

ENERGY EFFICIENCY AND CONSERVATION  
BLOCK GRANT (EECBG) PROGRAM

# Key Activities Summary

## Blueprint 1: Energy Planning

This Key Activities Summary provides a concise overview of the **Energy Planning Blueprint**. DOE plans to provide technical assistance support to all entities who select this Blueprint, which may include one-on-one attention from DOE or national lab experts, webinars, and peer learning opportunities.



# What

A strategic energy plan is a long-term roadmap to focus and guide efforts and actions toward a defined energy vision. Plans catalog existing energy consumption, sources, users, articulates goals, develops strategies and actions to meet the goals, and identifies resources needed to ensure effective completion of these strategies.

A strategic energy plan enables organizations and communities to make decisions that are:

- » **Proactive**—by outlining deliberate actions based on clearly articulated government and community priorities.
- » **Comprehensive**—by encompassing a broad scope, based on community priorities, that identifies and pursues high payoff opportunities through coordinated planning and sustained effort.
- » **Structured**—by providing defined and thoughtfully organized guidance through a specific plan for action.
- » **Long-term**—by supporting decisions that require multi-year investments and/or multiple project and planning stages and identifying a series of steps to undertake as funds and resources become available.
- » **Enduring**—by establishing a path forward that will maintain relevancy beyond a current administration and can include development of policies and procedures to institutionalize energy-saving practices across the organization and over time as staff change.

By seeking input from stakeholders across the community and intentionally tailoring engagement opportunities to involve disadvantaged communities and groups that face participation barriers, equitable outcomes can be better identified, prioritized, and incorporated into future energy and infrastructure investments.

## LEAD Tool

The **Low-Income Energy Affordability Data (LEAD) tool** is an interactive map that displays average energy burden data by state, county, city, tribal area, or census tract. Data can be sorted by income level and housing type and illustrates energy burden disparities.

## INTRODUCTION

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# Why

State, local, and tribal governments spend billions of dollars a year on energy to provide public services and meet constituent needs. In many buildings, energy costs can be reduced by 20 percent or more through energy efficiency measures.<sup>1</sup> Governments, organizations, and communities have the potential to reduce waste and reallocate savings by developing a plan that focuses on energy use in their own buildings and operations (e.g., City Hall, public schools, wastewater treatment plants, streetlights, transportation fleet) or in the broader community. Thoughtful goals and thorough planning paired with intentional stakeholder engagement will foster buy-in and can guide public investments towards high value and popular projects.

Energy plans – whether for your organization or for your community – can identify areas of opportunity to reduce energy use and energy waste, switch to different energy sources, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, anticipate increased energy needs and associated infrastructure, and/or improve resiliency. By undertaking an energy planning process, organizations and communities can be strategic; instead of undertaking decisions on a reactive or single-project basis.

### Smart Communities Plan First - Program In a Box

Provided by NASEO and E4TheFuture, the [Smart Communities Plan First - Program In a Box](#) is an example of planning to support municipal investments in clean energy and is structured around designing, developing, and implementing an energy plan.

<sup>1</sup>Source:

**State and Local Government  
Energy Financing Primer | Better  
Buildings Initiative**

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# Key Activities

These selected Key Activities are suggestions of important steps a government could take to begin or make progress on their energy planning journey. EECBG Program awardees that utilize a blueprint will receive expedited application review from DOE. Applicants must execute at least one of the key activities listed under each selected blueprint but should avoid going beyond the recommended activities. Going beyond these key activities may trigger additional reviews of your EECBG Program project to ensure you're meeting National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), historic preservation, and/or other federal regulations. While each step is important, they should be seen as a guide. Awardees should determine their own priority activities based on their local context.

Detailed information about these activities can be found in the [Guide to Community Energy Strategic Planning](#) resource document. DOE also has several other tools available that can help to reduce the overall expense of energy planning.

- 1 **Stakeholder Engagement, Education, and Outreach**
- 2 **Energy Data Collection to Establish a Baseline**
- 3 **Develop an Energy Vision, Goals and Strategies**
- 4 **Write, Adopt & Publicize Plan**



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# Stakeholder Engagement, Education, and Outreach

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To develop an energy plan, you will need the support and participation of multiple types of stakeholders. Some will be on your team and will help develop and guide the plan throughout the process; others will inform and shape portions of the plan or specific topics.

