

RCW 43.331.050 Competitive grant process—Audit—Administrative fees—Reports to the legislature. (1) Within appropriations specifically provided for the purposes of this chapter, the department of commerce, in consultation with the department of enterprise services, and the Washington State University energy program shall establish a competitive process to solicit and evaluate applications from public school districts, public higher education institutions, and other state agencies. Final grant awards shall be determined by the department of commerce.

(2) Grants must be awarded in competitive rounds, based on demand and capacity, with at least five percent of each grant round awarded to small public school districts with fewer than one thousand full-time equivalent students, based on demand and capacity.

(3) Within each competitive round, projects must be weighted and prioritized based on the following criteria and in the following order:

(a) Leverage ratio: In each round, the higher the leverage ratio of nonstate funding sources to state jobs act grant, the higher the project ranking.

(b) Energy savings: In each round, the higher the energy savings, the higher the project ranking. Applicants must submit documentation that demonstrates energy and operational cost savings resulting from the installation of the energy equipment and improvements. The energy savings analysis must be performed by a licensed engineer and documentation must include but is not limited to the following:

(i) A description of the energy equipment and improvements;

(ii) A description of the energy and operational cost savings;

and

(iii) A description of the extent to which the project employs collaborative and innovative measures and encourages demonstration of new and emerging technologies with high energy savings or energy cost reductions.

(c) Expediency of expenditure: Project readiness to spend funds must be prioritized so that the legislative intent to expend funds quickly is met.

(4) Projects that do not use energy savings performance contracting must: (a) Verify energy and operational cost savings, as defined in RCW 43.331.040, for ten years or until the energy and operational costs savings pay for the project, whichever is shorter; (b) follow the department of enterprise services' energy savings performance contracting project guidelines developed pursuant to RCW 43.331.040; and (c) employ a licensed engineer for the energy audit and construction. The department of commerce may require third-party verification of savings if a project is not implemented by an energy savings performance contractor selected by the department of enterprise services through the request of qualifications process. Third-party verification must be conducted either by an energy savings performance contractor selected by the department of enterprise services through a request for qualifications, a licensed engineer specializing in energy conservation, or by a project resource conservation manager or educational service district resource conservation manager.

(5) To intensify competition, the department of commerce may only award funds to the top eighty-five percent of projects applying in a round until the department of commerce determines a final round is

appropriate. Projects that do not receive a grant award in one round may reapply in subsequent rounds.

(6) To match federal grants and programs that require state matching funds and produce significantly higher efficiencies in operations and utilities, the level of innovation criteria may be increased for the purposes of weighted scoring to capture those federal dollars for selected projects that require a higher level of innovation and regional collaboration.

(7) Grant amounts awarded to each project must allow for the maximum number of projects funded with the greatest energy and cost benefit.

(8) (a) The department of commerce must use bond proceeds to pay one-half of the preliminary audit, up to five cents per square foot, if the project does not meet the school district's and higher education institution's predetermined cost-effectiveness criteria. School districts and higher education institutions must pay the other one-half of the cost of the preliminary audit if the project does not meet their predetermined cost-effectiveness criteria.

(b) The energy savings performance contractor may not charge for an investment grade audit if the project does not meet the school district's and higher education institution's predetermined cost-effectiveness criteria. School districts and higher education institutions must pay the full price of an investment grade audit if they do not proceed with a project that meets the school district's and higher education institution's predetermined cost-effectiveness criteria.

(9) The department of commerce may charge projects administrative fees and may pay the department of enterprise services and the Washington State University energy program administration fees in an amount determined through a memorandum of understanding.

(10) The department of commerce and the department of enterprise services must submit a joint report to the appropriate committees of the legislature and the office of financial management on the timing and use of the grant funds, program administrative function, compliance with apprenticeship utilization requirements in RCW 39.04.320, compliance with prevailing wage requirements, and administration fees by the end of each fiscal year, until the funds are fully expended and all savings verification requirements are fulfilled. [2015 c 225 s 95; 2010 1st sp.s. c 35 s 302.]

Contingent effective date—2010 1st sp.s. c 35: See note following RCW 43.331.040.