

Indiana Home Energy Rebate Listening Sessions

Indianapolis In-Person Q&A

This document includes responses to questions received during the In-Person Listening Session hosted in Indianapolis for the Home Energy Rebate programs on June 11, 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 churches eligible to receive rebates?

The Home Energy Rebates program is designated for residential units only by federal law. Non-residential properties are not eligible to receive rebates for energy efficiency upgrades under this program. However, churches can play an important role in helping to distribute information about this program to their members.

2. Are solar panels eligible for rebates?

The Home Energy Rebates program does not provide rebates for solar panels, however, households may be eligible to receive rebates for other upgrades, such as electrical wiring, that interact with solar installations. For more information, please see question 29 on the [U.S. Department of Energy's FAQ page](#).

Program Design

3. Has OED looked at any best practices in other states on how to streamline the rebate process and minimize barriers to participation?

Yes, OED and our partners are evaluating different ways states are considering deploying their programs and how that could apply to the state of Indiana. Ultimately, those observations can help to identify how Indiana's program will look and what will best benefit Hoosiers.

4. Are the rebates instant for a participant?

OED intends to design a program that would provide rebates instantly 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.

5. Will there be any additional consideration or prioritization for owner-occupied homes?

Federal guidance for the Home Energy Rebates program does not provide a dedicated funding requirement for owner-occupied homes. OED has not set a dedicated target or goal for owner-occupied homes.

6. Will developers, contractors, non-profits, etc. be able to submit the applications on behalf of residents or clients, or do applications need to be owner/self-submitted?

Landlords or owners of residential multi-family buildings can apply for program benefits on behalf of their residents, provided OED receives all necessary eligibility determination documentation. In addition, nonprofits and other community organizations may also be able to submit applications on behalf of residents, also in accordance with program requirements. OED intends to design a program with channels to accommodate applications submitted on behalf of residents.

7. Will the rebate amount cover the full cost of the project?

Maximum allowed rebates under each program are listed in the below table (from the [U.S. Department of Energy FAQ page](#)).

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)

**DOE guidance allows states to increase the maximum amount for low-income households. 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.*

Under the HEAR program, federal requirements set a maximum rebate amount for each type of appliance/technology with an overall household rebate limit of \$14,000. (See Question 23 on the [DOE FAQ page](#) for information about the specific technology maximums).

8. Why is an energy assessment part of the process to receive rebates and who will complete the audit? How will you accommodate those who do not want to go through the audit process for an appliance upgrade under the HEAR program?

An energy assessment is required by program guidance for single-family homes and multifamily buildings receiving rebates under the Home Efficiency Rebate program (HOMES). The assessment is intended to provide a comprehensive evaluation of the entire home to maximize energy efficiency improvements and ensure energy saving requirements can be achieved.

OED intends to provide all participants with the opportunity to complete a home assessment as part of delivering both programs simultaneously to maximize the benefits to each household. OED is considering alternative pathways for participants who are only interested in appliance upgrades under the Home Appliance Rebate program (HEAR) which are not subject to the energy assessment requirement under the federal guidance. The program requirements provided by the U.S. DOE can be viewed [here](#).

9. Are you exploring options for retailers to offer direct rebates on appliances, or will people need to purchase appliances through your process with reimbursement afterward? How will this approach impact the choices available to consumers regarding where they can shop for appliances?

OED is exploring pathways to enable straightforward participation in the program through direct rebates on appliances under the HEAR program. Consistent with our

response to Question 4, customers will receive an immediate discount on the product and installation for a qualified project in accordance with program requirements. 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.

10. Will the call center for this program only assist with applications, or will it also provide information about electric appliances eligible for rebates? What kind of technical knowledge will they have?

The call center will be available to assist applicants throughout the entire process, not just with application queries. Trained case managers will handle calls, providing support and addressing issues such as audit concerns or general inquiries about the program. In addition, a comprehensive toolkit will aid in tracking applicant progress and providing accurate information. This toolkit will also provide contact information for energy experts who can address technical questions about energy conservation and efficiency, including specific appliances like heat pumps to ensure the staff is equipped to assist both applicants and those seeking information or education about the program and specific measures.

