



Leveraging Experts and Incentives to Maximize Performance

Before you begin to implement energy efficiency measures, there are a few key considerations to make in order to maximize the impact of upgrades and achieve the greatest financial return on investments.

Check Energy Programs and Incentives in Your Area

Often your local utility, state agency, or other organizations in your area administer programs that can give you financial and/or technical assistance to help you improve the energy efficiency of your building.

Before you begin any energy efficiency projects at your office building, check to see if:

- **Your utility offers free or discounted energy audits.** Energy audits are comprehensive reviews aimed to evaluate the actual performance of a building's equipment, processes, and systems to identify opportunities for improved performance and determine what actions can be taken to reduce energy use. Assessing your energy performance helps you to:
 - Understand the contribution of energy expenditures to operating costs.
 - Develop a historical perspective and context for future actions and decisions.
 - Establish reference points for measuring and rewarding good performance.
- **Your utility or local energy programs offer any rebates or incentives for efficiency projects.** Many local agencies and utilities offer financial or technical assistance that can help you improve the energy performance of your commercial office building. Check out the resources below to see what benefits local energy efficiency programs are offering in your area.
 - **[DSIRE:](#)** Learn about policies and incentives that support renewables and energy efficiency in the United States.
 - **[Directory of energy efficiency programs leveraging ENERGY STAR:](#)** Find local programs and organizations that provide incentives, expert help, and benchmarking assistance, plus those that offer Portfolio Manager web services.
 - **[ENERGY STAR Rebate Finder:](#)** Find rebates and special offers near you on ENERGY STAR certified products.

Service and Product Providers

Service and product providers are companies that offer energy management assistance to help commercial buildings run more efficiently. Many also offer innovative financing options and can help you identify, prioritize, and implement energy projects that not only cut costs and offset greenhouse gas emissions, but can make your building more comfortable, too.

The selection of experienced, competent providers and other energy professionals is critical to the success of your energy efficiency project. **Here are some guidelines to keep in mind as you choose a company:**

- Ask for multiple current references that you can contact about work the company performed.
- Ask the company to provide a cost-estimate in writing for any work they will do.
- Make sure they are licensed and insured.
- The company should certify that their work conforms to state and local regulations and codes.
- Verify that the company carries workers' compensation insurance.
- Make sure the company has experience and will use energy-efficient equipment.
- Ask whether the company is an ENERGY STAR partner.

Check out this [list of all ENERGY STAR Service and Product Provider partners](#) to start improving your building's energy performance today!