

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)
K-12 Energy Enhancement Program (KEEP)

****Updated since originally published***

****Updated 5/30/2025***

1) What schools are eligible?

Idaho K-12 public schools located within rural school districts, according to Title V-B: Rural Education, Idaho Department of Education. A list of rural school districts can be found [here](#). Public charter schools and projects that would be located on facilities and other real property that is rented or leased by a school district under [Idaho Code §33-601\(1\)](#) are not eligible.

2) What is a shovel-ready, independent project?

Projects are shovel-ready when projects have received board approval and can begin construction within the next year. Independent projects must not share common contractors or materials with other school or school district projects.

3) What projects are eligible under KEEP?

- Installation of energy efficient lighting
- HVAC upgrades
- Weatherization, which includes weather sealing, replacement of windows and doors and insulation
- Purchase and installation of energy efficient appliances and equipment, including control systems, thermostats, furnaces, and air conditioners
- Retrofit of energy efficient pumps and motors in existing systems.

4) Where can an applicant find the scoring criteria?

The scoring criteria can be found in Appendix A of the KEEP RFA.

5) What topics in the application will be evaluated by the review committee?

- A strong need for energy improvements.
- Proposed project should reduce energy consumption and save energy costs.
- Proposed project generates a long-term benefit for the rural community.
- The rural community is in fiscal need.

- The rural community is able to adhere to administrative requirements.

6) What is a complete application?

A complete application must be signed by an authorized representative of the Applicant. Every question must be answered, and every form must be complete. OEMR will reject incomplete applications.

7) How soon will applicants be notified of their application status?

Applicants will be notified of their application in July of 2025.

8) How soon do projects need to be completed?

Projects are encouraged to be shovel-ready, independent and completed prior to the period of performance date (September 30, 2028).

9) When will the informational webinar be held?

April 9, 2025, at 3:30 MST

10) If applicants are unable to attend the webinar in person, will there be a recording of the webinar applicants can access later?

Yes, a recording of the webinar will be posted to OEMR's KEEP webpage.

11) Are projects that are below \$200,000 subject to Build America Buy America (BABA) requirements?

No, the Department of Energy applies the Small Grants Build America Buy America waiver to the domestic content procurement requirement for projects that are under the Simplified Acquisition Threshold of \$250,000 for subrecipients. Projects over \$250,000 are not eligible for the Small Grants Build America Buy America waiver and will be subject to requirements under BABA under Subtitle IX of the IIJA, Public Law 177-58, and 2 CFR part 184. UNINTENTIONAL APPLICATION OF THE WAIVER SUCH AS SPLITTING OF PROJECTS OR OTHER ACTIONS TO KEEP BELOW THE THRESHOLD IS PROHIBITED.

12) If total project costs exceed \$200,000, can a school district cover the additional cost and have the project still be eligible?

No, total project costs exceeding \$200,000, regardless of funding sources, will be rejected.

13) Are all applicants required to undergo a Section 106 State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) review?

Yes, applicants are encouraged to consult with SHPO before submitting their application. Applicants can find the SHPO Consultation Form on the KEEP webpage or in the RFA as Attachment 3.

14) How can an applicant determine if their proposed project is eligible?

Applicants should refer to Attachment 2, Categorical Exclusion, SEP-IIJA-ALRD-20022A Section 7 and Attachment 1, Programmatic Agreement, Appendix B for a list of eligible projects.

15) Where can an applicant find requirements regarding public works construction?

The following applicable Idaho codes address requirements associated with public works construction.

- [Idaho Code Title 67, Chapter 28](#)
- [Idaho Code Title 54, Chapter 19](#)

16) What type of equipment/appliance upgrades would qualify for funding through the program?

Upgrading existing appliances are eligible under KEEP so long as the equipment is energy efficient and can show a reduction in energy usage, per [Attachment 1: Programmatic Agreement](#) and [Attachment 2: NEPA Determination, Section 7 \(e\)](#). Both documents can be found on OEMR's website under Application Documents for Interested Applicants.

