

Indiana Home Energy Rebate Listening Sessions

Evansville In-Person Q&A

This document includes responses to questions received during the in-Person Listening Session hosted in Evansville for the Home Energy Rebate programs on June 13, 2024.

Some questions have been combined or modified for broader application. If you have any additional questions, or do not see your question listed, please contact rebates@oed.in.gov.

Eligibility

1. Are renters eligible for the program?

Yes, renters are eligible to participate in the Home Energy Rebate programs with the permission of their landlord. Renters, just like homeowners, can benefit from the energy efficiency measures implemented in their homes and the associated reduction of energy costs and improved comfort. Collaboration with landlords and applicants who are renters will be integral to scheduling energy audits and construction work.

Program Requirements

2. If you receive a rebate, is there a requirement to reside in that house for a certain period?

There is no requirement for how long you must stay in the residence if you receive a rebate. However, owners of single- and multi-family rental homes do have certain requirements that last at least two years, such as continuing to rent to low-income tenants and prohibiting rent increases as a result of the energy efficiency investments. To learn more about these requirements, please see sections 3.1.3 and 4.1.3 of the [program requirements](#).

3. As an individual, is there a maximum rebate amount you can receive?

Individual household rebate amounts and benefits will depend on a variety of factors including income level, predicted energy savings, and the type or energy efficiency improvement. There are federal limits as to how much can be invested in a residential building or dwelling under each program. With approval from the U.S. Department of Energy, states may increase the HOMES maximum rebate for low-

income households (up to 100% of project costs). OED is proposing to increase the project cost coverage under the HOMES program to 100% of project costs up to \$6,000 for low-income households (below 80% AMI) that achieve 20-34% energy savings and up to \$12,000 for low-income households (below 80% AMI) that achieve greater than 35% energy savings.

Maximum allowed rebates under each program are listed in the below table (from the [U.S. Department of Energy FAQ page](#)). See Question 24 for additional information about the specific technology maximums.

Type of Home Energy Project	Maximum Allowed Rebate Amount Per Household Below 80% Area Median Income (AMI)	Maximum Allowed Rebate Amount Per Household Above 80% Area Median Income (AMI)
HOMES Project with at least 20% predicted energy savings	80% of project costs, up to \$4,000*	50% of project costs, up to \$2,000 (maximum of \$200,000 for a multifamily building)
HOMES Project with at least 35% predicted energy savings	80% of project costs, up to \$8,000*	50% of project costs, up to \$4,000 (maximum of \$400,000 for a multifamily building)
HEAR Project Qualified Technologies (only households with an income below 150% AMI are eligible)	100% of project costs up to technology cost maximums**; up to \$14,000	50% of project costs, up to technology cost maximums*; up to \$14,000 (households with incomes above 150% AMI are not eligible)

4. Are participants eligible to receive the maximum rebate amount each year?

No, the maximum rebate amount under each program can only be received by an eligible household once. In addition, a household cannot receive a rebate from both programs for the same installation or upgrade. To learn more about maximum rebate amounts under each program, please see question 24 on the [DOE FAQ page](#).

Stakeholder Engagement

5. Did IOED notify the media that this stakeholder meeting was taking place? If yes, did you receive a response whether they would be in attendance?

Yes, OED reached out to local media outlets and local stakeholders via a media advisory by email. OED aims to ensure broad awareness among stakeholders leading up to public meetings.

6. Will we have access to these slides following the meeting?

Yes, all slides and written versions of the questions and answers from each meeting are posted on the OED [website](#).

Justice 40 Initiative

7. How will you incorporate the Justice40 initiative into the program to ensure businesses, homes, and contractors in disadvantaged communities receive the intended benefits? How can contractors in these communities participate in the program's qualified contractor network?

The Justice 40 Initiative (also referred to as J40) sets a goal to allocate 40% of the benefits to disadvantaged communities. Benefits can include direct benefits through rebate investments for homes and economic benefits through workforce development and participation in the contractor network. To learn more about the Justice 40 Initiative under this program, please see sections 3.1.4 and 4.1.4 in [the Program Requirements and Application Instructions](#) from the DOE.

For those interested in participating in the qualified contractor network, we are developing an engagement strategy which will include clear and reasonable requirements for participation. We are aiming to simplify the process for contractors and prevent any unnecessary barriers. Throughout the program's lifecycle, we're committed to providing opportunities for any interested contractor to participate in our network. There is an emphasis on ensuring high-quality, compliant work to maximize benefits. Specific outreach efforts and partnerships with community groups are in progress to engage a diverse contractor network and foster inclusive participation in the program.

8. Can you provide examples of how the Justice40 initiative is incorporated into the Community Benefits Plan? How are you defining a disadvantaged community?

