

OVERVIEW

Is there a goal for the number of applications awarded?

There is not a set goal for the number of applications that will be awarded. It is anticipated that 5-10 awards may be made.

Will this program be recurring? If so, what is the funding round frequency?

No. The summer 2025 application round is anticipated to be the last funding round.

What is deadline for project completion?

Projects funded in 2025, must be completed by September 30, 2026.

Will projects be funded based solely on meeting a minimum scoring threshold or will only the top scored projects be funded? If scored based on a minimum scoring threshold, could that result in the funding proportion decreasing per application?

The highest scoring applications will be given priority for funding. All projects achieving the minimum scoring threshold may not receive funding. IEDA may award amounts less than the applicant's proposed budget.

Can the cash match be other federal funds, such as from the Treasury, that have already been received?

Yes, unless the sources of federal funds exclude their use as match. The Iowa EECBG program encourages applicants to consider opportunities to leverage or coordinate EECBG funds with existing rebates, financial incentives and financing programs that may be available, as federally recommended.

If an applicant is not in a disadvantaged community and does not have a downtown plan, will it be possible to score the minimum required points to be eligible for a funding award?

Yes, it will be possible for applicants to achieve the minimum 75 out of 125 (60%) score even if project is not in a disadvantaged community and the community does not have a downtown plan.

APPLICANT ELIGIBILITY

Are school districts able to participate in this program?

School districts are eligible. Keep in mind that projects must be focused on energy system improvements in the community's downtown.

Can an entity apply for more than one project?

Yes, each project will be independently scored. It is highly unlikely that one entity would receive multiple awards due to limited funding available.

What will the EECBG program define as a low-to-moderate (LMI) community?

For the EECBG program, IEDA defines a low-to-moderate income (LMI) community as a community where at least 51% of the community's population is of low-to-moderate income per HUD's dataset from the American Community Survey. Alternatively, a local income survey following the process utilized by the Iowa Community Development Block Grant program can also be used to determine whether 51% or more of a community's residents meet the low-to-moderate income definition. Applicants can use income surveys conducted in the current calendar year or either of the two prior years to document LMI benefit.

NEW - Does a community have to be identified by HUD as a low-to-moderate income (LMI) community to be eligible to apply?

No. The EECBG program does not have a city-wide LMI requirement.

PROJECT ELIGIBILITY

Are renewable energy projects (such as solar installations) eligible?

Yes. Renewable energy projects are not the focus of the 2025 application round of the Iowa EECBG program. For this round of funding, the Iowa EECBG Program seeks projects that support downtown revitalization and downtown streetscape improvements.

Project examples include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Replacing existing streetlights and traffic signals with more efficient lighting
- Improving energy efficiency of existing exterior building and public space lighting
- Installing public electric vehicle charging infrastructure (must be at least Level II charging capability)

Can EECBG funds be used to install electric car charging stations, or are those considered new-installations, and therefore non-eligible?

For the 2025 EECBG funding round, EECBG funds can be utilized to install downtown EV charging stations with at least level II charging capacity.

Would city park lighting qualify? Updates to make current lighting energy efficient, but then installing additional lighting? Lighting would be light poles in the park and lighting within park pavilions.

Generally, yes city park lighting would qualify. However, federal regulations dictate that new poles cannot be installed where lighting was not already present. It is eligible to improve the energy performance of the existing lighting along streets, in city parks, and at public buildings, for example.

Keep in mind for the 2025 round of EECBG funding, the Iowa EECBG Program seeks projects that support downtown revitalization and downtown streetscape improvements, so projects must be located downtown.

A city is currently working to refurbish and rebuild a park pavilion. The pavilion is connected in inoperable electricity. Would bringing back electrical restoration then be considered new installation or would it be considered an upgrade? Also, would the pavilion adding additional outlets be considered eligible?

A grant application seeking funding to replace or install new electricity hook ups is not likely to be very competitive. The EECBG program is designed to reduce energy use, to reduce fossil fuel emissions, and to improve energy efficiency. Installation of new electricity hook ups doesn't support the objectives of the EECBG program. Updating existing lighting is an eligible cost.

The EECBG application states that projects may be ineligible if work has already begun. The city has been working on replacing bulbs in the street lights with energy efficient bulbs. Would this still qualify since they have been working on it already? They have been working on it for a couple of years now and so far have been able to replace the bulbs in the downtown district and those along the main highway, but have not done any in the residential areas.

The project would still be eligible. IEDA included language in the application about projects that are already started to avoid situations where meeting any federal requirements such as federal procurement, environmental review, Build America/Buy America, and Davis-Bacon Act would be difficult or not possible to meet. Federal compliance can still be achieved for a project like the one you are describing as none of the work has begun yet on the streetlight lamps being considered for upgrades.

NEW - Can EECBG funds be used to construct a new building?

Federal rules state that EECBG Program funds may not be used toward new buildings or construction. A structure is considered a building when there is both permanent walls and roofing. Further, activities considered within the NEPA determination are limited to improvements restricted to an existing footprint of ground disturbance.

COMPLIANCE

We are interested in applying to convert existing streetlights to LED and have chosen a specific product to standardize. The local vendor noted that the product is not Buy American Act (BAA) compliant. Is BAA-compliance mandatory for EECBG participation? If BAA-compliance is mandatory, do you know if a BAA waiver is in place for LED security lights? We are not aware of a BAA-compliant LED security light.

[Build America, Buy America](#) (BABA) (not the same as Buy American) applies to EECBG. IEDA is not aware of a Build America, Buy America general waiver in place for LED security lights. IEDA is familiar with a security light project that has identified BABA compliant security light fixtures. Projects with a total project cost of less than \$250,000 may qualify for DOE's Small Grants Waiver. Federal waiver review will take significant time and approval is not guaranteed. Projects are advised to seek out BABA compliant items. Projects that only replace the lamp and not the entire fixture are BABA exempt as lamps are not a BABA covered item.

Does the Davis-Bacon Act apply to EECBG projects involving construction of more than \$2,000?

The Davis Bacon Act does apply for projects involving construction of more than \$2,000.

Are private individuals able to contract directly with their preferred contractor on their private property without having to follow federal procurement requirements specified in 2 CFR 200 so long as it qualifies under the simplified acquisition threshold criteria outlined in 2 CFR 220.320(a)?

Yes. Once awarded, grant recipients and subrecipients are allowed to follow their own internal procurement procedures. Individuals can contract directly with a contractor of their choosing.

TO LEARN MORE

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