

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT (CDBG)
ENERGY EFFICIENCY GRANT
PROGRAM GUIDELINES

I. WHAT IS THE PROGRAM?

The Village of Oak Park Energy Efficiency Grant Program (“Program”) was established to provide financial assistance to Owner(s) who desire to reduce their home’s consumption of energy. The Village of Oak Park intends to use Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds to administer this grant program for low- and moderate- income households. The program intends to offset a portion of the expense that a homeowner will incur to complete home improvements that will increase energy efficiency. Energy efficiency upgrades lead to savings on utility bills, improved indoor air quality, improved home comfort, and reduced greenhouse gas emissions. Eligible homeowners may qualify for the program by providing proof of permanent ownership of the property, income eligibility, and energy upgrades completed. The program was established to provide financial assistance to homeowners who may qualify for a Grant of the cost of energy efficiency improvements, up to a maximum of \$5,000.00 per application.

II. HOW DOES THE PROGRAM WORK?

The Village will reimburse either the Owner(s) or the contractor directly upon written request for items related to the conservation of energy, such as by upgrading a dwelling unit’s insulation, water-saving fixtures, and furnaces. An Owner(s) may apply for reimbursement up to \$5,000 of the total cost of the installations under the Program for purposes of increasing building energy efficiency. Each of the approaches has different costs, degrees of disruption, and levels of efficiencies. The provisions of the most recently adopted International Energy Conservation Code (IECC), the International Building Code (IBC) and the International Existing Building Code (IEBC) by the Village of Oak Park shall be applicable to all projects submitted under this program.

III. WHAT WORK IS COVERED UNDER THIS GRANT PROGRAM?

This Program covers energy efficiency installation measures. The following are eligible costs that may be covered as part of this program.

1. Insulation
2. Weather stripping
3. Conservation costs for water and energy efficiency
4. Energy-efficient lighting, including automatic light sensors or timed light sensors
5. High efficiency faucets
6. Energy efficient windows
7. Electric heating, venting, and air conditioning (HVAC)
 - i. Electric air or ground source heat pump (when paired with a gas system, only the electric components are eligible for the grant.)
 - ii. Air conditioners with higher SEER than that which is being replaced.
 - iii. Smart Thermostats installation and thermostat upgrades
8. Upgraded electric water heater
9. Air sealing
10. Upgrade of electrical panels or wiring to support electrification measures.

The costs associated with any measure completed in a manner or using materials which do not meet the requirements of the Village's Specifications or Codes will be considered non-eligible for reimbursement from this program.

All the eligible measures, **require a permit from the Village**. It is the responsibility of the homeowner to ensure that the appropriate permits have been obtained before work begins. Permit fees associated with grant funded projects are eligible for reimbursement and may be waived by the Village. Projects(s) must be proposed for completions, during the year in which the application is submitted.

IV. WHO IS ELIGIBLE?

A. Eligibility of Owners

The Program is intended to benefit low- to moderate-income households. Such households are defined as households with an income below 80% of the Area Median Income (AMI) for the Chicago Metropolitan Statistical Area including Cook County, as defined by U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). An Owner(s) will self-certify that their household income meets these requirements, which the Village reserves the right to verify in its discretion. Owner(s) of two to four unit buildings will self-certify that the household income of 51% of their tenant units meets these requirements, which the Village reserves the right to verify in its discretion.

An Owner(s) will be considered ineligible for the Program if:

1. An Owner(s) owes any unpaid taxes or water bills or other debt to the Village;
2. The Owner(s) has any unpaid final judgments of liability from the office of Adjudication which are due and owing;
3. There are any unpaid Village liens on any property owned by the Owner(s);
4. The Owner(s) is not current on any other Village obligations, or otherwise is not in compliance with requirements of the Village Code, including but not limited to multi-family licensing, alarm permit, or vacant building registration requirements; or
5. The applicable property for which an Owner(s) seeks a grant has previously been the subject of a grant under the Program under a different owner.

B. Eligibility of Village Employees

Eligible Owner(s) who are also Village Employees are eligible for the Program in accordance with the Village's Conflict of Interest and Ethics Ordinance.

C. Eligibility for Other Village Housing Programs

Participants in the Program may be eligible for multiple grants and loans that are available through the Village of Oak Park. Other programs include the following.

