



Local Issue Brief

The American Institute of Architects • Government Advocacy • Current Issue Position and Analysis

EECBG Proposed Projects:

- *Albuquerque would like to construct a LEED certified, eco-friendly city solid waste transfer station*
- *Honolulu will design the expansion of a solid waste to energy facility*
- *Indianapolis will use this funding as green building seed money in order to increase the number of buildings with green elements and LEED certified buildings, these funds will be used to incentivize the development community to design and build green*
- *Miami will construct a green lab resource center and provide for building energy efficiency upgrades for 20 city buildings*
- *Milwaukee has numerous building upgrades in the pipeline, including the installation of a green roof on the Central library*
- *Philadelphia plans an exterior modernization of community libraries*
- *Providence is focused on the creation of a Botanical Center Education Center*

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Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grant (EECBG) Program

AIA Position

The American Institute of Architects (AIA) believes that the funding of the Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grant Program through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 provides an unprecedented opportunity for the advancement of green building and sustainability efforts in our nation's communities. Instituting wise spending plans that promote sustainability will enhance localities' abilities to advance or begin their green building efforts.

Action Sought

The AIA urges local government officials to support green building efforts through the use of EECBG funding. With increased funding for green projects comes the need for effective and efficient strategies that incorporate the expertise of local architects, members of government, and business leaders. Community planning is also paramount, as the submission of an Energy Efficiency and Conservation strategy is a requirement of the funds.

Explanation and Justification

\$3.2 billion will be allocated to localities through this block grant, with a predicted 68% of the EECBG funds apportioned directly to eligible cities and counties. The remaining percentage is split between the states, Indian tribes, and additional localities at the discretion of the Department of Energy.

Efficiency in the distribution of EECBG funds begins with the proactive attention of the localities eligible to receive a block grant. Funds are estimated to be distributed within 90 days of the receipt of funds by the Office of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy, with a current schedule of March 16th-17th. The requirements that must be met by grant recipients are population based. A city must have a population greater than 35,000, while a county must exceed 200,000. Exceptions will be made to include cities and counties that are 1 of the 10 most populated within their state.

The formula by which the funds will be distributed has not yet been released by the Secretary of Energy, however the majority of these funds are designed to go directly to the target communities. Further funds are allocated to states, also based on a population formula, with stipulations that 60% be provided in subgrants to local governments eligible for EECBG funds. It is important to note that within 120 days of the receipt of funds, both states and localities must submit an Energy Efficiency and Conservation Strategy to the Energy Secretary.

Green building projects must lead the way toward achieving carbon neutrality, called for in the goals outlined in the AIA's position statements on sustainable design and architectural practice, as well as in the US Conference of Mayors Climate Protection Agreement. In creating sustainable cities, communities must consider the level of greenhouse gas emissions attributed to buildings and aging infrastructure. The goal of reducing greenhouse gas emissions at the local level will put architects in demand, as money becomes available to further existing green building efforts, and begin new programs.

Localities can prepare for the dispersion of EECBG funds by registering with the U.S. Department of Energy through the FedConnect portal. The instructions for registering an eligible locality with FedConnect can be found through the Department of Energy's office of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy at http://apps1.eere.energy.gov/wip/block_grants.cfm. For more information on the Stimulus Package and AIA's recommendations for furthering environmentally sustainable infrastructure, see <http://www.aia.org/rebuildandrenew/>.