

Chapter 70A.50 RCW
ENERGY EFFICIENCY IMPROVEMENTS

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RCW 70A.50.010 Definitions. The definitions in this section apply throughout this chapter unless the context clearly requires otherwise.

- (1) "Customers" means residents, businesses, and building owners.
- (2) "Direct outreach" means:
 - (a) The use of door-to-door contact, community events, and other methods of direct interaction with customers to inform them of energy efficiency and weatherization opportunities; and
 - (b) The performance of energy audits.
- (3) "Energy audit" means an assessment of building energy efficiency opportunities, from measures that require very little investment and without any disruption to building operation, normally involving general building operational measures, to low or relatively higher cost investment, such as installing timers to turn off equipment, replacing light bulbs, installing insulation, replacing equipment and appliances with higher efficiency equipment and appliances, and similar measures. The term includes an assessment of alternatives for generation of heat and power from renewable energy resources, including installation of solar water heating and equipment for photovoltaic electricity generation.
- (4) "Energy efficiency and conservation block grant program" means the federal program created under the energy independence and security act of 2007 (P.L. 110-140).
- (5) "Energy efficiency services" means energy audits, weatherization, energy efficiency retrofits, energy management systems as defined in RCW 39.35.030, and other activities to reduce a customer's energy consumption, and includes assistance with paperwork, arranging for financing, program design and development, and other postenergy audit assistance and education to help customers meet their energy savings goals.
- (6) "Low-income individual" means an individual whose annual household income does not exceed eighty percent of the area median income for the metropolitan, micropolitan, or combined statistical area in which that individual resides as determined annually by the United States department of housing and urban development.
- (7) "Sponsor" means any entity or group of entities that submits a proposal under RCW 70A.50.020, including but not limited to any nongovernmental nonprofit organization, local community action agency, tribal nation, community service agency, public service company, county, municipality, publicly owned electric, or natural gas utility.
- (8) "Sponsor match" means the share, if any, of the cost of efficiency improvements to be paid by the sponsor.
- (9) "Weatherization" means making energy and resource conservation and energy efficiency improvements. [2020 c 20 § 1410; 2009 c 379 § 101. Formerly RCW 70.260.010.]

Finding—Intent—2009 c 379: "(1) The legislature finds that improving energy efficiency in structures is one of the most cost-effective means to meet energy requirements, and that while there have been significant efficiency savings achieved in the state over the past quarter century, there remains enormous potential to achieve even greater savings. Increased weatherization and more extensive efficiency improvements in residential, commercial, and public buildings achieves many benefits, including reducing energy bills, avoiding the construction of new electricity generating facilities with associated climate change impacts, and creation of family-wage jobs in performing energy audits and improvements.

(2) It is the intent of the legislature that financial and technical assistance programs be expanded to direct municipal, state, and federal funds, as well as electric and natural gas utility funding, toward greater achievement of energy efficiency improvements. To this end, the legislature establishes a policy goal of assisting in weatherizing twenty thousand homes and businesses in the state in each of the next five years. The legislature also intends to attain this goal in part through supporting programs that rely on community organizations and that there be maximum family-wage job creation in fields related to energy efficiency." [2009 c 379 § 1.]

Effective date—2009 c 379: "This act is necessary for the immediate preservation of the public peace, health, or safety, or support of the state government and its existing public institutions, and takes effect immediately [May 7, 2009]." [2009 c 379 § 405.]

RCW 70A.50.020 Grants for pilot programs providing urban residential and commercial energy efficiency upgrades—Requirements of pilot programs—Report to the governor and legislature. The Washington State University extension energy program is authorized to implement grants for pilot programs providing community-wide urban residential and commercial energy efficiency upgrades. The Washington State University extension energy program must coordinate and collaborate with the department of commerce on the design, administration, and implementation elements of the pilot program.

(1) There must be at least three grants for pilot programs, awarded on a competitive basis to sponsors for conducting direct outreach and delivering energy efficiency services that, to the extent feasible, ensure a balance of participation for: (a) Geographic regions in the state; (b) types of fuel used for heating; (c) owner-occupied and rental residences; (d) small commercial buildings; and (e) single-family and multifamily dwellings.

