

Vice President Biden Unveils Home Retrofit Plan for Energy Efficiency

Vice President Biden released on October 19 the "Recovery Through Retrofit" report, which lays out a plan to help U.S. residents upgrade the energy efficiencies of their homes. The scheme aims to increase green jobs and save energy through residential retrofits. At the same time, DOE issued a solicitation that offers \$454 million in American Recovery and Reinvestment Act funds—including \$390 million for a "Retrofit Ramp-Up" program—to support energy efficiency efforts throughout the country.

At a Middle Class Task Force meeting earlier this year, the vice president asked the White House Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) to develop a proposal for federal action to lay the groundwork for a self-sustaining industry for home energy efficiency retrofits. Their response comes in the October 19 report and includes these federal recommendations: provide U.S. homeowners with home energy retrofit information, including an energy performance label for existing homes; get past cost barriers by making financing more accessible, including long-term municipal loans repaid through the owners' property tax bills, a concept known as Property Assessed Clean Energy (PACE); and establish national workforce certifications and training standards, creating a uniform set of national standards to qualify workers for energy efficiency retrofits. See the Recovery Through Retrofit report ([PDF 485 KB](#)). [Download Adobe Reader](#).

DOE's new solicitation will support the retrofit objectives with a series of "Retrofit Ramp-up" awards, ranging from \$5 to \$75 million, for states, local governments, and Indian tribes. DOE seeks innovative programs that are highly leveraged, are broadly replicable and scalable, can achieve cost savings when scaled up, and are likely to be self-sustaining beyond the funding period. The programs should achieve high-quality retrofits for a large fraction of the buildings within entire neighborhoods and communities, and they can include PACE programs and programs that employ [Home Performance with Energy Star](#), a national program from DOE and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. DOE also offered \$64 million in energy efficiency grants for local governments and state-recognized Indian tribes that are not eligible for direct funding under DOE's Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block ! Grant Program. Applications are due on December 14. See the [DOE press release](#), download the full solicitation ([PDF 395 KB](#)), and see the solicitation postings on [grants.gov](#) and [FedConnect](#).