



American Recovery and Reinvestment Act

A Texas Eye on the Dollars



EECBG Tips

Energy Efficiency & Conservation Block Grants (EECBG)

The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA) allocated \$45,638,100 to the Texas State Energy Conservation Office (SECO) for Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grant (EECBG) funds. The EECBG program is intended to assist cities and counties to develop, promote, implement and manage energy efficiency and conservation projects and programs designed to:

- ✓ reduce fossil fuel emissions;
- ✓ reduce the total energy use of the eligible entities;
- ✓ improve energy efficiency in the transportation, building and other appropriate sectors; and
- ✓ create and retain jobs.

During this application review and contracting phase, eligible cities and counties can begin to prepare for their upcoming EECBG activities in anticipation of final project approval. Below are some helpful tips for EECBG recipients to consider in order to maximize their investments and get the highest level of energy efficiency out of their projects.

Helpful EECBG Tips

1. Research Products

When looking for products to complete your EECBG projects, research the products you intend to purchase. ENERGY STAR products are federally approved to meet strict EPA and DOE energy efficiency standards and are good options for products such as light bulbs, HVAC units, refrigerators, windows and more. Visit energystar.gov for more information on qualifying products. Be sure to choose an appliance size that is most efficient and applicable for the energy needs of the building.

2. Research Vendors

As you look for partners to install equipment or perform building retrofits, do your research. First, be sure to follow the procurement rules outlined in our Technical Guidelines (<http://www.seco.cpa.state.tx.us/arra/eecbg/guidelines/>). Next, check vendor references and resources such as your Better Business Bureau. Be sure that the vendor can handle your type of project and is available for follow-up appointments as necessary. Additional resources that allow you to verify vendor eligibility for federal funds through this program include the Excluded Parties List System (<https://www.epls.gov/>), which verifies whether a company is on the debarment list; and the Texas Taxable Entity Search (<https://ourcpa.cpa.state.tx.us/coa/Index.html>) to determine whether a taxable entity is in good standing for the Texas Franchise Tax.

3. Check Technical Guidelines for EECBG

To ensure there are no delays in reimbursement, EECBG recipients should review and stick to the ARRA Special Provisions found on the SECO Stimulus Web site. By sticking to the federal contract requirements, not only can SECO reimburse the funds quickly but reporting will also be easier. Visit our Web site for a summary of Compliance with American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) Provisions. (http://www.seco.cpa.state.tx.us/arra/docs/ARRA_Provisions.pdf)

*** NOTE:** SECO **does not** have any preferred vendors and **does not** require EECBG cities and counties to conduct an audit. If an energy audit is selected as an EECBG project, it must be completed first in order to prioritize other activities.

Fraud Prevention

If you suspect scams, fraud or unethical activity related to the EECBG program, please notify SECO. The SECO Stimulus Fraud Prevention page (<http://www.seco.cpa.state.tx.us/arra/fraud/>) has links to resources that shed light on current scams and the various places to file complaints. Overall, use your best judgment. If it doesn't seem right, ask questions before you proceed.

For more information on Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grants, go to: www.secostimulus.org/blockgrant/

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