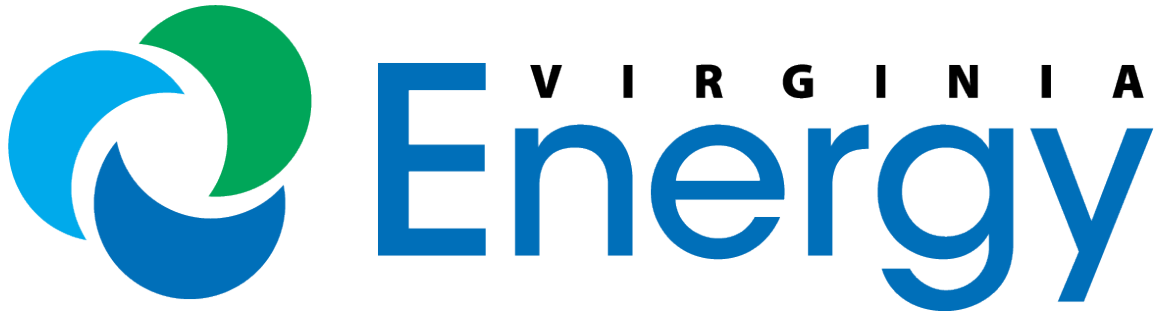


THE COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA



Notice of Funding Opportunity

Document Title: Energy Efficiency Conservation Block Grant – Round 3

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Revised

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I. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

Virginia Energy is the state agency charged with advancing Virginia's energy, mining, and mineral policies and initiatives. Its mission is to lead the Commonwealth to a safe, reliable, and responsible energy future by:

- Providing for safe and environmentally sound stewardship of Virginia's mineral and energy resources;
- Encouraging economic development through the sound stewardship of Virginia's energy, mineral, land and water resources; and
- Successfully pursuing federal funding and implement the Virginia Energy Plan to ensure the Commonwealth has abundant, reliable, affordable and clean energy.

Currently in Virginia, energy efficiency, solar, and EV charging programs are operated by many organizations in different utility service territories, making it sometimes confusing for consumers and contractors to know where to go for help or information on programs. Given this, Virginia needs a strategic, statewide energy consumer marketing, education, and outreach (MEO) effort.

With its \$2,646,050 in EECBG funding from the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE), Virginia Energy is meeting this need by providing consumers and contractors a place to go for accurate and impartial information about how they can best manage their energy usage, including by accessing financial incentives. Virginia Energy's MEO will focus on small-scale energy projects for which there are tax credits, rebates, or financing options (e.g., energy efficiency, electrification, solar and EV charging).

To support these goals, Virginia Energy is also making available funding to eligible units of local government ("localities") across the Commonwealth through the EECBG Program. Each locality receiving EECBG Program funds is required to use the funds cost-effectively for maximum benefit to the population of that locality and to yield sustained long-term impacts on energy efficiency and energy conservation.

The localities NOT receiving EECBG direct formula allocations, as noted in the [allocation document \(https://www.energy.gov/sites/default/files/2023-01/IIJA_%2840552%29_EECBG_Program_Attachment_1a_Local_Govt_Allocations_FINAL.pdf\)](https://www.energy.gov/sites/default/files/2023-01/IIJA_%2840552%29_EECBG_Program_Attachment_1a_Local_Govt_Allocations_FINAL.pdf), are eligible to receive funds through Virginia Energy and the EECBG Formula Grant Program, and should complete this application.

The seventeen (17) cities and ten (10) counties receiving their EECBG allocations directly from U.S. DOE, NOT Virginia Energy, do not need to complete this application to receive those funds.

Counties, cities, and towns which submitted an application during the first and second rounds of funding as part of the NOFO are eligible to submit another application during this, the third round of applications, so long as the total requested amount does not surpass \$200,000.

II. PROGRAM OUTLINE

Through this application, Virginia Energy will be evaluating project proposals from localities to distribute this federal EECBG funding to ensure alignment and compliance with the requirements outlined herein.

Project eligibility criteria, distribution of funds, and reporting requirements are detailed in full in this announcement. Please ensure you have read all the guidelines and requirements outlined in this application and proposed project(s) meet all stated requirements prior to submission of your application. An amount not to exceed one million, five hundred eighty-seven thousand, six hundred thirty dollars (\$1,587,630) in grant funding is available through this Program, which includes three rounds of application deadlines. Any funding not awarded during the first and second rounds will be available for awards during the third round.

Virginia Energy is offering competitive sub grants to localities not to exceed two hundred thousand dollars (\$200,000) per locality for MEO activities supporting Energy Efficiency and Conservation Programs for Buildings and Facilities.