(2) The pilot programs must:

(a) Provide assistance for energy audits and energy efficiency-related improvements to structures owned by or used for residential, commercial, or nonprofit purposes in specified urban neighborhoods where the objective is to achieve a high rate of participation among building owners within the pilot area;

(b) Utilize volunteer support to reach out to potential customers through the use of community-based institutions;

(c) Employ qualified energy auditors and energy efficiency service providers to perform the energy audits using recognized energy efficiency and weatherization services that are cost-effective;

(d) Select and provide oversight of contractors to perform energy efficiency services. Sponsors shall require contractors to participate in quality control and efficiency training, use workers trained from workforce training and apprentice programs established under chapter 536, Laws of 2009 if these workers are available, pay prevailing wages under chapter 39.12 RCW, hire from the community in which the program is located, and create employment opportunities for veterans, members of the national guard, and low-income and disadvantaged populations; and

(e) Work with customers to secure financing for their portion of the project and apply for and administer utility, public, and charitable funding provided for energy audits and retrofits.

(3) The Washington State University extension energy program must give priority to sponsors that can secure a sponsor match of at least one dollar for each dollar awarded.

(a) A sponsor may use its own moneys, including corporate or ratepayer moneys, or moneys provided by landlords, charitable groups, government programs, the Bonneville power administration, or other sources to pay the sponsor match.

(b) A sponsor may meet its match requirement in whole or in part through providing labor, materials, or other in-kind expenditures.

(4)(a) Pilot programs receiving funding must report compliance with performance metrics for each sponsor receiving a grant award. The performance metrics include:

(i) Monetary and energy savings achieved;

(ii) Savings-to-investment ratio achieved for customers;

(iii) Wage levels of jobs created;

(iv) Utilization of preapprentice and apprenticeship programs;

and

(v) Efficiency and speed of delivery of services.

(b) Pilot programs receiving funding under this section are required to report to the Washington State University extension energy program on compliance with the performance metrics every six months following the receipt of grants, with the last report submitted six months after program completion.

(c) The Washington State University extension energy program shall review the accuracy of these reports and provide a progress report on all grant pilot programs to the appropriate committees of the legislature by December 1st of each year.

(5)(a) By December 1, 2009, the Washington State University extension energy program shall provide a report to the governor and appropriate legislative committees on the: Number of grants awarded; number of jobs created or maintained; number and type of individuals trained through workforce training and apprentice programs; number of veterans, members of the national guard, and individuals of low-income and disadvantaged populations employed by pilot programs; and amount of funding provided through the grants as established in subsection

(1) of this section and the performance metrics established in subsection (4) of this section.

(b) By December 1, 2010, the Washington State University extension energy program shall provide a final report to the governor and appropriate legislative committees on the: Number of grants awarded; number of jobs created or maintained; number and type of individuals trained through workforce training and apprentice programs; number of veterans, members of the national guard, and individuals of low-income and disadvantaged populations employed by pilot programs; and amount of funding provided through the grants as

established in subsection (1) of this section and the performance metrics established in subsection (4) of this section. [2023 c 470 § 2116; 2009 c 379 § 102. Formerly RCW 70.260.020.]

Explanatory statement—2023 c 470: See note following RCW 10.99.030.

Finding—Intent—Effective date—2009 c 379: See notes following RCW 70A.50.010.

RCW 70A.50.030 Farm energy efficiency improvements. (1) The legislature finds that increasing energy costs put farm viability and competitiveness at risk and that energy efficiency improvements on the farm are the most cost-effective way to manage these costs. The legislature further finds that current on-farm energy efficiency programs often miss opportunities to evaluate and conserve all types of energy, including fuels and fertilizers.

(2) The Washington State University extension energy program, in consultation with the department of agriculture, shall form an interdisciplinary team of agricultural and energy extension agencies to develop and offer new methods to help agricultural producers assess their opportunities to increase energy efficiency in all aspects of their operations. The interdisciplinary team must develop and deploy:

(a) Online energy self-assessment software tools to allow agricultural producers to assess whole-farm energy use and to identify the most cost-effective efficiency opportunities;

(b) Energy auditor training curricula specific to the agricultural sector and designed for use by agricultural producers, conservation districts, agricultural extensions, and commodity groups;

(c) An effective infrastructure of trained energy auditors available to assist agricultural producers with on-farm energy audits and identify cost-share assistance for efficiency improvements; and

(d) Measurement systems for cost savings, energy savings, and carbon emission reduction benefits resulting from efficiency improvements identified by the interdisciplinary team.

(3) The Washington State University extension energy program shall seek to obtain additional resources for this section from federal and state agricultural assistance programs and from other sources.

(4) The Washington State University extension energy program shall provide technical assistance for farm energy assessment activities as specified in this section. [2009 c 379 § 103. Formerly RCW 70.260.030.]

Finding—Intent—Effective date—2009 c 379: See notes following RCW 70A.50.010.