1. Climate Ready Energy Grant
2. Residential Energy Efficiency
3. Residential Rehabilitation Loan Program
4. Sewer Backup Protection Grant Program
5. Small Rental Property Rehabilitation Loan Program
6. Oak Park Energy Navigator
7. Climate Ready Energy Loans

Participants of the Residential Rehabilitation or the Small Rental Property Rehabilitation Loan Programs must wait one (1) calendar year from completion of a project before being eligible for an energy efficiency grant, as funding allows.

D. Eligibility for Other Energy Efficiency Programs

Participants may be eligible for other energy efficiency assistance programs, including free programs. Participants will be asked to document their efforts to access these free programs prior to the provision of Village assistance. Staff will connect applicants with these programs if needed. Below are such free programs.

1. ComEd or Nicor energy efficiency programs
2. Elevate Multi-Family energy savings offering

V. WHAT PROPERTY TYPES ARE ELIGIBLE?

A. Owner Occupied Up to Four Units

Eligible properties are owner-occupied single-family dwellings containing one to four units. For condominium units, improvements can only be made to those areas within a unit which the Owner(s) of the unit has authority to change, alter or improve, as defined by the condominium declarations, by-laws, and/or other rules and regulations as issued and adopted by the applicable condominium association or board. Improvements to common elements and limited common elements, including window or door repairs and replacements, are not eligible for the Program. A condominium unit is defined as a single-family dwelling.

B. Clear Title

The Owner(s) must have clear title to the owner-occupied dwelling unit, without any cloud on the title, not including any prior recorded consensual liens such as a mortgage or deed of trust. The Owner(s) must be the sole title holder of the dwelling unit which will undergo project rehabilitation, unless an acceptable release is obtained from any person on the title agreeing to an additional encumbrance.

VI. HOW DO I APPLY?

A. Steps

The following are the steps to participate in the Program.

1. An Owner(s) is encouraged to schedule a home energy assessment and be able to provide a final report of the findings which supports the need for the chosen improvement and estimated energy savings. Free assessments may be available from Nicor or ComEd as well as through Village programs.
2. An Owner(s) must complete an application and submit it to the Neighborhood Services Department;
3. An Owner(s) must apply for any necessary building permits. **Permits are required** for all eligible costs. An applicable general contractor and all subcontractors must be properly registered in the Village of Oak Park and must submit evidence of insurances and licenses; and,
4. An Owner(s) is responsible for selecting an applicable contractor. The Owner(s) is required to obtain at least three (3) bids for the work. The applicant may select a contractor from any of the bids so long as the differential between the bids is not greater than 50%.

B. Priority

Applications will be processed on a first come, first served basis. The Program will expire when all grant funds are expended.

VII. PROGRAM MANAGEMENT

A. Application and Eligibility Review

The Village will review a completed application for an initial determination of eligibility.

B. Ineligibility

If the Owner(s) is ineligible, the Village will notify the Owner(s) of the reason for ineligibility. If the reason for ineligibility is due to an outstanding debt, judgment or code compliance issue, the Owner(s) may re-apply after such matters have been satisfied. For purposes of determining priority, the Owner(s)'s place in line will be based upon the date of reapplication if initially determined to be ineligible

C. Limitations of Funding

Participants in this program can only apply once a year for an energy grant and can only be a recipient of funds a maximum of two times for a property, if funding is available.

D. Agreement

Upon approval of an application, the Owner(s) will be required to sign a Grant "Homeowner Participant" Agreement.

E. Building Permits

The Owner(s) must obtain permits from the Village before a contractor may begin any work. All work must be properly permitted and inspected by the Village.

F. Payment of Requests for Reimbursement

Upon completion of any applicable work, the Owner(s) must submit a Request for Reimbursement Form. The form must be accompanied by the following:

1. Contractor's mechanics lien waiver (if electing to pay contractor directly);
2. A copy of the Owner(s)'s proof of payment to the contractor and/or final paid invoice;
3. A certification from the contractor that the Owner(s) paid for the work; and
4. A final inspection report (if applicable).

In those cases where the Owner(s) requests that payment be made directly to a contractor, the Owner(s) must sign a payment authorization form, "Contractor Payment Agreement" and provide applicable mechanics' lien waivers. The Village will agree to pay a contractor directly upon proof that the Village's payment is the only outstanding payment to be made to the contractor.

If a Request for Reimbursement is completed in conformance with the Program requirements, payment will be made by the Village within thirty (30) days of approval of an invoice. Please advise that approval of invoice is separate from final invoice confirmation by Neighborhood Services to Homeowner.

