



Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments

American Recovery & Reinvestment Act Regional Information Center

COG Initiative: Regional Home Energy Conservation Program

Situation and Opportunity:

The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 appropriated \$3.2 billion for the Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grant (EECBG) Program for fiscal year 2009. The Program provides federal grants to units of local government, Indian tribes, states, and U.S. territories to reduce energy use and fossil fuel emissions, and for improvements in energy efficiency. The EECBG Program is administered by the Office Weatherization and Intergovernmental Program in the Office of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy of the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE).

Local governments are increasingly developing programs to address energy efficiency and conservation. Green building strategies are also increasing, with energy efficiency as a key component. Of particular interest are current efforts to assist the single-family homeowners to make an energy efficiency improvement or install a renewable energy device. For example, recent proposed legislation ties home energy loans to a homeowner's evidence to having a "certified" home energy audit. There is significant potential to achieve regional consistency for energy audits, as well as regional consistency for home energy loan programs, now that the Virginia legislature has passed enabling legislation for local governments.

Issues

How can the National Capital region leverage funding to ensure consistent and high quality energy audit certification standards and training? How can COG assist its members with implementing home energy loan programs that take advantage of stimulus funding and other potential federal funding?

Solutions:

(1) Facilitate development of a consistent regional energy auditing qualification and certification standards. (2) Identify grant options for using stimulus funding (ARRA Energy Efficiency Block Grants and/or Department of Labor Training Grants) to support job training for home energy auditors. (3) Facilitate sharing of best practices to enable COG members across the region to implement home energy efficiency and renewable energy loan programs.

Goals:

Use ARRA stimulus funding to assist in the regional implementation of home energy loan programs; new "green jobs" in energy auditing, training, and home energy efficiency retrofits; promotion of renewable energy applications for homeowners.

Outcomes:

- Consistency in energy auditing certification across the region.
- Expand pool of trained energy auditors to meet expected increased demand resulting from implementation home energy efficiency loan programs.
- Significant increase in home energy efficiency and distributed renewable energy utilization, thereby assisting with meeting regional energy conservation and greenhouse gas reduction goals.