



ENERGY EFFICIENCY Grants for farms & rural businesses

REAP Program (Rural Energy for America Program)

Grants for energy efficiency measures – e.g., lighting, heating, cooling, insulation, & pump improvements

The REAP program provides grants (& loan guarantees) to rural small businesses & agricultural producers for **up to 25% of the cost** of making energy efficiency improvements to their facilities. *Renewable energy generation projects (which are discussed in a separate information sheet) are also eligible for assistance under this program.*

Funds available

In FY2008, **over \$34 million** in REAP grants were awarded. **Over \$50 million may be available in FY2009.**

Grant size: \$250,000 maximum (\$1,500 minimum) per project – cannot exceed 25% of total project cost.

Preferred size: Grants of ≤ \$20,000 are strongly favored.

Eligible applicants

Rural small businesses – “**Rural**” means the project is not located in a Census-defined Metropolitan Statistical Areas (i.e., outside the Portland, Salem, Eugene, Medford, & Bend MSA’s). “**Small**” is as defined by SBA and depends on business type – typically < 500 employees & revenue < \$6.5 million.

Agricultural producers (including *nurseries & dairies*) – individuals or business entities receiving at least 50% of gross income from agriculture. (The SBA-“small business” limitation does not apply to ag producers.)

Preference is given to “very small businesses” – those with < 15 employees & < \$1 million in annual receipts.

The applicant must have a demonstrable financial need for the grant assistance.

Majority ownership must be held by US citizens or permanent residents.

Nonprofits & public projects are not eligible.

Eligible purposes

Purchase & installation **in a rural location** of non-residential **energy efficiency improvements** to a building or process resulting in reduced energy consumption.

Strong preference is given for technology that is “**commercially available**” – i.e., that has a proven operating history and has an established design, installation, & service industry. *Pre-commercial technologies* – i.e., those that have emerged through the R&D process and have commercial potential – may qualify, but require substantially more documentation. Experimental or R&D projects are not eligible.

The applicant must own & control the system, though a qualified third-party may be engaged to operate it.

Authorized uses

- Energy-efficient fixtures, **machinery & equipment** (new or refurbished) – both purchase & installation (including reimbursement for these costs only if the costs were incurred after submitting your application).
 - » Vehicles & farm equipment are ineligible
- Energy-efficient **real estate improvements** – both materials & construction (including reimbursement for these costs only if the costs were incurred after submitting your application)
 - » New facilities are ineligible unless they exactly *replace* an existing inefficient facility in the same size & purpose. Furthermore, the REAP assistance is limited to costs directly attributed to energy efficiency improvements over & above conventional design and as supported by an energy audit.
- **Energy audits**, permits, professional fees (except application packaging), feasibility studies, & business plans (including reimbursement for such costs whether incurred before or after applying)

Application process

“**Simplified**” applications are allowed for projects seeking ≤ \$50,000 grant & with ≤ \$200,000 total project cost. Grants are awarded twice a year via a national competition. USDA only accepts applications during certain periods. **Applications are now being accepted. The FY2009 deadline is July 31, 2009.**

Recent examples. In FY2008, 3 Oregonians received energy efficiency grants – for lighting at a dairy, lighting at a manufacturing facility, and for greenhouse glazing retrofits at a commercial nursery.

Additional requirements

Matching funds – 75% of the project cost must come from non-Federal funds. “In-kind” contributions from third parties of up to 10% of the project cost may be counted toward the match.

Energy audit – a report by an independent, professional, qualified party (such as a Certified Energy Manager) is required with the application. (Applications for < \$50,000 are exempt from this requirement, but receive extra priority points for meeting it.) The audit must address current energy use, recommended improvements & costs, energy savings from the improvements, dollars saved per year, and weighted-average payback in years.

Interim financing – Grant funds are typically disbursed when the project is complete, tested, & certified operational.

Priority Point System

REAP applications are competitively chosen for funding based on the following weighted selection criteria:

| Max Points | Grant selection criteria |
|--------------|--|
| 15 | Energy saved (max points for projects with ≥ 35% energy savings) |
| 5 | Professional energy audit obtained (these points are given only if total project cost is ≤ \$50,000) |
| 10 | Environmental benefits – the project helps meet state environmental goals (true for Oregon) |
| 10 | Commercial availability of the system (max points for improvements with a 5+ year warranty) |
| 10% of 35pts | Technical merit score – qualifications of the project team |
| 5% of 35pts | Technical merit score – agreements & permits |
| 10% of 35pts | Technical merit score – energy savings audit/assessment |
| 30% of 35pts | Technical merit score – design & engineering |
| 5% of 35pts | Technical merit score – project development schedule |
| 20% of 35pts | Technical merit score – financial feasibility |
| 5% of 35pts | Technical merit score – equipment procurement |
| 5% of 35pts | Technical merit score – equipment installation |
| 5% of 35pts | Technical merit score – operations & maintenance |
| 5% of 35pts | Technical merit score – decommissioning |
| 15 | Readiness (max points if all other funding sources have already given written commitment) |
| 10 | “Smallness” of applicant (max points if <\$1 MM gross revenue for business, <\$200,000 for farms) |
| 5 | “Small” project (i.e., ≤ \$50,000 grant & ≤ \$200,000 project) using simplified application |
| 5 | No previous REAP award to applicant within last 2 years |
| 10 | Time for project to repay cost of investment (max points if simple payback in <4 years) |
| 10 | Grant request is \$20,000 or less |

Shaded points are awarded by independent technical review committees; other points awarded by USDA.

GET STARTED NOW!

1. Obtain an independent, professional energy audit. Contact your utility for suggestions.
2. Decide which energy efficiency improvements to adopt & determine approximate cost.
3. Line up other incentives. Most utilities have them – www.energytrust.org/ or www.bpa.gov/energy/n/ – and Oregon has *excellent* State incentives too – www.oregon.gov/ENERGY/CONS/BUS/bushome.shtml
4. Apply for REAP grant. There is an easy-to-use application template (see “Helpful links” below).
5. USDA announces REAP awards, usually in late summer. Once your application is submitted, you may proceed with the project. (The grant may reimburse post-application costs *only* if your application is chosen.)

Helpful links

Additional REAP and other energy funding program information is on-line at: <http://energy.ruraloregon.biz>

For more information, for an easy-to-use application template, or to get on our REAP notification list:

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|-------------------------------|-------------|-----------|-------------------|--|
| Energy Efficiency Coordinator | Martin Zone | Portland | 503-414-3361 | martin.zone@or.usda.gov |
| REAP Program Coordinator | Don Hollis | Pendleton | 541-278-8049 x129 | don.hollis@or.usda.gov |
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