Localities can opt to partner together on a single project to braid their respective EECBG funds together. If partnering, one locality will be the lead applicant and submit a single application to Virginia Energy, listing all other partner localities. In this case, the maximum grant amount is based on the number of partnering localities and the amount of funding required to execute that project in each locality. For instance, one locality cannot apply for \$280,000 with two listed partnering localities and direct \$260,000 of the grant to one locality. A good example is one locality applies for \$280,000 with two listed partnering localities and they utilize \$200,000 for one locality and \$50,000 for the second and \$30,000 for the third. The intent of partnering should be to achieve benefits of scale and unified messaging where it makes sense.

Each application will be reviewed for eligibility and other criteria by Virginia Energy staff. Virginia Energy reserves the right in its sole discretion to request additional information directly from the applicant prior to making its final award determination. **All grant-funded projects must be completed and closed-out, with final reporting due by April 30, 2027.**

III. PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

Program applicants must demonstrate that the project meets the requirements and criteria described in this section.

A. Eligible Activities

- Energy auditor education and certification to provide BPI-2400 compliant energy audits in your locality. The eligible energy auditor certifications are listed in Appendix A. Energy auditors trained under this offering should be required to perform at least 5 home energy audits within your locality by the end of the sub-grant performance period which meet the home energy audit requirements in Appendix A, including the additional reporting requirements.
- Programs for public education including training or workshops for residents and contractors performing work in your locality

- Programs to partner with local non-profits and community organizations to support MEO activities focused on weatherization, efficiency retrofits and technologies, and installations
- Support additional staff capacity for conducting energy MEO, such as hiring and training an energy coach or outreach coordinator
- Offer free home energy audits to promote interest in energy upgrades (please refer to Appendix A for home energy audit requirements)
- Fund MEO services, including website content, emails, social media posts, and digital ads to inform your community about the incentives, rebates, and technologies that can help improve the comfort and efficiency of their residence or business. You may also consider targeted direct mail or public signage as part of the MEO services or include marketing of any of the other eligible activities, such as marketing free home energy audits or marketing energy auditor education and certification programs.

B. Additional Requirements

- The activity must be for the development and/or implementation of an energy efficiency or energy conservation program.
- The activity must ensure that all outreach materials and activities are accessible to diverse populations, including those with disabilities and non-English speakers.
- The activity must include data collection methods to track the impact of the MEO activities.

IV. FUNDING

The total funding available under this NOFO is one million, five hundred eighty seven thousand, six hundred thirty dollars (\$1,587,630). Virginia Energy intends to leverage funds to support as many projects as possible with the available funding.

Individual award decisions will vary depending on project eligibility. In no instance may an applicant receive more than one hundred percent (100%) of the cost of a project from this grant when combined with other internal and/or external funding sources.

V. ASKING QUESTIONS

Questions may be submitted via email (vaenergy.meogrant@aptim.com). Answers will be compiled and posted on: <https://energy.virginia.gov/energy-efficiency/eecbg-subgrants>. It is the responsibility of every potential respondent to check <https://energy.virginia.gov/energy-efficiency/eecbg-subgrants> for any answers to questions, addenda, or modifications to this NOFO.

The Commonwealth of Virginia and its subdivisions accept no liability and will provide no accommodations to respondents who fail to check for amended NOFOs or submit inadequate

or incorrect responses.

Respondents may not alter NOFO language or any NOFO component files. Those submitting a proposal must respond in accordance with the NOFO directions and complete only those sections that prompt a respondent for a response. Modifications to the body of this NOFO, specifications, terms and conditions, or which change the intent of this NOFO are prohibited. Any unauthorized alterations will disqualify a response.

- All questions must be submitted by 11:59 PM on March 23, 2025 via email (vaenergy.meogrant@aptim.com) or phone (804-404-7940).
- All answers shall be posted on <https://energy.virginia.gov/energy-efficiency/eecbg-subgrants>.
- To submit an application, see the Instructions on Page 9.

VI. AWARDS

Applications will be accepted until all funding has been awarded or until March 31, 2025.

Grant applications must be approved by Virginia Energy, and a Grant Contract is required to be signed between Virginia Energy and the grantee, prior to the purchase of equipment or commencement of any work to be funded by this grant. Virginia Energy shall not disburse funds until all requirements under the NOFO and any terms and conditions have been satisfied, as determined by Virginia Energy in its sole discretion.

Failure to provide adequate reporting information in a timely manner may be considered cause for reducing or terminating the subaward.

VII. REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

The following reporting requirements ensures that Virginia Energy has the information needed to meet the requirements of the U.S. DOE for reporting the progress of the use of EECBG funds.

