If a township is currently voting to approve a purchase of LED retrofits, and they otherwise comply with the grant terms, would they be eligible to apply for the grant if the LED order is placed and the project kicked off prior to the grant submission?
 - **No.**
7. Is this grant for non-entitlement communities only or all communities?
 - **This grant is for both entitlement and non-entitlement communities. However, at least 60% of grant funds will be allocated to non-entitlement communities (see Eligibility Requirements in the RFP).**
8. Is an entity such as a consortium of counties (all non-entitlement) eligible to submit an application that includes several projects in different non-entitlement governmental units?
 - **Yes, a group of municipalities can submit a proposal as a single applicant. One municipality would be designated as the lead in grant reporting, financial management, record-keeping; the other(s) would need to document partner**

support (e.g. Council/Board resolutions or administrators' letter) in the proposal.

- *As a multi-jurisdictional applicant, the group would compete for one grant in the range of \$30k - \$100k, but the proposed budget could be allocated to smaller advanced lighting projects in each partner's jurisdiction.*
9. I was reviewing the grant program and it does state that its purpose is to retrofit existing light fixtures to energy efficient ones. We currently have no lights from our town to the expressway exit in which our local government is promoting economic growth in that 2 mile stretch. It would require the installation of new lighting instead of retrofitting older lighting. Please advise me of the answer to this eligibility question.
- *The EECBG/ALT Demo funds are for replacement or retrofitted lighting only. A major goal of the EECBG Program is to reduce energy consumption and energy costs through efficiency.*
10. It appears that the grants are not based on population but a flat amount for the project. Is this correct?
- *Yes, the only population criterion is that at least 60% of available funds must be awarded to smaller, non-entitlement communities. Otherwise, awards will be based on the strength of the proposal relative to stated RFP objectives.*
11. We are a non-entitlement county and our project is located on county property in an entitlement city. Are we eligible to apply?
- *Yes, the county can apply either as a single jurisdiction or partner with the city on a project.*
12. This question is in response to Question #6 above, with the response of "No." I am hoping to find out which part, if both, disqualify the township. Is it that the LED order has been purchased prior to May 26, 2011 (Or is it August 1, 2011?) or that the project will commence prior to May 26, 2011 (or again, August 1, 2011)? Our situation is that we took on a retrofit project and awarded the bid (two contractors competitively bid), however have not purchased materials or began actual work. I am hoping to find out if we are still eligible, as our situation closely relates to the aforementioned question.
- *Projects started or for which a financial commitment has been made before an award of federal funds cannot be reimbursed for those expenditures. In the Question #6, the municipality was planning to order LED lighting as soon as the board approved the expenditure and would have to make a down payment with the order. Based on the published August 1 award schedule for this grant, a financial commitment now would exclude them from using subsequently awarded grant funds to pay for those lights.*
13. We are in the process of upgrading our fire hall electrical service along with replacing our lighting inside and outside of the building. We also plan on building a new station within in the next year. Would either of these projects qualify for this type of grant?

- *This round of EECBG competitive awards offers to pay 90% of the lighting equipment cost. Labor to install the equipment plus any costs to demonstrate its benefits to the community rests with the local government(s).*
 - *The RFP specifies that grant funds are for lighting retrofits and/or replacement lighting. New construction projects are not eligible.*
14. If we currently have induction lighting, are we eligible to apply to replace with LEDs?
- *No*
15. Are new construction projects eligible for this grant?
- *No.*

Funding & Match Requirements

1. Can labor be used as the match?
 - *The 10% of equipment cost must be a cash match; the labor and educational component costs must be estimated in the budget, but may be in-kind.*
2. For approved projects, will the amount of grant reimbursement have any relationship to the overall final project expenses or, as the RFP indicates, be solely based on 90% of actual lighting equipment expenses? If final project expenses in categories that the grantee is solely responsible for are less than what is identified in the proposed project budget, would the reimbursement amount be lowered due to county in-kind budget dollar figures not being met?
 - *Grant reimbursement would be based on 90% of actual lighting equipment expenses. Grant reimbursement would not be reduced if other project expenses were less than expected.*
3. We would like to save costs often tacked on by a contractor by purchasing energy efficient replacement lighting for a large parking lot with tremendous public traffic. Are we able to include the replacements as supplies in our budget and then estimate the cost for a contractor to install them?
 - *The RFP specifies that grant funds can be spent only on lighting equipment costs, and not for the installation labor or the public education components of the project. You'll still need to estimate the cost of all project labor and educational costs to track job hours and leverage added to any awarded EECBG funds.*
4. Can light poles and/or light pole bases for the lights be paid for by the grant dollars or are is the funding for fixtures only?
 - *Yes, the grant can pay for either the direct retrofit of the fixture and lamp or replacement of existing street lights, including poles and bases, if needed. The grantee is responsible for any associated labor costs.*

