



Energy Efficiency Community Block Grant (EECBG)

FAQs

General Guidance:

What type of grants and dollar amounts are available?

A total of just under \$1.6M is available for Energy Efficiency Community Block Grants (EECBG). We anticipate issuing 16 grants of around \$55K to communities for building retrofits, 10 grants of around \$55K for traffic and signal lighting projects, and three grants of around \$52K for EV charging stations to local communities.

Who is eligible for these grants?

These grants are only available for those counties and cities that were not eligible for formula funds. This means all counties and cities in the state are eligible, except for the 10 largest counties and 10 largest cities by population.

Counties and cities that are ineligible for a subgrant of these funds from the state include:

Counties:

Burleigh
Cass
Grand Forks
McKenzie
Morton
Richland
Stark
Stutsman
Ward
Williams

Cities:

Bismarck
Dickinson
Fargo
Grand Forks
Jamestown
Mandan
Minot
Wahpeton
West Fargo
Williston

Our county is among the 10 largest but we did not apply for our formula EECBG grant. Can we apply for these funds?

If your local government was eligible for formula EECBG funds from the Department of Energy (DOE) your application will not be considered as your government is not eligible for funds provided to the state. The Division of Community Services can only provide these funds to those counties and cities that were not eligible for formula grants.

When does our county/city need to apply and when will the funds be available?

Applications may be submitted any time after November 1, 2024. The Division of Community Services intends to issue grants to communities in total sums up to \$600,000 each quarter beginning December 1 and continuing each quarter until all of the funds have been obligated and subsequently exhausted.

Can both a city and county apply for funds for adjoining projects?

Yes, as long as the respective projects are within the local government's (city's) jurisdiction.

Can a county apply for funds for a project to be used within a city that is within the county?

Yes, as long as the part of the city in which the project will take place is within the county's boundaries.

Our city does not have a need for these funds but a non-profit critical to the welfare of our residents has a need we would like to use this grant to cover. Is this allowable?

Yes. ND Department of Commerce, Division of Community Services can work with the local government to facilitate using these funds toward a non-profit within the jurisdiction of the local government.

What cities and counties are most likely to have priority?

Priority will be given to cities within tribal areas and counties with portions in tribal areas, particularly when the proposed work is within these areas or other Justice40 designated areas. The only community not in a tribal area yet within an area designated as Justice40 is the east half of the City of Grafton, ND.

Can the grant cover both materials and associated labor to complete the project?

Yes, both materials and labor are eligible expenditures under this grant.

What match will local governments be expected to provide toward the project?

Our guidelines require a 20% match. However, a waiver may be granted depending on factors such as location (e.g., Justice40 areas), extenuating circumstances, or overall demand for funds.

Can funding from this grant be “braided” with other grants where funds from this grant are used to support a part of the overall local government project, such as energy efficiency improvements of a building and other funds are used for another aspect of the overall project?

Yes, braiding with other funding sources is encouraged as long as the local government does not receive funds twice for the same completed work.

Are there special requirements with the use of these funds?

Yes. The applicant must meet Davis-Bacon wage and administrative requirements. Contractors selected to do the projects covered by the grant must sign up for a DOE sponsored online LCP tracker program. Projects with a cost of \$250,000 or more must meet Build American – Buy America (BABA) requirements. In addition, any structure in which funds from this grant were used must meet Historical Preservation requirements and any groundbreaking must meet National Environmental Protection Act (NEPA) requirements. As a matter of preference, we discourage any groundbreaking under this grant except where it may be required for establishment of an EV charging station.

Building Retrofits:

Our current building needs to be replaced. Can the funds be used towards the construction of a new building as our current building no longer meets our needs?

No. Funds from this grant can be used for renovation of an existing building only and not new construction.

Can weatherization of a building be included in the work of an existing building under this grant to improve its energy efficiency?

Yes, weatherization can be done under this grant. This is different in that our standard State Energy Program grant cannot cover weatherization.

Can energy management systems, including grid-interactive equipment such as smart thermostats, battery storage systems, and building energy management systems, be procured under this grant to improve energy efficiency?

Yes, energy management systems such as smart thermostats, heat pumps, battery storage, and associated wiring can be procured under this grant to improve energy efficiency.

We will need to dig out a trench next to the building in which we need to update the HVAC system. Are there any special requirements that we need to meet?

Yes, any excavation work will need to comply with NEPA requirements.

EV Charging Stations:

Our county is considering using this grant to fund an EV charging station in a county park. Is this allowed?

Yes, as long as the park is within the county's jurisdiction and in a location that serves the public accessing the park.

Our city is considering using this grant to fund an EV charging station in a state park just outside of the city. Is this allowed?

No, the state park is outside the city's jurisdiction and the grant would have to go to the state and state agencies are not eligible for these funds.

Our city has a need for an EV charging station in our fenced-in lot. Can we use these funds for an EV charging station for city vehicles only?

No, an EV charging station funded with this grant must be available to residents and visitors to the city and should support local economic development and as many local businesses as is practical.

Our city has a car dealership two miles from the center of the city. We would like to locate an EV charging station on the dealership's property. This would benefit the dealership to sell more EVs in our community. Is this allowable under this grant?

Probably not. It is unlikely ND Department of Commerce, Division of Community Services would fund an EV charging station in a location that supports only a single business in a community. An EV charging station funded under this grant should be in an area accessible to as many of the local residents and visitors as possible and benefiting as many of the local businesses as is practical.

Traffic Lights/Signal Lights:

What kind of light fixtures will this grant cover?

Replacement of traffic signals or streetlights must be light emitting diodes (LEDs) or other technology of equal or greater energy efficiency.

Can we add solar panels that power the streetlights as long as the panels are part of a replacement effort?

Yes, these items can be included in the work covered by the grant.

We need to replace both the poles and the light fixture. Can this grant cover the new poles?

No, only the light fixtures can be covered by the grant.

We need to replace our 4-way stop signs with traffic lights. Can we use this grant to obtain them?

No, this grant only covers the replacement of light fixtures in traffic and signal lights. This proposal would be considered new construction and is not within the scope of the grant.

There is a traffic light just outside the city boundary. Can we use these grant funds to cover replacement of this?

No, the work must be within the jurisdiction of the city. However, if the county is eligible for this grant the county can apply.