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Chicago area gets $25M grant for green buildings

By: Paul Merrion April 21, 2010

(Crain's) — The Chicago region won a $25-million stimulus grant to boost energy-efficiency projects for residential and commercial buildings.

The goal is to retrofit at least 9,500 buildings over three years, creating about 2,000 jobs and energy savings of 30% by better coordinating and simplifying the process of applying for a variety of public and private sources of funding for weatherization and energy-efficiency projects.

Chicago was one of 25 communities awarded a total of $425 million in Recovery Act grants for energy retrofit projects.

“We want people to have one place to go, a one-stop shop” for energy retrofit information and funding, said Randy Blankenhorn, executive director of the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning, which received the grant in partnership with Chicago and Rockford. “The real problem is, people want to do this, they just don’t know how.”

In addition to a Web site and call center, CMAP is working with Commonwealth Edison, Peoples Gas and Nicor to unify marketing and establish a brand for the region’s energy retrofit programs.

CMAP also plans to work with local banks on new loan programs and loan guarantees tied to energy efficiency, said Mr. Blankenhorn, with a goal of leveraging $300 million from financial institutions.

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