



Small Business Energy Efficiency Grant Program FAQs

<https://commerceri.com/small-business-energy-efficiency-grant-program/>

1. Will this grant pay for my project in full?

No, the grant reimburses project costs on a percentage basis:

- Businesses with less than \$2 million in annual gross revenue may qualify for up to 80% of eligible costs.
- Businesses with \$2 million to \$5 million in annual gross revenue may qualify for up to 70% of eligible costs.

2. What are the funding caps?

Eligible small businesses can receive **up to \$20,000** in reimbursements for energy efficiency measures recommended through a professional energy audit/ assessment.

- If you are receiving incentives through Rhode Island Energy, the Rhode Island Commerce grant is **capped at \$10,000**.
- If you complete the project independently with a contractor, you may qualify for **up to \$20,000** through the Rhode Island Commerce grant.

3. Why are there funding caps?

Projects that leverage Rhode Island Energy incentives typically provide greater overall value, as they allow for financing options and additional discounts that often exceed what a Rhode Island Commerce grant alone can cover. This program is a collaborative effort between Rhode Island Commerce, Rhode Island Energy, RISE Engineering, and the Rhode Island Executive Climate Change Coordinating Council.

4. What are the steps to apply & get approved?

- **Option 1: RISE & RI Energy Small Business Program Pathway**
 - a. **Obtain a qualifying energy assessment:** Contact Rhode Island Energy's Small Business Program delivered by RISE Engineering to [schedule a no cost audit](#).
 - b. **Submit for approval:** Applicant submits an [online application](#) with an attached RISE or RI Energy energy audit/ assessment.
 - c. **Confirm grant amount:** RI Commerce confirms the project, timeline and grant amount that the applicant will receive upon project completion and pre-approves the project to move forward.
 - d. **Complete the project:** The applicant signs the contract to complete the eligible project with RISE or RI Energy. The applicant sends a copy of the signed contract to RI Commerce.
 - e. **Pay project costs:** The applicant is responsible for paying the negotiated out-of-pocket portion of the project.
 - f. **Request reimbursement:** The applicant notifies RI Commerce as soon as the project is completed. RI Commerce will send the **grant package** to the applicant via Adobe Sign. The applicant must sign all required documents and submit the completed package to RI Commerce in a timely manner.
 - g. **Grant Processing:** RI Commerce confirms that all documents are signed and submitted accurately. After receiving confirmation that all required documents were properly submitted to RI Commerce, the applicant will receive the RI Commerce grant within **60 days** via an ACH transfer.
- **Option 2: You Choose to Work with Your Own Contractor**
 - a. **Select a contractor:** Applicants may work with any contractor of your choice. A list of vetted installers is available here: <https://cleanheatri.com/resources/find-an-installer/>
 - b. **Obtain a qualifying energy assessment:** Your contractor must provide an updated energy assessment (dated in 2026) that clearly includes:
 - A detailed description of the proposed project
 - How the project improves energy efficiency for your business operations

- Estimated energy savings
 - Estimated cost savings
 - Estimated project completion date
- c. **Submit for approval:** Applicant submits an [online application](#) with attached energy audit/assessment for approval before starting any work.
 - h. **Confirm grant amount:** RI Commerce confirms the project, timeline and grant amount that the applicant will receive upon project completion and pre-approves the project to move forward.
 - d. **Complete the project:** After approval, applicant will proceed with the contractor to complete the work.
 - e. **Pay project costs upfront:** Applicant is responsible for full payment to the contractor upon completion. The applicant notifies RI Commerce as soon as the project is paid and completed.
 - f. **Request reimbursement:** RI Commerce will send the **grant package** to the applicant via Adobe Sign. The applicant must sign all required documents and submit the completed package to RI Commerce in a timely manner.
 - g. **Grant Processing:** RI Commerce confirms that all documents are signed and submitted accurately. After receiving confirmation that all required documents were properly submitted to RI Commerce, the applicant will receive the RI Commerce grant within **60 days** via an ACH transfer.

5. Which forms are included in the grant package?

Applicants must fill out and sign a grant package before receiving funds from RI Commerce. These forms will be provided by RI Commerce for Signature via Adobe Sign:

- Grant Agreement
- W-9 Form
- ACH Payment Form
- Project Completion Form and Photos

6. Are additional forms required?

Yes, the following forms must be submitted to RI Commerce:

- Letter of Good Standing (from [Taxation](#) issued within 3 months or from your certified public accountant issued within 1 month)
- Certificate of Good Standing (visit the [SOS website](#)) issued within 3 months
- Tax returns from 2025 or 2024

7. Where can I get an energy audit/ assessment for my small business?

Energy audits/ assessments must be completed within calendar year 2026 to qualify unless the program gets extended. Only new projects that have not yet been completed prior to applying will be eligible for reimbursement. Only energy audits/ assessments conducted by a Rhode Island registered and licensed professional will be accepted for the Small Business Energy Efficiency Grant Program. You can obtain a no cost, no obligation energy audit/ assessment from any of the following entities:

