Chicago Region Retrofit Ramp-up (CR3): Frequently Asked Questions

What is the Chicago Region Retrofit Ramp-up (CR3)?

Businesses and residents of northeastern Illinois -- including Chicago, Rockford, and suburbs -- will benefit from federal stimulus incentives to create a regional marketplace for improving energy efficiency of buildings through the Energy Efficiency Conservation Block Grant – Retrofit Ramp-Up program. CR3 is an initiative designed to create a sustainable marketplace where every home, business, and institution has access to the information and financing needed to retrofit their building. To reach our energy goals, we must significantly increase the number of building retrofits; to do this, CR3 will invest in key strategies that make it easier for building owners and residents to get a retrofit and easier for workers to provide retrofit services. CR3 will provide a web based information portal so building owners can get the data they need to understand the benefits of a retrofit and to access information on the financial resources available to complete a retrofit. A major component of CR3 will be partnering with financial institutions to develop and support a range of financial products, including low interest loans and provide the guarantees banks need to lend in this emerging market. CR3 is funded with a $25 million award from the Department of Energy but will leverage more than $500 million in private capital and other resources.

CR3 does not provide direct grants to municipalities or building owners for retrofit activity. The purpose of CR3 is to develop the market infrastructure that will support a sustainable energy efficiency market for years to come through developing information systems, financial products and through coordinating workforce development.

Who is administrating this grant? Who is participating?

CR3 was developed as a joint effort between a number of stakeholders, led by CMAP and the City of Chicago Department of Environment. These stakeholders will continue to provide guidance on the development and deployment of the grant, and to ensure that it is strategically consistent with the over-arching retrofit strategy of the key market players. CMAP, as the lead agency, will be responsible for the administration of the grant.

How do building owners participate?

Building owners that are interested in retrofits or want to learn more about the benefits of a retrofit will have access to an online information portal to find out what kind of retrofit activities make the most sense for their building, and obtain information on the programs available. In addition, information on financial and other resources will be easily accessible so building owners can determine what financial incentives are available and how to access private capital. Information on qualified contractors and other retrofit service providers will also be easily accessible at the site.

How do municipalities participate?

CR3 is not a direct grant program, however, it will invest in strategies to coordinate information and bolster financial products so that various building sectors can better access resources through the private and public sector to retrofit buildings. The CR3 will not sub-grant funds to

municipalities, but will invest in the financial products aimed at helping the retrofit market flourish.

How can retrofit service providers participate?

CR3 will work to organize the vast but fragmented amount of information on retrofit service providers through a web based information portal. The aim of CR3 is to bolster demand for retrofit activity throughout the region.

Are there eligibility requirements?

In conjunction with the private sector, CR3 will work to develop new financing products that all building sectors will be able to access. Building owners will be able to seek loans and other financing options from lenders, including banks and other financial entities.

When will the program be available?

The award was announced on April 21st, 2010, and the CR3 team is working with the U.S. Department of Energy to begin implementing CR3 as quickly as possible. The development of the services and investment in the strategies is targeted to begin in the summer of 2010 so that the online information portal and financial resources would be available in early to middle of 2011.

Where can I go to get retrofit resources now?

There are a number of resources currently available to obtain information on home retrofits. These include websites supported by your local utility. In addition, the CUB Energy Saver website provides a unique set of tools to determine current energy usage for homeowners. You can also find information on HVAC contractors through the Midwest Energy Efficiency Association website. Finally, retrofit program providers, including the Community Economic Development Agency (CEDA), can provide information on their programs.

How do I stay updated on CR3?

Stay informed of CR3 developments by subscribing to CMAP's weekly email and bi-weekly Recovery Act Newsletter

Stay informed on Request for proposals related to CR3 by subscribing to the mailing list http://www.cmap.illinois.gov/rfp/email.aspx

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