

Rochester Benchmarking Energy Efficiency Program Grant

Program Overview

The City of Rochester's Community Development Department's Sustainability Team will oversee the Rochester Benchmarking Energy Efficiency Program (RBEEP) grant. This program is part of the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program approved by the City Council and the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, and funded by the Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security (CARES) Act to prevent, prepare for, and respond to coronavirus pandemic.

To provide emergency assistance to small local businesses in Rochester adversely impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, RBEEP will provide grants to small businesses or property owners participating in the Rochester Energy Benchmarking Program for up to 100% of the costs associated with installing an energy efficiency project. Grant funding will be based on organizational need and nature of the project.

Grant funds will help businesses pay for energy efficiency projects, including (but not limited to) energy audits, lighting, HVAC, refrigeration, heating, cooling, kitchens, etc. Grants must be used to cover costs paid to a third party, and cannot be used for normal operational expenses, including (but not limited to) rent/mortgage payments, advertising fees, utilities, payments to suppliers, payroll expenses, other expenses incurred in the regular course of business, or any tax obligations. Providing this support will increase the capacity of small businesses with a permanent physical presence in the city to rebound from the current crisis and will help mitigate potential future scenarios.

Not sure what type of energy efficiency projects you could install? The Community Development Department and Rochester Public Utilities (RPU) have partnered to offer assistance in analyzing energy use and identifying energy efficient upgrades. RPU's [Partnering in Energy Solutions](#) (PiES) Program and their Energy Solutions Partners can:

- Analyze your current and future energy use and needs
- Propose cost-cutting changes, as well as energy efficient upgrades to your equipment
- Provide payback analysis of suggested improvements
- Assist with the purchase and/or implementation of suggested improvements
- List and apply for all available RPU Conserve & Save rebates
- Assist with applying for financing – 0% interest, up to \$25,000 for qualified customers

Please contact Lauren Jensen, ljensen@rochestermn.gov or 507-328-2957 or rpumarketing@rpu.org to assist you with an energy audit and identifying energy efficiency projects.

A total of up to \$30,000 is available for grant awards, with a priority given to historically underserved businesses (women-, military veteran-, and ethnic or racial minority-owned businesses).

Any business started before July 1st, 2021 is welcome to apply. Applicants must be a current participants of the Rochester Energy Benchmarking Program OR may sign up as a new participant in the program for at least 3 years. Eligible projects that meet the minimum efficiency requirements for any of RPU's Conserve and Save® rebates will be available so long as the customer has not already received a rebate for the same project. No duplication of rebates.

Awards will be disbursed and administered by the City of Rochester's Community Development Department (CDD). Grant funds received by individual businesses shall be used to cover energy efficiency expenses since July 1st, 2021. **Receipt of payment to a 3rd party must be provided to the CDD and approved before grant funds will be disbursed to the business.** These funds cannot be used to pay for expenses that are being funded by other COVID-19 related programs. These are grants and no repayment will be required; they are not loans.

Applications for the Rochester Benchmarking Energy Efficiency Program open on **Wednesday, December 1st, 2021 at 12 noon, and will be accepted on a rolling basis until 11:59 p.m. on Wednesday, January 12th, 2021. Awardees will have until March 31st, 2022 to start their projects and should aim to complete projects by June 1st, 2022.** Reimbursement checks will be mailed accordingly within 1 month of project completion.

To qualify, an applicant must:

- Be a private business (for-profit or) that has a permanent physical location within the city limits of Rochester, MN OR an operating 501 (c) (3) nonprofit organization.
- Be either 1) a participant of the Rochester Building Energy Benchmarking Program or 2) sign up as a new participant and commit to participating for three years.
- Work with an RPU representative (or third party auditor if recommended) to identify energy solutions in accordance with Rochester Public Utilities' Partnering in Energy Solutions (PiES) program
- Be in operation with all required filings with the Minnesota Secretary of State before July 1st, 2021.
- Be majority-owned by a permanent resident of Minnesota.
- Have been impacted by Minnesota Governor's Executive Orders issued in response to the coronavirus pandemic.
- Be in good standing with the Minnesota Secretary of State with no outstanding liens at the time of application.
- Be in compliance with all State of Minnesota Executive Orders at the time of application.
- Employ fewer than five hundred (500) full-time equivalent (FTE) employees.
- Document how the funds helped prevent, prepare for or respond to coronavirus.

Priority Considerations:

- Businesses that are majority-owned by military veterans, women, and ethnic or racial minorities.
- Nonprofits or organizations that serve military veterans, women, people experiencing homelessness, seniors, LGBTQ+, and ethnic or racial minorities.

Other Conditions:

- Please submit only **one application per business**. An eligible business may receive at most one grant under this program, which can cover multiple energy efficiency projects, regardless of other related business locations.
- A business owner **may not** receive grants for multiple businesses for which they have an ownership share of 20% or more.
- A business must report any other funding received to pay for the activity in which this funding is used for. Duplication of benefits requirements apply to all CDBG-CV allocations to prevent, prepare for, and respond to coronavirus. Examples of federal funding which must be reported can be found [here](#).

To complete your application, you will need:

- **Schedule C or equivalent form from your 2020 business tax returns OR filing for extension, if your business was operating in 2020;**
- **Completed W-9, which you can [download here](#);**
- **Copy of quote or receipt from 3rd Party vendor for products or services linked to energy efficiency project(s).**

You will also need proof of Minnesota residency of a majority owner of the company. You can submit ONE of the following:

- **Copy of Minnesota income tax return,**
- **Copy of MN driver's license or state ID,**
- **Copy of current residential lease agreement or recent mortgage statement (on or after March 1st, 2020),**
- **Copy of recent residential utility bill in owner's name (on or after March 1st, 2020),**
OR
- **Copy of DD 214 from DOD**

IMPORTANT NOTE: Only PDF, DOC, DOCX, PNG, JPG, JPEG, or GIF file formats are supported.

IMPORTANT NOTE: All documentation MUST include company name in the name of the file, e.g. SamsBakery-ScheduleC.pdf

Additional Ineligible Businesses:

- A business deriving income from passive investments without operational ties to operating businesses.
- A business primarily focusing on speculative activities based on fluctuations in price rather than the normal course of trade.
- A business earning more than half of its annual net revenue from lending.
- A business engaging in pyramid sales, where a participant's primary incentive is based on the sales of an ever-increasing number of participants.

- A business engaging in activities prohibited by federal law or applicable law in the local jurisdiction of the business.
- A business engaging in gambling enterprises, unless the business earns less than 50% of its annual net revenue from lottery sales.
- A business late in payment to any creditors by 60 days or more as of March 1st, 2020.
- A business permanently closed at the time this application is submitted.
- A business wholly owned by City of Rochester employees.