

CRITERIA AND FUNDING GUIDELINES

The City of Cincinnati offers matching grants for owners of multi-family residential buildings to make energy efficiency upgrades. One-to-one matches of owners' dollars are available up to \$5,000 for each qualifying building. Funds are from Duke Energy Ohio and up to \$80,000 can be distributed per round. Review the following details carefully before applying.

Eligibility to Apply

- The building(s) must:
 - Be a multi-family (2 or more units), residential structure;
 - Be located within the City of Cincinnati;
 - Have at least 50% or more of tenants at or below 200% FPL. Please refer to this [Federal Poverty Chart](#) to determine whether a majority of your tenants fall within the 200% requirement.
- Tenants must have Duke Energy electricity bills for their unit in their names.
- Applicants can be non-profit or for-profit organizations. Individual landlords are also eligible.
- Past matching grant recipients are welcome to apply again with a couple of exceptions:
 - A single street address can receive grants totaling no more than of \$10,000 over multiple cycles
 - Those with yet to be completed matching grant projects open from an earlier round are unable to reapply until the present grant is complete and closed satisfactorily.

Program Requirements

- Proposed energy efficiency measures must be centered on improving electricity efficiency, not natural gas or water efficiency.
- Improvements proposed must directly reduce the cost of electricity bills and result in verifiable energy savings for low-income tenants upon analysis by the Office of Environment and Sustainability. To get an idea of the likely savings from your proposed capital investment(s) [visit here](#).
- Improvements proposed must meet or exceed [ENERGY STAR](#) standards. The necessary detail to verify each proposed technology's energy savings capacity must be provided in print via the quotes/estimates submitted as part of the application. The City will handle actual energy savings estimates as part of the review and decision making process.
- All presently approved technologies and efficiency specifications for each are included in our [Eligible Energy Efficient Technologies](#) document.
- Owners must present an application with at least a 1:1 match of requested funds;
- Only the hard cost of supplies and materials for upgrades are reimbursable in this grant. The City is unable to approve or reimburse for labor or tax-related project costs in the matching grant award. Please take this into account when calculating the matching grant amount requested.
- Matching grant awardees must:
 - Pledge to maintain pre-award rent levels and percentage of low-income tenants for at least two years following the award.
 - Register, at no cost, as a vendor with the City of Cincinnati and provide a W-9 form.

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Other Details:

- Owners are permitted to submit multiple applications in a given grant cycle. One complete application is needed for each street address. As competition for funds increases, the likelihood of multiple awards for a single owner is likely to decrease unless the savings and energy burden reduction is undeniable.
- This matching grant award functions as a reimbursement. Building owners who receive the grant are responsible for the following: purchasing materials, completing their proposed upgrade project within the established timeframe, scheduling and conducting a brief site visit after project completion, and submitting an invoice and proof of all payment prior to any reimbursement. All activities need to take place within the given quarter unless an extension is requested and granted. More detailed deadlines will be provided to awardees.

Application Process:

- An optional Pre-Application Info Session will be held a few weeks prior to each deadline. Register for the next virtual info session or view a recent webinar on the [OES website](#). Attending this will ensure you have the latest information regarding the program as it evolves.
- A complete submission includes a completed application with the project budget and all relevant quotes/estimates attached.
- All portions of the application need to be submitted online (preferred), email or mail (if submitting online is a barrier to participation). Applicants are encouraged to use the writable PDF to prepare the application write up in order to make online submission easier.
- Incomplete applications cannot be considered.
- Submissions will be evaluated based on completeness, eligibility, strength of alignment with program requirements and funding priorities, budget, clarity, and energy savings impact.
- The online application link as well as a writable PDF can be accessed via the City [website](#).

Funding Priorities:

Selection for matching grant investment will be influenced by the following priorities:

- Property located in a neighborhood proven to have higher than average energy burden:
 - a. Queensgate, Winton Hills, Villages at Roll Hill, English Woods, Millvale, West End, Lower Price Hill, Mt. Airy, Walnut Hills, Avondale, East Westwood, South Fairmount, Roselawn, North Fairmount, Evanston, and Westwood
- Upgrades planned that will provide the greatest opportunity for energy savings as guided by the [2010 Ohio Technical Reference Manual \(TRM\)](#)
- High percentage of tenants living at or below 200% of the FPL
- High number of households/units and overall individuals impacted by energy upgrades
- Owner demonstrates a history of preservation of affordable housing units and/or supportive housing and/or a participatory management system that maintains affordability of housing
- Building owners investing in energy efficiency measures beyond the 1:1 match and thereby increase the leverage of the matching grant dollars
- Buildings that have already completed an ASHRAE Level 2 audit and will use these grant funds to implement the audit recommendations (please submit documentation of the audit at application)
- Nonprofit applicants including: 1) Community Development Corporations that preserve affordable housing through partnerships and/or land trusts; 2) Organizations that provide and preserve affordable

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housing and/or supportive housing, and/or 3) Organizations with a participatory management system that maintains affordability of housing through collective ownership or leasing (i.e. renter equity)

Resources

- [Energy Burden on Low-Income, African American, and Latino Households Up to Three Times As High As Other Homes: More Energy Efficiency Needed.](#) (2016). American Council for An Energy Efficient Economy.
- [Energy Burden in the City of Cincinnati.](#) (2019). Greater Cincinnati Energy Alliance.
- [Understanding Cincinnati's multifamily housing stock: An analysis to improve access to energy efficiency for low-income households.](#) (2020). University of Cincinnati.

For more information on the Matching Grant Program, please contact:

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