5. Will the State of Michigan consider awarding grants larger than \$100,000 for exceptional proposals?
 - *No*

6. If a municipality is planning on implementing a \$200,000 project of which \$130,000 is for equipment and the municipality applies for the full \$100,000 grant amount, will they be considered for only that amount or would it be possible that they still get an award but for a lesser amount if they aren't awarded the full amount?
 - ***A number of factors are considered in determining award amounts, including overall proposal ranking and reasonableness of cost estimates. If a selected applicant is offered an award that is less than the amount requested, the Michigan Energy Office will work with the grantee to negotiate a revised project scope, as needed.***

7. May the grantee use other grant funds to pay for grant expenses such as 10% of equipment costs, labor, indirect expenses, personnel and the educational component?
 - ***The remaining 10% of equipment cost must be a cash match. All other match (i.e. labor, personnel, etc.) can be paid for using any funding source necessary.***

Competitive Bid

1. Can applicants carry out grant projects with pre-identified lighting technology companies as partners? Specifically, these partners are companies that have been identified as uniquely able to meet specific lighting needs in a community, and that would be written into the grant request as partners.
 - *Yes.*

2. If it is possible to carry out grant projects with pre-identified lighting technology companies as partners, what bidding requirements will govern these kinds of partnerships?
 - ***Sole source agreements with contractors and consultants in projects using federal funds are discouraged. If a municipality has a formal procurement policy that allows sole source selection under certain conditions that are met, provide a copy of the policy along with least two informal comparison quotes. In addition, supply evidence that the selection decision was published or otherwise known to the public (e.g. via Council or Board meeting minutes) and that no complaints were filed. Otherwise, formal competitive bidding is necessary.***

3. If the County received a competitive bid in 2009 for prior EECBG engineering work, can we use that same firm for the lighting work?
 - ***The approach as described does not meet the competitive bidding requirement of the new federally-funded grant. A new solicitation must be issued to ensure that competitive bid is satisfied. Alternatively, a sole source justification must be provided. (Please see response to Question #2)***

Davis-Bacon Act

1. If the grant is not covering labor costs, why is Davis Bacon required?
 - ***This is a federally funded grant and any project funded under this grant will be subject to the federal requirements, even if the labor portion is not directly funded by the grant.***
2. Can we use our personnel to perform the work?
 - ***Yes.***
3. Are certified payrolls required paperwork?
 - ***Yes, for all laborers/mechanics who worked on the project (excluding government employees and proprietors who own at least 20% of the company and take part in the management of the company).***

Michigan Based Manufacturing

1. How can a city give preference to Michigan based companies if they are not the low bid?
 - ***You do not have to select any bid that is inconsistent with the municipality's procurement policy.***
2. Should bid specs state preference to Michigan based companies?
 - ***It is not required, but encouraged. However, if including a Michigan-based company preference is noted in the proposal, this type of follow through is expected.***
3. With a Buy Michigan preference, is there a list of manufacturers available?
 - ***Manufacturers' lists are available using online Search engines. Type in key words for manufacturers of the technology of interest, followed by "in Michigan" or "in USA". Also, the Michigan Solid-State Lighting Association is a source of LED company information at: www.mssla.org***

State Historical Preservation Office (SHPO) / National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)

1. If a project has already been cleared through SHPO and NEPA, does that process need to be started again? (*Example: A streetscape enhancement project cleared for summer construction, with lighting replacement supported by this grant to be completed this fall/winter.*)
 - ***Applications for the Advanced Lighting Demonstration grants would be considered new projects and would need to go through State Historic Preservation review. A separate NEPA review does not apply to this grant solicitation; however a waste management plan will still be needed for each project site.***

2. Just wanted to clarify, if the building is less than 50 years old and is not in a historic district, we do not have to submit a SHPO form?
 - ***Yes, you will still need to submit the SHPO form, Attachment B of the RFP, for the proposed project.***
3. What do I need to include in the application relative to the SHPO 106 review"?
 - ***Please follow the directions listed on Attachment B of the RFP and submit this form and all related documents with your proposal.***
4. Does SHPO need to be completed for something like traffic lights?
 - ***Yes.***
5. Regarding the SHPO requirements, who is the federal agency?
 - ***The US Department of Energy has produced a waiver that allows the State Historic Preservation Office to approve or disapprove projects in or on a historic building or property.***
6. Are projects for replacing *exterior* building lighting subject to obtaining State Historic Preservation Office clearance? For example, upgrading parking lot lights where some of the buildings on site are fifty years of age or older?
 - ***Yes.***

