

Building Efficiency

Frequently Asked Questions

What is Building Efficiency?

Building Efficiency is an incentive program from Idaho Power to help cover a significant share of the costs of designing and building energy-efficiency features into a commercial or industrial construction project.

Who can apply?

This program is targeted to commercial construction projects for small and midsize commercial buildings that are (or will be) on Idaho Power schedules 7, 9, or 19.

What projects are eligible?

Only projects that are part of a new building, an expansion to an existing building, or a major renovation started after April 15, 2005 can qualify. Major renovations are projects involving professional design services, review by code authorities or substantial replacement of two or more building components – building shell, plumbing, HVAC, lighting or other electrical systems.

How much can I receive?

Incentives are designed to average about half the additional cost of energy-efficiency investments. For 2007, the maximum incentive payment for any one project completed has been increased to \$100,000.

What measures are eligible?

Incentives are offered for four specific lighting efficiency options, four specific cooling efficiency options, three building shell options, and three control strategies. Any project can earn an incentive for as many, or as few of those design options as you choose to install.

What if I am planning an energy upgrade that's not on the eligible measure list?

While the current list of eligible measures covers 17 of the most common energy-saving design options, if you have an additional design option that's not on this year's list, you can apply for an incentive through the Custom Efficiency program. Contact the program manager to see if you qualify.

How do I apply for a Custom Efficiency application?

Building Efficiency and Custom Efficiency incentives cannot be applied to the same design features, but they can be applied to separate measures on the same project. Custom Efficiency applications require a pre-application and incentive levels are set only after a thorough engineering review.

Why was the commissioning bonus dropped?

Commissioning is an independent, third-party verification of the performance of the energy-saving measures you've installed. While commissioning is still encouraged, Idaho Power is no longer offering an additional bonus for that. The prior commissioning bonus was confusing, provided a very limited incentive and was largely unused by program participants.

What if I'm located in Oregon?

Commercial construction projects in Oregon are eligible too. This applies to Oregon projects that were started after Jan. 1, 2006. Since Oregon's code is different from Idaho, there are some minor differences. For specific details, refer to Schedule 83.

How can I participate?

Talk to your team of design professionals about the energy-efficiency options that will work best for your facility. You can learn more – and reserve your place in line for an incentive payment – by submitting a Pre-Application.

What is the application process?

The first step is to submit a Pre-Application. If you've already submitted an "Expression of Interest" under the prior program, you don't need to do another pre-application. The second step is to include the qualifying energy-saving features in your building. The third and final step is to provide the documentation of your energy-saving features with your Final Application.

Why should I use this program?

Energy efficiency pays. The less your business has to pay for electricity, the more funds you'll have available to spend on other necessities or to add to your bottom line. With Idaho Power's expanded and enhanced incentive program, there's no better time to add energy-saving features to your commercial construction process.

How much extra time/effort will this take?

This incentive program is designed to be easy to use. The application is a simple "menu" of energy-efficiency measures that you can choose from. This should not take much time or effort and your design professional will be able to help. Of course, Idaho Power can assist you if you have any questions.

Who can help me understand my design/technology options?

Your team of design professionals is a great place to start. They may have designed other efficient buildings. Other building efficiency assistance resources are available, some provided at no cost. For additional energy-related questions, you can also contact an Idaho Power delivery service representative in your area. To reach the appropriate representative, call (208) 388-2323 or 1-800-488-6151 from outside the Treasure Valley. You may also request additional information on the eligible technologies when you submit the Pre-Application form.

What additional documentation do you need?

A one-page application form along with design performance details and equipment cost invoices for each measure is all that's required.

Is there a similar program for existing facilities?

Yes. Idaho Power now offers incentives for many typical equipment retrofits in existing commercial facilities through the Easy Upgrades program.

When will this program end?

The Building Efficiency incentive program is designed to be in place for a number of years. However, future menu measures and incentive levels may be adjusted as state building codes or federal standards change.

How will my incentive be paid?

Idaho Power will provide you with a check after the work is completed and your final application for incentive payment is made. Idaho Power reserves the right to request additional details and/or inspect any project prior to issuing the incentive payment.

Where do the funds for this program come from?

All of Idaho Power's energy-efficiency programs are funded through the Conservation Charge collected monthly from Idaho customers as approved by the Idaho Public Utilities Commission in May 2002 and the Oregon Public Utility Commission approved in August 2005.

Why is Idaho Power sponsoring this program?

We are committed to offering services and information to our customers to help them use energy wisely. Efficiency programs like this help offset the need to build new power plants and to prevent the company from acquiring power from more expensive sources to meet growing customer demand. Successful conservation programs can delay the construction of new power plants and reduce the company's generation costs during times of peak use, thus slowing the increase in customer rates.

How can I get additional information?

If you still have questions about the commercial construction Building Efficiency program, contact an Idaho Power delivery service representative in your local office or call the Customer Service Center at 388-2323, or 1-800-488-6151 from outside the Treasure Valley. If you prefer, you can e-mail questions to buildingefficiency@idahopower.com.