» **Set Up Your Team** - A strong team, including a champion, project manager, support staff, and possibly consultants, will ensure the energy plan has the internal backing and staff needed to support plan elements as they go into effect once the plan is completed.

» **Identify and Engage Stakeholders** - Engaging stakeholders to collect input, opinions, priorities and reactions will ensure the energy plan is human-centered and focused on issues that matter most to constituents. Create a review panel, hold a virtual meeting, ask for formal public comments, or just share a draft with key community members. Bottom line – get some feedback on your plan prior to publication! Start by mapping your stakeholders – identify who they are, when you will request input during your planning process, and when and how progress updates will be provided.

## Key Resource

Below are a sampling of guides to stakeholder engagement created by state and local governments:

» [\*\*Stimulating Energy Efficiency through Collaborative Stakeholder Engagement—Kentucky:\*\*](#)

The Kentucky Department for Energy Development and Independence's 'Stimulating Energy Efficiency Action' program (SEE KY) engaged more than 80 stakeholders to promote energy efficiency to meet growing energy demands.

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# Energy Data Collection to Establish a Baseline

Developing an understanding of how your community uses energy and the sources of its fossil fuel and greenhouse gas emissions is the first step to energy planning. It's important to know which data sets are available to help your community establish a baseline and measure progress towards your goals.

## Key Resource

[SLOPE tool data viewer](#) illustrates several modeled datasets at the state and county levels, including energy consumption and transportation fuel use, energy efficiency and renewable energy potential, social vulnerability index, energy burden data, and clean energy job estimates.

## Key Resource

Utilities may be able to provide consumption data at the jurisdiction level aggregated by sector. Contact your energy providers to confirm.

## Case Study

[City Energy: From Data to Decisions](#)

### SLOPE Tool

The [State and Local Planning for Energy \(SLOPE\) Platform](#) is an easy-to-access online platform to support data-driven state and local energy planning. SLOPE includes two distinct tools to support planning needs:

- » **Scenario Planner:** Compare scenarios for the future of energy, costs, and emissions for counties and states.
- » **Data Viewer:** Explore city, county, and state data on renewables, efficiency, and transportation.

# Develop an Energy Vision, Goals and Strategies

This step is the “meat & potatoes” of energy planning. Tangible long-term goals and nearer-term strategies provide a pathway from the conceptual energy vision to concrete, cost-effective actions. Prioritizing strategies and aligning them with potential funding sources will result in an actionable plan.

## Key Resource

[SLOPE Tool Scenario Planner](#)

## Case Study

The City of Knoxville, TN (population 180,000) set a goal to reduce its energy intensity by 20% by 2020. Facing the prospect of failing to reach this goal due to the lack of a unified plan to implement energy efficiency improvements, the mayor launched the Energy and Sustainability Task Force in 2007 made up of local private and community leaders and City department heads to begin shaping the City’s sustainability program. To help them develop their plan, they used a national non-profit’s online inventory tools to quantify their baseline energy use, costs, and greenhouse gas emissions. Read more about the project here: [Knoxville, TN: Designing a Comprehensive Energy Plan | Better Buildings Initiative](#)



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## KEY ACTIVITIES

# Write, Adopt & Publicize Plan

The last phase of the planning process is to prepare a plan, present it for formal adoption, and publicize it to the broader community. This plan is a roadmap for you to understand your state/community's energy future, where things stand today, set your long-term vision, and articulate the goals, strategies, and actions you will take to achieve that vision. It also incorporates the implementation blueprint, including responsible parties, timelines, financing strategy, and process for tracking progress.

## Next Steps to Get Started

Indicate your interest in energy planning by emailing the DOE EECBG Program at [community@hq.doe.gov](mailto:community@hq.doe.gov) and join an EECBG Program Energy Planning cohort. DOE can help connect you with the National Renewable Energy Laboratory (NREL) to receive free technical assistance to begin your planning journey.