***Updated 4/22/2025**

17) Is this funding already awarded to OEMR or is there a possibility that it could be revoked by the Department of Government Efficiency?

OEMR has received confirmation from the Department of Energy (DOE) to proceed with programs funded through current Assistance Agreements with DOE. KEEP is funded through OEMR's current SEP-BIL Assistance Agreement, Award No. DE-EE0010069.

As with any federally funded grant program through OEMR, payments are subject to the availability of federal funds and pursuant to Idaho State Legislature appropriations. OEMR reserves the right to terminate any agreements, in whole or in part, if, in its sole judgement, the Legislature of the State of Idaho, United States Congress, DOE, or other applicable federal agency or entity, withdraws or freezes the State's federal funding or fails, neglects, or refuses to appropriate or provide sufficient funds.

18) I have an HVAC project that consists of a rooftop unit replacement along with the installation of two gas makeup air units. Do each one of those count as an activity? Or is it considered one activity?

Replacement of the HVAC unit would be considered one activity under the proposed project. Additional tasks associated with replacing the HVAC, such as installing air units, would not be considered a separate activity.

19) Is \$1M HVAC project eligible if outside funding is added?

No, total project costs cannot exceed \$200,000. Applications with total project costs exceeding \$200,000, regardless of funding source(s), or where additional funding is provided by a rural school district, will be rejected.

20) Can you elaborate more on what an independent project is?

A project is considered independent if it can meet the Program Goals outlined in Section B of the RFA on its own and does not exceed a total cost of \$200,000.

To be eligible, the project must not be a partial component of a larger effort that relies on additional phases or components to achieve the Program Goals. For example:

Eligible: Replacing HVAC ductwork is considered an independent project if it integrates with an existing system that will meet the Program Goals with just the new ductwork.

Not Eligible: If the ductwork only helps achieve the goals when combined with other upgrades—such as new HVAC units and controls—and the total cost exceeds \$200,000, then the project would not be considered independent or eligible.

21) Schools can apply for up to 3 applications each, but you cannot use the same contractor. Correct?

School districts can submit up to 3 applications, but only 1 school can submit an application. An application can include multiple eligible activities, involving multiple buildings within the school, so long as the eligible activities fall under the eligible categories found in [Attachment 1: Programmatic Agreement, Appendix B](#) and [Attachment 2: NEPA Determination, Section 7](#) and do not exceed \$200,000. The same contractor can be used for each activity, so long as federal, state and local procurement procedures are properly followed.

22) Are there any other grant opportunities available or coming that you know of that could be used for larger projects?

Currently, OEMR is unaware of additional grant opportunities available to schools to complete similar projects with a higher dollar value. OEMR encourages those interested in grant opportunities to [sign up for our newsletters](#) or visit the [OEMR website](#) for additional information.

23) How long do we have to complete projects?

Projects should begin construction within the next school year and must be completed by the end of the grants period of performance by September 30, 2028.

24) When can we expect reimbursement after a completion report is submitted?

After the Subrecipient submits a completion report and meets all of the requirements for reimbursement, OEMR will reimburse all eligible costs within thirty (30) days.

25) We received an energy audit that identified several potential energy efficiency projects. If we were to tackle them all, project costs would well exceed \$200,000. Would the projects identified be considered one large project and therefore ineligible, or can we select individual projects identified to apply for funding?

You may select individual projects from the audit as activities to include in your application, provided that each activity can meet the Program Goals independently of the other identified projects that are not part of the application. Applicants must review [Attachment 1: Programmatic Agreement, Appendix B](#) and [Attachment 2: NEPA Determination, Section 7](#) for a detailed list of eligible projects. Total project costs cannot exceed \$200,000. Applicants should carefully choose projects that fall below this threshold and can stand alone in meeting Program Goals.

26) Would replacing a dated and inefficient boiler system be an eligible project?

A boiler can be eligible as long as it falls under one of the categories listed below and in the [Attachment 1: Programmatic Agreement, Appendix B](#) and [Attachment 2: NEPA Determination, Section 7](#) and total project costs do not exceed \$200,000.