The U.S. Department of Energy provides guidance to states on what must be included in their community benefits plan. The exact criteria can be found in sections 3.1.4 and 4.1.4 of the Program Requirements and Application Instructions. While the specific material for the Community Benefits Plan is under development, OED has started exploring engagement strategies and identifying key stakeholders to contribute to a successful implementation of the Community Benefits Plan. OED remains open to public input on all topics, including Justice 40. This work has included gathering insights on successful Justice 40 initiatives from other regions to inform and potentially replicate effective strategies in our program. OED intends to use the federal definition of a disadvantaged community, which encompasses various burdens faced by communities. Please see the federal government's [online screening tool](#) to learn more.

9. Can you provide more detail on how OED and their implementer has and plans to engage with community leaders and organizations in J40 communities?

Community engagement is a key priority in OED's plan to meet J40 goals. Our team plans to engage with numerous J40 communities across Indiana and collaborate with local organizations and leaders such as mayors and elected officials. Outreach efforts and marketing tools will also be used to ensure program information reaches those in disadvantaged communities. OED has already begun gathering feedback from various nonprofit stakeholders in disadvantaged communities to refine our approach, and we remain open to specific ideas and suggestions to enhance community engagement.

Program Design

10. Will existing community-based organizations, like Community Action Programs participate in the contractor selection process? Do you already have pre-selected contractors, and will you develop an onboarding process?

OED and our partners have started collaborating with various community groups to identify high-performing contractors with experience in similar programs. OED intends to provide a robust onboarding process for participating contractors and provide clear avenues for contractor participation and engagement.

11. How will you help people avoid being scammed?

We are implementing a qualified contractor network to protect participants and safeguard against potential scams. In addition, we will separate the energy audits from contractor installations to ensure participants receive unbiased assessments of potential energy efficiency upgrades. This approach aims to provide comprehensive audits without pressure from contractors to upsell additional services. Although we aim to provide a clear and transparent program, homeowners should also be aware and mindful of potential fraudulent entities who attempt to pose as a part of the program. If there are any questions or concerns, they should contact the program directly.

12. Will households have to cover upgrade costs upfront before they receive a rebate?

OED intends to design a program that would provide instant rebates in the form of a discount on the product and installation for a qualified project in accordance with program requirements. The design of this process is being developed and will be subject to approval from the U.S. Department of Energy. Households may incur some cost share if they do not qualify for a rebate that covers 100% of the project costs.

13. Do you have anything or measures in place to ensure contractors are drug-free and trained properly?

Our program will implement all DOE-specified requirements to ensure contractors adhere to federal requirements and training standards. In addition, our qualified contractor network will help ensure that the contractors performing the work have received additional training and can provide quality service. A process will be established to address any issues with quality of the service or work provided by participating contractors.

14. What kind of marketing will you do to incentivize landlords to use the program and keep housing affordable after maintenance?

Overall, our team aims to carry out a comprehensive marketing strategy using channels such as social media, mailers, etc. to achieve broad visibility and drive program participation. Materials specific to building owners may explain the unique opportunity this program provides for significant property investment. To maintain housing affordability, the U.S. DOE has provided specific mechanisms states must

implement as part of their program to prevent building owners from raising tenants' rent for at least two years following program participation based on energy savings or investments made through this program. To learn more about the specific requirements, please see sections 3.1.3 and 4.1.3 in the [Program Requirements and Application Instructions](#).

15. Will call center staff be able to assist applicants who do not speak English as their first language?

OED acknowledges the diverse language needs in Indiana and intends to provide translated resources for residents. Case managers will be available to assist applicants, including those who do not speak English as their first language, to ensure accessibility to program information and support.

16. Will there be an option to receive a rebate if you want to purchase an appliance from the store and install it on your own?

OED is exploring pathways to enable straightforward participation in the program through direct rebates on appliances under the HEAR program. Our goal is to make it straightforward for Hoosiers to access rebates and eliminate unnecessary complexity in the application process. Facilitating the program through retailers alone can create challenges to compliance and reporting requirements, and our team is actively working to identify potential solutions and pathways to facilitate this process without compromising program compliance.

17. For emergency situations like a water heater or HVAC system going out, will there be a way to expedite the application process?

This is a concern our team has also identified. We are actively exploring solutions to simplify and expedite the rebate process, especially in case of an emergency. Our goal is to make it straightforward for Hoosiers to access rebates when needed, aiming to eliminate unnecessary complexity in the application process.

Interactions with Other Programs

18. Is this program run by utilities?

No, the Home Energy Rebates program is funded by the federal government and remains separate from any utility program. Only federally designated state, territorial, and tribal energy offices can apply to receive funding and administer this program.

19. Do you plan to engage with current applicants or participants of the weatherization and energy assistance programs to encourage participation in the program? How will you work with the organizations administering these programs?

OED is collaborating with Indiana Housing and Community Development Authority to determine how current weatherization participants and waitlisted individuals can be integrated into the rebates program. We are working closely with IHEDA and their partners to maximize the benefits of these programs. Support with IHEDA might range from co-marketing and outreach efforts to utilizing similar implementation strategies for program cohesiveness and efficiency.