Pre-Proposal Webinar Information

1. Where will the pre-proposal be held?
 - ***The pre-proposal is a webinar. A sign-up sheet will be posted to our website and registrations will be confirmed on a first come, first served basis.***
2. Can you please let me know what time the Pre-proposal webinar for the above mentioned grant will be held on Wednesday, May 18th and how to get access that?
 - ***The pre-proposal webinar starts at 10 a.m. Registration instructions are posted on the Energy Office website listed in the RFP. Go to www.michigan.gov/energyoffice, click on the EECBG – Advanced Lighting Technology Grant Program link to find the Advanced Lighting Pre-Proposal Webinar Sign-Up Form. Once registered, the call in information will be sent directly to you.***
3. Will there be another webinar for the EEGBG request for proposals?
 - ***No, but the slides from our webinar are available on our website at www.michigan.gov/energyoffice.***

Miscellaneous / Other

1. The lights we want to replace are not presently metered. If we are eligible for a grant, we would meter them two months prior to changing the lights to provide electric consumption records. Would this be enough time?
 - *Yes.*
2. Is there a way to get a list of the non-entitlement communities and counties other than the ones mentioned?
 - *There is a list of Michigan's entitlement communities posted on the U.S. DOE EECBG webpage. The direct URL follows:
http://www1.eere.energy.gov/wip/docs/eecbg_allocation_mi.xls.*
3. Same guidelines as last grant?
 - *Please read the 2011 RFP carefully as there are differences from the previous round of EECBG funding.*
4. I have a municipal client that is interested in converting street lights to LED. Is the EECBG program still alive or coming back?
 - *Yes, a new round of EECBG grants for Advanced Lighting Technology projects was announced on 5/4/11. A link to a copy of the Request for Proposals can be found on our website home page at www.michigan.gov/energyoffice. Proposals are due by 3 p.m. on May 26, 2011.*
5. If a consultant performs grant administration or grant management on behalf of a small community, should the Financial Information Form (Attachment C of the RFP) list the community's Treasurer or the consultant responsible for grant administration?
 - *All information requested in the Financial Information Form (Attachment C) refers to the grant applicant (city, village, township or county) not the consultant.*
6. Is there any advantage to communities working together?
 - *Yes, there can be. For example, if the community's project is too small to use the minimum \$30,000 award amount, then they may be able to combine projects with one or more adjacent communities to secure a grant. Also, working together is a way to leverage additional funds for the project.*
7. Would parking lot lighting and/or alley way lighting be considered street lighting?
 - *Both would be considered grant eligible projects*
8. Do I need to break down equipment by item, such as poles, fixtures, bases, etc?
 - *An itemized breakdown is preferred but not required. At a minimum, we need to see the cost per fixture, which may include various components.*

9. Is governing body approval of the application is required?
- ***No, it's not required, but encouraged. Each applicant must decide whether or not the proposal needs governing body approval before submittal.***
10. Can we combine outdoor lighting (streetscape) with multiple indoor lighting projects (interior buildings)?
- ***Yes.***
11. Can I mix the different type of lighting fixtures for the project?
- ***Yes.***
12. If a non-profit organization intends to support a local government extensively in administering one of these grants, does the state wish to see grant management credentials of the non-profit detailed in the application?
- ***Yes, the non-profit would be considered a sub-recipient contractor. The municipality is the applicant and, if awarded a grant, the responsible organization for financial management, record-keeping, federal compliance and all reports.***
13. In part V of the RFP it states that there shall be a maximum of 40 pages for the grant application. If we have to submit an A-133 audit per Attachment C, that in itself is about 78 pages. Should we exclude the audit at this time or does the page number not include the supporting documents. The RFP states that the page number includes the cover page and the attachments. Please clarify.
- ***The number of pages does not include supporting documentation.***
14. I understand that this grant covers 90% of *lighting equipment expenses*. Could that include energy monitoring and remote lighting control equipment attached to advanced lighting technology retrofit/upgrades?
- ***Metering equipment is not eligible for grant funding, as it doesn't reduce energy consumption and would not be considered essential to system operation. Remote lighting controls could be proposed, but must be justified in the proposal based on the same criteria.***
15. Does a firm proposal from a vendor need to be in hand before the application can be submitted? That is, do I have to select my vendor before next Thursday?
- ***No, but you will need a good estimate of your project costs. Some vendors will provide that by phone; others will want to see the facilities and project specifications to provide a quote.***

16. How do I identify Cognizant Federal Agency? We have had only one A-133 audit that states a few of the federal grants received on it and one is a pass through program to the State of Michigan DEQ. Is a pass through same as sub-award? I was told the agency that gave us the most funding is the cognizant federal agency but how do I know who that is?

- ***Please check with your own Controller/Treasurer &/or Procurement official first, as they typically know whether your municipality has received \$500,000 or more in federal funds in a year and, if so, who your Cognizant federal agency is. In general, if your municipality exceeds this threshold of total federal funding, and has received funds from several federal agencies, the Cognizant Federal Agency is the one from which the most funds were received. If below \$500,000 in funds received, respond with N/A.***