- Installation of energy efficient lighting
- HVAC upgrades
- Weatherization, which includes weather sealing, replacement of windows and doors and insulation
- Purchase and installation of energy efficient appliances and equipment, including control systems, thermostats, furnaces, and air conditioners

- Retrofit of energy efficient pumps and motors in existing systems.

27) How much funding can each school within one school district request in a single application?

A rural school district may submit up to three separate applications, one per school, with each application requesting up to \$200,000. This allows a maximum total request of \$600,000 per district

28) Would a non-Energy Star high efficiency appliance qualify as an eligible appliance or does the appliance have to have an Energy Star label?

No, while the appliance does not need to have the Energy Star label it must show a reduction in energy usage and the appliance needs to be energy efficient per [Attachment 2: NEPA Determination, Section 7](#), and [Attachment 1: Programmatic Agreement](#). **Updated 4/22/2025*

29) Would replacing an inefficient kitchen appliance, such as a freezer for a school be an eligible project under KEEP?

A freezer in a school cafeteria can be eligible as long as it falls under one of the categories listed below and in the [Attachment 1: Programmatic Agreement, Appendix B](#) and [Attachment 2: NEPA Determination, Section 7](#) and total project costs do not exceed \$200,000.

- Installation of energy efficient lighting
- HVAC upgrades
- Weatherization, which includes weather sealing, replacement of windows and doors and insulation
- Purchase and installation of energy efficient appliances and equipment, including control systems, thermostats, furnaces, and air conditioners
- Retrofit of energy efficient pumps and motors in existing systems.

30) Is this program a first-come first-served application program?

The K-12 Energy Enhancement Program is a competitive grant program. The application period closes on May 30, 2025. After May 30, 2025, OEMR will review applications for completion and eligibility. If eligible application funding requests exceed total funding available, a separate review committee will evaluate and score applications. The highest scored applications will be awarded until the total funding available limit is reached. All applicants will be notified of the status of their application no later than July 30, 2025.

31) Would inefficient outside lighting in a school's football stadium be eligible for replacement?

Installation of energy efficient lighting on school property can be eligible as long as it falls under one of the categories listed in the [Attachment 1: Programmatic Agreement, Appendix B](#) and [Attachment 2: NEPA Determination, Section 7](#) and total project costs do not exceed \$200,000.

32) Can you please confirm whether we would be allowed to submit one application that includes HVAC upgrades along with window sealing and thermostat replacements under the same project?

An applicant can include multiple eligible activities, involving multiple school buildings, within one application so long as the activities fall under the eligible categories listed below:

- Installation of energy efficient lighting
- HVAC upgrades
- Weatherization, which includes weather sealing, replacement of windows and doors and insulation
- Purchase and installation of energy efficient appliances and equipment, including control systems, thermostats, furnaces, and air conditioners
- Retrofit of energy efficient pumps and motors in existing systems.

Activities such as HVAC upgrades, window sealing and thermostat replacements fall under the eligible categories and can be recognized as one project, even if they are completed within the school's multiple buildings and total project costs do not exceed \$200,000.

33) If a school campus includes both a middle school and a high school housed in separate buildings. Would we be permitted to submit two separate applications, one for the middle school and one for the high school, each requesting up to \$200,000 as long as the projects are independent?

If the middle school and the high school are one school, (e.g. ABC Junior/Senior school) the school can only submit one application. If the middle school is its own school and the high school is its own school then each school can submit one application, each requesting up to \$200,000, if the projects are independent. **Updated 5/1/2025*

34) Do we need to ask OEMR for permission to apply or do we just complete the documents on this website: <https://oemr.idaho.gov/programs/k-12-energy-enhancement-program/>?

Eligible rural public schools as defined in Idaho Code [§33-319](#) do not need to ask OEMR in advance for permission to apply to the K-12 Energy Enhancement Program. Schools interested in applying for the grant can access the application [here](#). Applications should be submitted to alexa.bouvier@oer.idaho.gov with the subject line “Idaho KEEP Application [School Name, School District Name] no later than 11:59 PM MST on May 30, 2025.

