**How to use the Clean Energy Incentive Toolkit for States**

Today, dozens of free federal incentives are available to help businesses, organizations, and families **cut energy costs, upgrade buildings, generate renewable energy, and modernize transportation at more affordable prices.** However, with information spread across the internet and different government offices, it can be confusing and overwhelming for individuals and organizations to take advantage of these cost-saving opportunities.

RMI created this toolkit for states to streamline information on key federal incentives into one place for constituents: a clean energy incentive hub. The toolkit is comprised of proposed content and structure for states to upload to their websites.

**Clean Energy Incentives State Checklist**

* Create a clean energy incentives hub webpage using RMI content
* Build out your hub by adding in state, utility, and local incentives
* Increase accessibility to the hub with translation offerings and a technical support office with a phone number, email, and mailing address
* Promote the hub with outreach and engagement in person, online, and through traditional media
* Make it easier for constituents to utilize incentives with programmatic updates
* Pass policies that support statewide energy and cost savings

# Creating your own online clean energy incentive hub

With the influx of new federal programs, finding information can be complicated. States can provide clarity by publishing a compilation of all the information constituents need to use these government incentives on one webpage.

## Use RMI-provided content to quickly develop a basic clean energy hub

This toolkit is comprised of customized content for three audiences: households, businesses, and tax-exempt organizations (such as local governments, nonprofits, and schools). Each audience has a customized resource with tailored summaries of new energy incentives, project ideas, application information, timelines, key links, and program requirements to increase access and understanding. In addition to the online version, you can download a Microsoft Word version of the audience content pages in English and Spanish to make it easier for web design teams to upload content.

**States should create an energy savings incentive resource hub webpage on a high-traffic public engagement-focused website.** The website should be created in coordination with state government agencies and offices.

RMI recommends a central homepage highlighting a combination of benefits mentioned in the section above that most appeal to the state and constituency. The homepage would lead to three incentive pages, one for each audience: households, businesses, and tax-exempt entities. Each of these web pages would include the content from RMI’s toolkit audience pages. These pages can include expandable and contractable links so website users can pick what information is relevant to them. States are encouraged to customize content to meet their needs.

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## Incorporate state, local, and utility incentives into the hub for maximum savings

To make this online incentive hub a place individuals can go to get all the information they need about applying for incentives, states should add relevant state, local, and utility-level incentives. Relevant state, local, and utility incentives should include any rebates, tax credits, tax deductions, tax exemptions, and any other financial incentives that make it more affordable to do building, transportation, and energy projects.

State, local, and utility programs should be added to relevant audience pages under their respective project category. States can reach out to utilities and local governments to compile information on community incentives directly from the source. To aid this process you can use this downloadable spreadsheet as a way to collect incentive information from local governments and utilities.

These subnational additions can either be a one-sentence summary with a link to the relevant official incentive webpage or a more comprehensive description that mirrors the structure of the federal incentive descriptions in the toolkit audience pages (including information on what qualifies, incentive value, who is eligible, when the incentive is available, and how to claim the incentive).

In addition to providing information on specific incentives, the hub is a great place to aggregate statewide related clean energy and energy efficiency resources, websites, and portals.

## Increase accessibility of clean energy incentive hub content

* **Translate resources as needed** to serve the spoken languages of the population. RMI has created a Spanish translation of the audience resource pages. Use translation services to create versions of the webpage in languages other than English.
* **Create a technical support office** to answer questions and provide information to individuals less comfortable with online technology. The technical support office can include a telephone hotline to answer questions and read information, a mailing address to request information, and an email address to answer questions.

## Promote the hub with outreach and engagement

To ensure the webpage is successful, outreach and engagement is important to increase visibility. Below are some suggestions to maximize the reach of your energy savings incentive resource webpage with individuals across the state.

* **Work with utilities to create a joint outreach plan** to promote the website. Utilities are consumer-facing organizations due to regular billing which provides many natural engagement opportunities. Strong platforms to promote the hub can include the utility customer login homepage online, mailed bills, email newsletters, email bills, and flyers.
* **Publish and post promotional website flyers and posters** with QR codes at relevant physical state-owned locations such as the Department of Motor Vehicles, Department of Treasury or Tax Offices, and Parks.
* **Send staff, set up tables, and speak at existing events.** The state sends clean energy, sustainability, energy office, and transportation representatives to promote the hub and answer questions.
* **Host in-person or virtual stakeholder meetings, town halls, or workshops** to educate people about the incentives available and the resource center. To reach a broad audience across the state, you can host educational radio segments, podcasts, or webinars to educate constituents. These can be targeted at specific audiences such as communities, types of organizations, or specific industries. To maximize impact, focus on strategic, targeted audiences that are key suppliers or buyers of the incentivized technologies. Examples include car dealerships, large fleet owners, and building industry professionals such as window, appliance, heating and cooling retailers, installers, and contractors.
* **Cross-link the hub webpage** across other relevant state agency webpages. Relevant webpages that could link to the hub include agency websites on subjects such as building permitting, building retrofits, taxes, vehicle registration, energy generation, or manufacturing.
* **Create a social media and public engagement strategy** to promote the incentive resource hub. Use multiple platforms to reach diverse audiences such as X, LinkedIn, radio, YouTube, Facebook, Instagram, and TikTok. The incentive may be promoted alone or with examples of project savings.