11. Could Hoosiers receive rebates for appliances like heat pump systems and HVAC units without needing to complete the application and assessment process, especially considering emergency situations?

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.

Contractors

12. Is there a process to confirm the work was completed as intended before people are paid, and how long will that process take?

Currently our team is actively working on the contractor engagement strategy for Indiana. Part of this engagement will focus on outlining the reimbursement and

payment processes. Overall, OED intends to emphasize quality control measures for compliant work while streamlining contractor payment timelines. Our team is considering a program design where contractors are provided the rebate funds directly from program staff, rather than requiring participants to make those payments to contractors with the aim to enhance compliance and streamline reporting for funding security.

13. How are you actively engaging and supporting diverse contractors to ensure their meaningful inclusion in your workforce development initiatives?

OED is developing a contractor workforce development strategy in collaboration with the Indiana Department of Workforce Development. Our team is seeking input from additional experienced state agencies and community organizations to enhance the strategy. Part of this engagement strategy will help establish a qualified network of contractors with a focus on energy rebates. 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.

14. Are you planning to set market rates or establish price ceilings for contractor reimbursement in Indiana's program; specifically, for services like electrical panel upgrades where costs can vary, will the state implement standardized pricing or allow homeowners to choose contractors based on market rates and personal preference?

OED's approach to contractor reimbursement rates focuses on identifying eligible improvements based on DOE guidelines. Indiana is conducting a market analysis to refine the list of eligible measures that are desirable to be included in Indiana's program. The market analysis aims to establish to set fair pricing and rates for these specific upgrades considering variables like effort level through collaboration with contractors. The goal is to streamline the process while ensuring homeowners have options in selecting service providers.

Funding

15. Does the office intend to have conversations at the state level once this funding is depleted, and if this proves successful, can we reallocate additional money towards this program to ensure more Hoosiers get the benefits?

The creation of state-level programs with state appropriations is a decision made by the Indiana General Assembly. The current funds were provided by the U.S. Department of Energy as authorized by federal law.

16. Is there a possibility that Congress could take back these federally allocated funds in the future, and if so, what would that mean for the program's operations and funding?

Federal funding for the program is subject to potential changes by Congress in future years. Uncertainty exists regarding the possibility of funding being withdrawn. Indiana aims to proceed with program implementation while monitoring federal decisions.

17. Is Indiana, along with the rest of the nation, prepared in terms of supply chain capacity to meet the demand for new equipment required by these programs? Have there been discussions with manufacturers regarding supply capabilities, and what is the expected lead time for acquiring equipment?

Indiana and other states are considering the supply chain implications for rolling out new equipment. Our team is monitoring potential supply chain impacts closely as companies nationwide navigate this possibility. Our team recognizes the need for strategic planning to address potential supply chain issues. OED and our partners have already started and will continue to collaborate with related stakeholders to stay informed and proactively address supply chain concerns as needed.

18. What is the estimated number of low-income households (80% AMI or less) that you're estimating to serve?

It is difficult to provide an estimate of the number of households this program will serve given the variation of rebate amounts allowed in addition to each home's characteristics and energy-saving needs. For example, the measures and associated costs needed to achieve a 20% energy savings under the HOMES program will vary across each home and can only be identified on a house-by-house basis. The program does require a 40% set aside of rebate funds for low-income

households in Indiana. In addition, 10% of rebates funds are set aside low-income multifamily units. Required allocations per state can be found under Appendix A of the [federal program requirements](#).

19. Can you tell us more about how customers might switch to heat pump systems, and are there any anticipated barriers within the program related to fuel switching?

Consistent with Indiana's energy policy regarding fuel choice, Indiana's program is fuel neutral, emphasizing affordability to reduce energy costs for homeowners and individual choice on energy efficiency investments made. OED is considering various factors to ensure participants can install the measures they desire in their homes to achieve cost savings.