Quarterly: Due within 10 calendar days after the end of the quarterly reporting period that occurs during the performance period of your award. These dates are January 10, April 10, July 10, and October 10.

I. Progress Report

The progress report must include, but not limited to, the following information:

- Organizations
 - Identify all subrecipients, contractors, U.S. National Laboratories, partners, and collaborating organizations. Recipients must also include all foreign collaborators as outlined in the Foreign Collaboration Considerations term of the award Terms and Conditions. For each, provide name, UEI, zip code or latitude/longitude, role in the project,

contribution to the project, and start and end date. This information can be included in the qualitative section of the report.

- Tasks and Milestones with progress to date and status of each
 - Total amount spent on the project with details for each budget category, as applicable
 - Personnel, including time sheets
 - Fringe
 - Contracts, including copies of contracts
 - Travel, including receipts
 - Equipment, including receipts
 - Supplies, including receipts
 - Other, including receipts
 - Indirect, including a cost rate agreement
 - Funds leveraged (e.g., other funds and their source used to support work under this award)
 - Activity metrics, at a minimum, as applicable to your chosen activities:
 - For energy audits:
 - Number of building energy audits performed
 - Square footage of building energy audits performed (ft²)
 - For all others:
 - Number of workshops and number of people attending
 - Number of training sessions and number of people attending
 - Number of education sessions and number of people attending
 - Full time equivalent Number of sustainability officers or energy managers hired (FTE)
 - Number of information contacts (e.g., webinars, site visits, media fact sheets) by sector in which energy efficiency or renewable energy measures were recommended
 - Sector categories include:
 - Agricultural
 - Commercial
 - Industrial
 - Institutional (e.g. hospital, educational, correctional)*
 - Other
 - Public
 - Residential
 - Transportation*
 - All sectors
- *Work under this award should not fall into these sectors.
- Qualitative section

- Summary of success, general updates on the progress, problems or issues, and any activities that altered the schedule.
- Summary of recommended or anticipated next steps
- Summary of items that require guidance or decisions from the department

II. Financial Report SF-425

- a. Financial reporting must include all financial information reported in the same format and categories as the SF-425, which Virginia Energy will aggregate and submit to the U.S. DOE quarterly. A spreadsheet template will be provided to awardees.

Yearly: These reports are required on an annual basis, within 10 calendar days after the end of the federal fiscal year (October 10).

- I.** Jobs created/retained, as applicable. (e.g., number of energy coaches or outreach coordinators hired), using the Good Jobs template which will be provided.

One Time: These reports are required one time, with timing as specified below for each report.

I. Final Report

- a. Provided in the same format as the quarterly progress report, but covering the entire project, including total metrics and financials. This report will be due within 60 days of the completion of the funded work, but no later than the grant closeout date of April 30, 2027.

EECBG sub-grant recipients will be responsible for meeting any additional federal reporting requirements, if applicable to the project (though we do not anticipate projects within the Eligible Activities will require this additional reporting which mostly applies to construction and infrastructure projects), including weekly payroll and semi-annual reports for projects subject to Davis-Bacon and Related Acts (DBRA) requirements, National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), annual Historic Preservation report, and Build America, Buy America (BABA).

For clarity: Per U.S. DOE, “Energy auditors, inspectors, and other personnel not performing physical or manual work at the site of the work are not covered by DBRA.”

If you receive additional federal funds, nothing contained in this NOFO exempts you from any other reporting requirements. If the additional funding you receive from this subgrant, for instance, results in you expending \$750,000 or more during your fiscal year in federal awards, you are subject to the annual single audit requirement which must be filed directly with the Federal Audit Clearinghouse.

The special terms and conditions supplied with the award package provides a list of all federal reporting requirements any EECBG grant recipient is subject to, however, for the purpose of this NOFO we have reduced the included requirements to only those applicable to the eligible MEO activities.

VIII. EVALUATION CRITERIA

The following criteria will be used for evaluating grant applications under this NOFO:

- Project Viability and Completeness: How feasible and thorough is your project plan?
- Readiness for Implementation: Is your project ready to go right away?
- Expected Impact: What positive outcomes do you anticipate from the project, particularly in terms of energy efficiency and conservation?

Virginia Energy reserves the right to request clarifying information or amendments in support of the application and evaluation process and may fully or partially fund projects based on the information provided.

IX. GRANT AND CONTACT INFORMATION

Email: vaenergy.meogrant@aptim.com

Phone: 804.404.7940

X. APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS

No paper submissions will be accepted. Applications may only be submitted via vaenergy.meogrant@aptim.com. Please make the subject of the email “[Locality Name] MEO Grant Submission”.