# State action can make it easier for businesses and families to take advantage of state, local, and utility programs

Below you will find a list of strategic projects for states that would increase impact and make it easier for constituents to use government incentives.

* **Align program requirements across state, local, and utility programs.** Work with program administrators to adjust applicant, income, technology, and other requirements across programs, aligning with federal requirements where possible. This will simplify the landscape of incentives for potential users.
* **Create a qualified contractor list** for incentives so constituents can more easily find vetted vendors who meet program requirements.
* **Standardize and streamline statewide program applications.** Work across agencies to standardize program applications and processes. Consider creating a universal state application where applicants could upload supporting and personal material for all relevant programs. Coordinate with utilities and local governments to consolidate application processes.
* **Fill gaps in current programs to provide comprehensive whole home retrofit services** including upgrades for health and safety, weatherization, energy efficiency, appliance electrification, and energy assistance. This may involve the creation of new statewide programs. The one-stop shop should create a single point of entry to all low-cost whole home retrofits within the state.
* **Create resources on how different state, local, utility, and federal incentives can be combined on a single or related projects**. These “stacking” resources should include guidance on timelines for when during the project each incentive is used and how the incentive value may increase or decrease based on how they are combined.
* **Monitor and measure incentive uptake**. Track usage statistics to understand how well each program is being used. Include equity indicators to see how equitable program access is and identify underserved populations.

# Pass policy to drive economic, health, and environmental benefits

Federal incentives have also changed the economics of the clean energy economy and it’s now easier to implement more ambitious energy efficiency and clean energy policies. States can pass policies to proactively drive the clean energy transition to **attract new clean industries to their state, develop the workforce, and improve air and water quality leading to stronger public health.**

States can pass policies to proactively drive the clean energy transition.

* Address risks and barriers with supportive policies that enable clean energy projects, such as updating permitting codes to expedite EV charging.
* Create new complimentary incentives to further subsidize strategic clean energy projects, such as a tax credit for electric bikes.
* Pass standards to mandate certain cleaner technologies over time or at certain adoption timelines, such as appliance pollution standards or bans on new gas lines.

Check out RMI’s [*State Energy Policy in a Land of New Federal Opportunity*](https://rmi.org/state-energy-policy-in-a-land-of-new-federal-opportunity/)publication which highlights five high-impact clean energy policies and ties them to federal funding available to help pay for these state energy policies.

Beyond the incentives included in this toolkit for constituents, there is more funding available for states to help pay for state energy policy. For a comprehensive list of federal funding available to states use the [America’s Federal Funding Opportunities and Resources for Decarbonization (AFFORD) tool.](https://cityrenewables.org/ffold/?_sfm_resource_policy_type=Whole-home%20energy%20retrofit%20program)

# Statewide benefits

These new incentives make it more affordable for families, businesses, nonprofits, and local governments to make cost-saving upgrades.

RMI analysis found that [one in every seven households in the United States live in energy poverty](https://rmi.org/1-in-7-families-live-in-energy-poverty-states-can-ease-that-burden/), but using new funding policies states can help alleviate that burden. In 2023, households already took advantage of [$8.4 billion in residential tax credits](https://rmi.org/bring-in-the-billions/) to save money on home and vehicle upgrades. With these new incentives, households can get 30% off rooftop solar installation, $600 off an energy-efficient air conditioner, or $1,000 off the installation of an EV charger at home.

New incentives go beyond the consumer and help lower the costs for businesses, local governments, and nonprofits to invest in energy efficiency and clean energy. Organizations can now get up to 30% off the cost of electric vehicles, $100,000 off electric vehicle charging stations, 30% off solar projects, and 30% off geothermal heat pumps.

**Why should states promote incentive uptake?**

States are trusted voices within the community and can help play a key role in educating the public about new government-sponsored energy-saving opportunities. Increasing uptake of these incentives through education and outreach would provide cross-cutting benefits.

**Co-benefits of increasing uptake of energy-saving incentives**

* **Directly help local businesses, families, local governments, schools, and nonprofits save money** by using free government programs to lower their energy costs
* **Make buildings and homes more comfortable and efficient** with incentives that make capital improvements and upgrade projects more affordable than ever before
* **Improve energy resilience against extreme weather events and volatile global pricing** by generating local and on-site renewable energy
* **Reduce air pollution and improve public health** by electrifying transportation and energy systems
* **Attract private and public sector investment** to build out new or existing clean energy industries as businesses gain a competitive advantage from new cost-saving government incentives
* **Help organizations meet pollution reduction goals** with clean, efficient technologies

*If you are a state interested in building an energy savings incentive center and have any questions please reach out to* [*states@rmi.org*](mailto:states@rmi.org)