

Small Business Energy Efficiency Grant Program FAQs

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

<i>Revenue Tier (gross annual revenue)</i>	<i>% of Project Cost Covered</i>
<i>Under \$2M</i>	<i>Up to 80%</i>
<i>Between \$2M - \$5M</i>	<i>Up to 70%</i>

1. How does the Small Business Energy Efficiency Grant Program work?

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

- **Apply & Get Approved**
 - Applicant submits an [online application](#) with an attached energy audit/ assessment. *See question #2 below for more information on the energy audit/ assessment.*
 - RI Commerce reviews and pre-approves the project to move forward. RI Commerce confirms the grant amount that the applicant will receive upon project completion.
- **Choose a Project Pathway:**
 - **Option 1: RISE & RI Energy Small Business Program Pathway**
 - The applicant signs a contract to complete the eligible project with RISE/RI Energy.
 - The applicant sends a copy of the signed contract to RI Commerce.
 - The project is completed by a RISE/RI Energy contractor.
 - The applicant notifies RI Commerce as soon as the project is completed.
 - The applicant pays their out-of-pocket cost to RISE within 30 days of receiving the project invoice.
 - **Option 2: Independent Contractor Pathway**
 - The applicant hires a RI-licensed and registered contractor or completes the work themselves.
 - The applicant notifies RI Commerce as soon as the project is completed.
- **Grant Payment**
 - After the applicant notifies RI Commerce that the project is completed, RI Commerce will send the grant package to the applicant via Adobe Sign (required documents include a grant agreement, W9, ACH form, COGS, invoices, receipts, and proof of payment).
 - The applicant must sign all required documents and submit the completed package to RI Commerce in a timely manner.
 - 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 30 days via an ACH transfer.

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

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>
- 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.

3. 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
- Rhode Island Certificate of Good Standing (COGS)*
- Not be owned by a nationally or regionally owned franchise.
 - 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.

4. What documents do I need to submit to receive a grant?

You are required to sign and submit the following documents within 30 days of project completion in order to receive a Rhode Island Commerce grant:

- Rhode Island Commerce Grant Agreement
- Automated Clearing House (ACH) form
- W-9 Form from the Department of the Treasury Internal Revenue Service (IRS)
- Rhode Island Certificate of Good Standing (COGS)*
- Proof of project payment (paid receipt/ invoice, canceled check, bank statement or equivalent)
- Project Completion Form

5. *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](#).

6. 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.

7. 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.

8. 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.

9. 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.

10. 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 chart above.

11. 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.

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

Please allow a minimum of 30 days after submitting all required documentation to receive your reimbursement.

- 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 #13 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).

13. 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, you 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/>

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

No, only new projects that have not yet been completed prior to applying will be eligible for reimbursement. Energy audits/ assessments must be completed within calendar year 2026 to qualify.

15. 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.

16. 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.