

IDAHO OFFICE OF ENERGY RESOURCES
STATE ENERGY PROGRAM FORMULA GRANTS
AMERICAN RECOVERY AND REINVESTMENT ACT
INITIAL APPLICATION

3. Planned Activities

a. Idaho Energy Efficient Schools:

The Office of Energy Resources (OER) will create a direct grant program for energy efficiency projects targeting existing k-12 public school buildings. Grant dollars will be distributed across the state to fund private energy auditors to perform audits on all school buildings. OER will pay for retrofitting school buildings revealed as the best efficiency opportunities in the state.

This venture will reduce utility costs for school districts in Idaho and will have a direct increase in employment opportunities for energy efficiency auditors, HVAC technicians, lighting contractors, control experts, construction/installation workers, and manufacturers and vendors of energy efficiency technologies.

b. Idaho Solar Panels for Schools

The Office of Energy Resources will launch a progressive pilot project that utilizes solar power to offset energy costs at public schools. This distributed generation concept allows schools to displace energy that would otherwise be purchased to service the building. Additionally, existing net metering tariffs allow energy to be sold to utilities from projects such as this when the energy produced exceeds the needs of the facility.

OER will develop pilot projects that will install solar panels at public schools buildings. The intent is to determine the value of this distributed generation resource by assessing its ability to reduce energy consumption and general a potential new revenue stream.

Idaho's energy consumption is heaviest in the summer months when the school buildings are largely empty. Solar energy potential in Idaho is greater during the summer months, which heightens the opportunity to generate net metering revenue during peak summer hours from solar panels installed on school buildings that are vacant and have lower energy requirements. This provides an additional energy resource during peak summer load periods. This proposal can provide the necessary data to examine opportunities for similar scalable projects to assist Idaho utilities in serving loads during peak summer months.

The schools selected for this project must already have achieved a high level of energy efficiency. Buildings that are already energy efficient represent the best opportunities to explore the potential benefits of the distributed generation and net metering potential this project seeks to examine.

c. Idaho Renewable Energy Projects

This program will provide a means to assist the development of energy production projects and the start up of renewable energy equipment manufacturing in Idaho.

The purpose of this project will be to establish supplemental funds in Idaho to provide financing for new renewable energy projects and re-tooling for expansion of renewable energy manufacturing opportunities.

Possibilities include providing co-funds to bring energy manufacturing to Idaho. Manufacturing opportunities might include manufacturing that produce wind turbines, solar energy technologies and other renewable energy projects. Renewable energy resource opportunities will be enhanced while increasing manufacturing jobs in the state.

Another opportunity could be to work with the Idaho Energy Resource Authority (IERA) to support bond financing for renewable energy production projects. The IERA is an “instrumentality of the state” empowered to sell revenue bonds to finance (i) generation, transmission and distribution facilities of electric utilities with a nexus to Idaho and (ii) renewable energy electric generation facilities. The state Treasurer is empowered to purchase fixed rate long-term IERA bonds that are investment grade and this ability to do so is an attractive alternative to the IERA for smaller scale projects and bond financings.