- Rhode Island Energy's Small Business Program delivered by RISE Engineering: [complete this form](#) or call 877-784-3709 to schedule a no cost audit
- Block Island Power Company Small Business or Commercial Energy Audits call – 1-888-772-4242 or visit [Block Island Power Company](#)
- Clear River Electric and Water Small Businesses visit <https://crewri.org/business>
- Licensed and Registered Contractors*
 - To verify registered and licensed contractors (commercial roofers, home inspectors, underground utility, water filtration, well drilling, pump installers, etc.), visit <https://crb.ri.gov/>
 - To verify licensed trades professionals (alarm business and agents, electricians, hoisting engineers, mechanical, and plumbers/irrigators, etc.), visit <https://dlt.ri.gov/regulation-and-safety/professional-regulation>

8. How do I know if my business is eligible?

Small businesses must meet the following requirements to be eligible for the Small Business Energy Efficiency Grant Program:

- Be a Rhode Island business or 501©3 nonprofit
- Have a gross annual revenue of \$5 million or less
- Not be disbarred in the federal System of Account Management (SAM)
- Not be permanently closed
- Have been open and operating since January 31, 2024
- Have a Rhode Island Certificate of Good Standing (COGS)
- Have a Rhode Island Letter of Good Standing (LOGS)
- Not be owned by a nationally or regionally owned franchise.
 - α. While nationally owned chain businesses are not eligible to apply, a business that is part of a regional or national franchise that includes franchisees with locations outside of Rhode Island, may apply unless the business is owned by a regional or national franchisor or chain OR is owned by an entity that is not headquartered in Rhode Island.

9. How do I obtain my Rhode Island Certificate of Good Standing (COGS)?

Certificates of Good Standing are issued by the RI Department of State to verify that a business entity is in good standing with the RI Department of State. To order your certificate, visit the [SOS website](#). Certificates must be issued within 3 months of the grant approval to be valid.

10. How do I obtain my Rhode Island Letter of Good Standing (LOGS)?

Letters of Good Standing are issued by the State of Rhode Island's Division of [Taxation](#) and must be issued within 3 months. Alternatively, applicants can submit a signed letter from their certified public accountant that's dated within 1 month of the grant approval to be valid.

11. If I pay for my business energy audit/ assessment, will I be reimbursed?

No, we will not reimburse for any costs associated with an energy assessment/audit. We strongly encourage businesses to work with the partners listed above that offer no cost, no obligation energy audits/assessments.

12. Who can I contact for questions?

Questions concerning this program should be directed by e-mail to energy.efficiency@commerceri.com and should include "Energy Efficiency Support Program Question" in the subject line. You may also call 401-278-9100 or visit our [submit an inquiry form](#) to speak with a business support specialist.

13. How will the gross revenues of the business applicants be verified?

The program reserves the right to request supplemental information, including but not limited to tax returns, for the purpose of verifying business structure, tax filing status, and income or revenue information.

14. Does a small business need to own the building where the efficiency upgrades are being done?

No. Applicants do not need to own the building where efficiency upgrades are being undertaken. However, if the applicant does not own the building, they will need to have permission from the building's owner for the approved project.

15. Can the funding be applied to cover part of the cost of a larger upgrade project?

Yes. It is anticipated that some energy efficiency projects will cost more than the limit of this grant. Grant funds will cover up to \$20,000 of the cost and the small business is responsible for the remainder. Please refer to the funding caps and eligibility section above.

16. Does the project need to be completed by a registered and licensed Rhode Island contractor?

Yes. Any project requesting funds for labor or installation must be completed by a contractor who is properly

registered and licensed in the State of Rhode Island and must comply with all applicable local and state requirements, including permitting and zoning regulations.

17. How long will it take for me to receive my grant?

Please allow up to 60 days after submitting all required documentation to receive your reimbursement.

18. Is there a full list of eligible projects?

Eligible items include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Programmable WiFi thermostats
- Boiler and hot water controls
- Air sealing and building insulation
- Variable frequency drives
- Water saving devices
- Roof top unit controls
- Pumps and efficient motors
- Custom equipment and controls
- Electric panel upgrades
- Removal knob-and-tube wiring
- Improvements to ventilation:
 - Purchasing and installing a higher-grade filter within an existing air handling unit
 - Central HVAC installation, repair, or balancing
 - HVAC UVGI system installation
 - Adding a portable fan filter unit (PFFU)
 - Adding an indoor air purifier
 - HRV system installation, repair or balancing
- Heat pumps (*see question #18 below*)

Note: ineligible projects or purchases for reimbursement include solar panels (state incentives already support purchase and installation, please visit <https://commerceri.com/renewable-energy-fund/> for more information on solar).

19. Will this grant fund a heat pump for my business?

Yes, businesses can receive **up to \$10,000** toward a heat pump installation as a result of an energy audit/assessment. If existing Rhode Island Energy customers are using electric resistance heating through a baseboard or furnace, they will receive an additional incentive that covers 20% of the project cost. If you are interested in more information about heat pumps, please refer to the **Guide on Heat Pumps** document on our webpage: <https://commerceri.com/small-business-energy-efficiency-grant-program/>

20. If I already made a purchase or completed an energy efficiency project, can I apply for the grant?

Projects completed prior to February 17, 2026 are not eligible for reimbursement.

21. If I have already gotten an energy audit/assessment, can I use it for this program?

Yes, however energy audits/assessments must be dated within calendar year 2026 to qualify.

22. How will I be able to track the status of my application?

All communication regarding your grant application will come from the email address energy.efficiency@commerceri.com.

Interested in applying?
Click [here](#) to complete the application.