Application Materials Checklist

- File titles: Include locality/entity name and title of document
- EECBG Application Form in .docx (Word File)
- Signed certification
- Any supporting documentation, such as MOUs or Letters of Support, in .pdf

XI. APPENDIX A

Home Energy Audit Requirements

These requirements accomplish three primary goals:

- 1) To ensure the home energy audit is eligible for available tax credits
- 2) Ensure that the home energy audits provide the resident a valuable informational tool
- 3) Strongly recommend that the home energy audits are compliant with the requirements of the forthcoming federally funded state administered Home Energy Rebates and Home Electrification and Appliance Rebates programs.

To ensure that if there are any costs incurred by the resident as part of having a home energy audit performed (for instance, the subgrantee provides funding for a basic energy audit meeting these standards, but the auditor offers a blower door test for an additional \$100 at the resident's expense) that the resident's audit will be eligible for the home energy audit tax credit of up to \$150 offered by the federal government under the IRS Energy Efficient Home Improvement Credit.

Accordingly, the home energy audit must:

- Include a written report and inspection that identifies the most significant and cost-effective energy efficiency improvements with respect to the home, including an estimate of the energy and cost savings with respect to such improvement, and
- Be conducted and prepared by a home energy auditor
 - The inspection must be conducted by a qualified home energy auditor, defined as an individual who is certified by one of the qualified certification Programs at the time of the audit as listed on the Department of Energy certification programs for the Energy Efficient Home Improvement Credit (Section 25C) at <https://www.energy.gov/eere/buildings/us-department-energy-recognized-home-energy-auditor-qualified-certification-programs>, or under the supervision of a qualified home energy auditor;
 - This list currently (as of 10/12/2024) includes:
 - ASHRAE (formerly the American Society of Heating and Air-Conditioning Engineers) Building Energy Assessment Professional
 - Association of Energy Engineers (AEE) Certified Energy Auditor
 - Building Performance Institute (BPI) Building Analyst Professional (BA-P)
 - Building Performance Institute (BPI) Home Energy Professional Energy Auditor
 - Building Science Institute (BSI) Energy Code Compliance Specialist
 - Building Science Institute (BSI) ENERGY STAR Verifier
 - Building Science Institute (BSI) Zero Energy Ready Home Verifier
 - CalCERTS Inc. Whole House Home Energy Audit
 - California Home Energy Efficiency Rating Services (CHEERS)

HERS Rater

Residential Energy Services Network (RESNET) Home Energy Rater

- The written report must be prepared and signed by a qualified home energy auditor, be consistent with industry best practices, and include:
 - The qualified home energy auditor's name and relevant employer identification number (EIN) or other type of appropriate taxpayer identifying number, if the auditor does not have an EIN;
 - An attestation that the qualified home energy auditor is certified by a qualified certification program; and
 - The name of such qualified certification program

While not strictly required for the purposes of this grant funding, we strongly encourage applicants to require their energy auditors to utilize whole-home modeling software that is BPI-2400 compliant so that the customer's audit may be used to access the upcoming Home Efficiency Rebates (HOMES) program without requiring another audit. The model includes utility bill calibration so that customers can have a better idea of bill impacts from recommended energy efficiency upgrades.

Please refer to the DOE website for the current list of approved single-family modeling solutions at <https://www.energy.gov/scep/single-family-modeling-solutions-home-efficiency-rebates-program>. Again, these are NOT required, but we strongly encourage applicants to require energy auditors to utilize one of these solutions. The current list (as of 10/12/2024) includes:

- OptiMiser
- Snugg Pro

Should the customer wish to perform energy efficiency upgrades at a later date, the contracted energy auditor must agree that they will provide access to the completed energy model to any contractor the resident chooses. The resident will be able to release access to their model by notifying the energy auditor who to provide access. This is to help prevent the customer from requiring multiple audits to participate in efficiency incentive programs.

The energy auditor is required to report back to you, the subgrantee, the following information, which you will also be required to report back to Virginia Energy in the form of a digital spreadsheet, such as Excel:

- Address of residence
- Age of home
- Square footage of home
- List of recommended improvements and estimated annual savings

We ask that you do not provide us with Personally Identifiable Information (PII) in this file. PII your auditors might collect that we do not want to receive could include email, phone numbers, names, etc.

We reserve the right to audit records. Residents may be contacted to verify that the home energy audit was completed and they received a copy of the report listing recommended home improvements. Home energy auditors found to provide energy audits not “consistent with industry best practices”, may be barred from receiving further funding from the subgrant award.