



News Release

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SBA Awards Energy Efficiency Grants To Assist Small Businesses

WASHINGTON – Four Small Business Development Centers, one each in Idaho, Nebraska, Nevada and New York, have been awarded Small Business Sustainability Initiative grants totaling \$500,000 to fund projects offering energy efficiency assistance to small businesses, the U.S. Small Business Administration said today.

The programs proposed by the successful grant winners include providing education, training, energy efficiency audits, information about adoption of energy efficiency and energy conservation practices, and help with purchasing and installing energy efficient building fixtures and equipment.

Small Business Development Centers selected to receive the grants are –

- The New York Small Business Development Center at the Research Foundation of the State University of New York, Albany, NY
- The Nevada Small Business Development Center at the University of Nevada, Reno, NV
- The Nebraska Small Business Development Center at the University of Nebraska, Omaha, NE
- The Idaho Small Business Development Center at Boise State University, Boise, ID

SBA selected the grantees from among a highly competitive pool of applicants, based on the breadth and scope of the services they could provide promoting energy efficiency. The proposals offered innovative and imaginative approaches to respond to the rising needs of small businesses for information about practical steps they can take toward greater energy efficiency.

The New York State SBDC and its partner organizations plan to coordinate their resources to provide energy audits for small businesses with substantial energy consumption. They will also educate small business owners to help them identify energy savings and make “efficient energy” decisions. The SBDC and its partners will advise small business owners about energy opportunities relating to green buildings, renewable energy sources such as solar and wind, and improved environmental performance.

The Idaho SBDC, which has traditionally used student teams and interns to help small businesses, intends to use this student model to develop and implement an energy audit program. The SBDC held a one-day energy efficiency audit training in January 2008, presented by the Pennsylvania EMAP program staff, for state and local governments and nonprofit organizations. The training involved practice conducting energy efficiency audits. The SBDC plans to replicate this methodology to train student interns in Idaho.

The Idaho SBDC's environmental assistance coordinator also has established relationships with utility companies and economic development professionals to deliver energy efficiency training for small businesses. These training sessions have been used as focus groups to determine the best methods for delivering energy efficiency information to small businesses. The SBDC intends to use the results of these focus sessions to reach out to and educate greater numbers of small businesses.

In Nevada, the Nevada Small Business Development Center plans to build on its experience and involvement with the U.S. Department of Energy's Rebuild America building energy efficiency retrofit program, the Nevada State Office of Energy, the major Nevada Electric Utilities, the U.S. EPA and the Nevada Division of Environmental Protection to provide energy audits and help small businesses evaluate and implement energy efficiency measures. It also will offer education about renewable energy generation, constructing high performance green buildings, and developing and commercializing clean technology products, goods, services and processes. It plans to help small business concerns improve environmental performance using source reduction approaches, i.e., toxic reduction, waste and emissions minimization.

The Nebraska Small Business Development Center will provide energy efficiency screening, help businesses find financing opportunities for energy efficiency improvements and quantify the benefit of energy savings of such projects. The proposal includes creating a "roadmap" to guide counselors and small business owners through the use of the best tools and information resources currently available about energy efficiency and waste reduction.

All grant recipients will employ technology including webcasts and streaming video to reach out to and educate small business owners about energy efficiencies and services available through their SBDC networks.

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