

# Indiana Home Energy Rebate Listening Sessions

## Gary In-Person Q&A

This document includes responses to questions received during the first In-Person Listening Session hosted in Gary, IN for the Home Energy Rebate programs on May 22, 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](mailto:rebates@oed.in.gov).*

### Program Eligibility

- 1. As a renter in a Section 8 single-family household, will I be able to receive assistance and benefits from the program and what does the process look like for renters like me?**

*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.*

- 2. Will special consideration be made for senior citizens attempting to participate in the program?**

*OED intends to design a program structure that can provide individualized support to applicants, including seniors, to ensure their needs are met. While there may be many applicants, efforts will be made to align resource capacity with applicant expectations to ensure benefits are received in a timely manner. Overall, the program aims to improve participants' living conditions and financial well-being, regardless of their status or capabilities.*

- 3. Does your income disqualify you if it is too high? How will I know if I am eligible for the program?**

*There are two distinct programs under the Home Energy Rebates and each of them has different income considerations. The HOMES program, which is focused on energy efficiency upgrades and retrofits, is open for all Hoosiers, regardless of income. However, low-income households (defined as less than 80% of the area median income (AMI)) are eligible to receive a greater rebate amount. The HEAR program, focused on appliance upgrades, is exclusive to low- and moderate-income households earning less than 150% of AMI.*

*The U.S. Department of Energy has approved programs for [categorical eligibility](#) that states may use to determine income eligibility. Indiana OED is evaluating the incorporation of these programs into the State rebate program. Indiana OED is also*

looking at building a preliminary eligibility tool through an online portal where applicants can input their county of residence and number of people living in the household to make a preliminary eligibility determination based on total annual income. If you're interested in learning what 80% and 150% of area median income (AMI) is in your county ahead of the program launch, you can look this up using the [2024 Area Median Income tables](#).

**4. Is there an allocated amount for a household, and how much money can you get for your improvements?**

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).

Maximum allowed rebates under each program are listed in the below table (from the [U.S. Department of Energy FAQ page](#)). See Question 23 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)

**5. If I am eligible, do I get to choose the energy efficiency improvements and appliances, or is that something that the State is going to do for me?**

*Indiana OED prioritizes providing participants with choices within the programs and emphasizes individual preferences. There are minimum energy savings thresholds mandated by the U.S. Department of Energy that must be met under the Home Energy Rebate program. Choices will include a variety of high-efficiency appliances and improvements as allowed by federal law to meet individual needs while achieving energy cost savings. The program requirements provided by the U.S. DOE can be viewed [here](#).*

*Indiana OED is considering a program design in which after an applicant has been determined to be preliminarily eligible, an energy auditor will perform an assessment at the residence to evaluate potential energy efficiency improvements and will review these options along with the expected energy saving benefits under the program rules with the applicant. The applicant will then decide which investment options make sense for them.*

## **Contractors**

**6. Who will perform the energy audits and what are their credentials?**

*DOE program requirements state that modeled energy savings, calculated as part of the modeled program path for the Home Efficiency Rebates (HOMES) program, must be consistent with BPI 2400 standards. Energy auditors must be able to demonstrate relevant qualifications to complete energy audits to these standards. The program requirements provided by the U.S. DOE can be viewed [here](#).*

*Indiana is looking to utilize energy auditors (who are independent from contractors who are performing the work) to perform an unbiased energy audit or home assessment to evaluate eligible energy efficiency improvements and educate households about program benefits and expected utility bill savings.*

**7. What kinds of certification programs or standards are being considered to ensure contractors are qualified to do this work?**

*Indiana OED is planning to use a qualified contractor network in its Home Energy Rebate program to ensure all participating contractors meet program standards. Contractors who wish to be a part of Indiana's program will have an opportunity to demonstrate their qualifications and meet specific criteria, such as technical competency and financial capacity. Other specific contractor criteria are still being developed with may be considered such as proximity to project locations and workforce capacity. Transparent qualifications and requirements will be communicated to contractors to ensure a competent and qualified workforce for program implementation.*

**8. Will contractors outside of Indiana be able to participate?**

*Indiana OED intends to focus its initial engagement on contractors who primarily work within the state. The overall contractor engagement strategy is still being refined but will aim to address barriers that have historically hindered contractor participation in similar programs. Efforts are being made to identify and reduce barriers to entry for small businesses interested in participating, such as providing support with administrative paperwork.*

**9. Is the State going to be able to hire the number of necessary auditors to do the energy assessment step in the rebate program process?**

*Ensuring an adequate number of auditors across geographically distributed areas in Indiana is critical to minimizing program costs and thus allowing the energy rebate improvements to reach a larger number of households. Existing auditors may require upskilling or reskilling to meet the federal certification requirements of the program. Workforce development opportunities exist in various aspects of the program, emphasizing the importance of local engagement and involvement.*

## **Program Timeline**

**10. How soon will the rebate application portal be up?**

*OED aims to launch Indiana's program in late 2024 or early 2025, depending on when program approval is received by the U.S. Department of Energy. Indiana's implementation plans are currently being developed and must be submitted and approved before program launch. Indiana's robust stakeholder process helps to inform the state's program design, including consultations with utilities and community engagement meetings across Indiana.*

## **Interactions with Other Programs**

**11. How will the Home Energy Rebate program affect the existing electric utility energy efficiency programs?**

*The Home Energy Rebate programs are distinct from utility efficiency programs. However, collaboration and partnership with utilities are essential for designing successful programs across Indiana. For example, utility data access sharing is crucial to minimize burdens for program applicants and ensure efficient access to the program. Efforts will be made to partner with utilities for utility data access, and additional collaboration opportunities will be explored with the overall goal of maximizing impact and serving as many households as possible.*

**12. Is this program going to impact the delivery of the DOE-funded weatherization assistance program that is currently in the market?**

*Indiana OED is working with Indiana's Weatherization program administrator, the Indiana Housing and Community Development Authority (IHCDA) to identify potential areas for collaboration to ensure success of both programs. In addition to leveraging programmatic features, collaboration with IHCDA extends to marketing and communication efforts to ensure effective awareness of the program and to provide a cohesive approach to outreach efforts, while ensuring maximum participation and benefits received under both programs.*

**13. How are health and safety or other building issues going to be addressed?**

*Pre-existing conditions in homes may affect one's ability to participate in the Home Energy Rebate program. Indiana OED is actively exploring options to combine rebate dollars with other funding sources to address these health and safety concerns and to ensure comprehensive support for participants is provided. Overall, Indiana's program aims to maximize household benefits while minimizing administrative expenses by avoiding situations where residences are evaluated only to find barriers due to pre-existing conditions. Efforts are on-going to develop potential solutions to address these gaps.*