35) Is there an estimated timeline for when award notifications will be released following the May 30, 2025, deadline?

Yes, OEMR intends to notify all applicants of their application status no later than August 1, 2025. Those applicants whose applications scored the highest will receive a conditional award letter. During the conditional award period, which is anticipated to last approximately 60 days, applicants must:

- Work with the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) to determine what effect, if any, the applicant’s proposed project may have on a historic property
- Complete an introduction call with OEMR
- Submit any requested follow-up documentation to OEMR

Once conditionally awarded applicants complete tasks listed above, OEMR shall execute at its discretion a Subaward Agreement with the Subrecipient. Refer to Section E “Application Review” in the [RFA](#) for information regarding the application review process.

36) When are award notifications and funding expected to be disbursed?

Please refer to the response under question 35 in this FAQ regarding award notification expectations.

Project costs incurred prior to execution of the Subaward Agreement shall be ineligible for reimbursement. This includes any costs incurred during the application review and conditional award phases. Funds will be disbursed as reimbursement at project completion for successful applicants. Applicants are encouraged to review Section D “Funding” in the [RFA](#) for additional information regarding the funding process.

37) Are there any sample applications that have been completed that applicants can look at?

No, OEMR does not provide sample applications. Appendix A of the [Request for Application](#) provides a complete list of the criteria that the review committee will refer to when evaluating applications.

38) I have one of my school grants done, but it is pending the ICRIS review. Do you want me to wait to send in my grant application until I have the results, or can I send it in now?

Applicants may submit their application without the ICRIS review being completed. While completing an ICRIS review during the application period is not required, OEMR strongly encourages applicants to consult with SHPO before submitting their application to identify and incorporate any potential impacts to the budget, timeline, and scope that may result from a SHPO consultation. Applicants can also resubmit any previously submitted applications up until the application deadline of May 30, 2025 at 11:59PM MST.

39) My school was built in 1985, so it is under the ICRIS/SHPO requirement for age. Will I need to submit this project to ICRIS?

Applicants who receive conditional award letters after the application period closes will be required to submit their project to ICRIS and work with the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) to determine what effect, if any, the applicant's proposed project may have on a historic property. A detailed description of Section 106 can be found under "Federal Requirements," Section B and Appendix C within the [Request for Application](#).

40) I'm aware that KEEP applicants can submit up to three applications for one school district, assuming that each application corresponds to an individual school. I want to confirm however that a school district can alternatively submit one application for a project that would span three schools in their district. Specifically, for a lighting upgrade, it makes sense to lump all three schools into one application assuming the total cost is under \$200,000.

No, a school district cannot alternatively submit one application for a project that would span three schools in their district. A separate application must be submitted for each school within a school district. A rural school district can submit no more than three (3) applications.

41) When I input information that goes beyond the box provided in the application, it doesn't roll into a new page. This makes the information unviewable. Do you have a different format, such as Word or Docs?

No, applicants must use the pdf format to submit their [application](#). Applicants are encouraged to provide concise yet complete responses to each question within the application. Should an applicant need additional space to respond to a question, they can attach supplemental documents. Supplemental documents must identify the specific section within the application the document is addressing. For example: Section C: Energy Impact, Topic 1.

42) I am getting ready to send in the KEEP application and was hoping to ask you a few questions. Is there a contact number I can reach you at?

All questions shall be submitted in writing via email with the subject line “Idaho KEEP Application Question [School Name, School District Name].” OEMR will answer questions within three (3) business days via the public [FAQ](#) document linked above.

43) I have three program applications I would like to submit soon, but I need some clarification. I have read through the paperwork and know the subject line information. Do you want everything (Application & Budget) in one PD for each proposal? Or do you want separate PDs?

OEMR prefers the Application and Budget to remain separate PDFs, however, submitting them as a single combined PDF is also acceptable.

44) It states that we have to submit our UEI with the submission. Where do you want that information?

Applicants may include their UEI in the body of the email when submitting their application. OEMR will follow up to verify the UEI number with any applicants who did not include it prior to issuing a Conditional Award.