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# Affordable energy efficiency funding for Illinois nonprofit and public organizations

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September 15, 2011

The State of Illinois' energy efficiency policies have resulted in over \$150 million being available *annually* for programs and incentives to help Illinois building owners and operators reduce energy usage. Two Illinois organizations have programs that focus on helping public and nonprofit organizations assess and reduce energy usage, by identifying energy efficiency incentives and low cost financing options, as well as guidance in choosing qualified contractors.

The IFF, formerly known as the Illinois Facilities Fund, is a nonprofit lender that specializes in real estate services. IFF has programs to assist Chicago and Rockford area nonprofits to identify energy consumption issues, and then helps them finance the retrofit work with qualified contractors. The IFF will make loans to nonprofits that (1) achieve at least a 25% reduction in energy consumption, or (2) result in energy upgrades that achieve energy efficiency at least 15% or greater than applicable building codes. For small nonprofits, the IFF works to identify opportunities for them to bundle energy audits, financing and implementation services to make energy efficiency upgrades affordable.

Another organization called the Smart Energy Design Assistance Center (SEDAC) provides energy assessment services and funding for public and private building owners who are customers of Ameren, ComEd, Nicor Gas, North Shore Gas, and Peoples Gas. The School of Architecture at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign manages the SEDAC program. SEDAC

also provides retro-commissioning training to the public building sector for buildings that are more than five years old and at least 150,000 square feet. Retro-commissioning is like giving a building's mechanical operations a big tune-up. Often the return on investment to conduct a retro-commission pays for itself in less than a year, making it an attractive option for cash-strapped organizations.

Why is Illinois focusing on reducing energy usage in buildings? According to SEDAC, nearly 75% of all electricity consumed in the United States is within residential and commercial buildings. The technology used to heat and cool and light a building can have a big impact on energy consumption patterns, as can the manner in which people operate within a building. By having an organization like IFF or SEDAC review your organization's energy consumption patterns, your organization will have the information necessary to make wise decisions that will help make energy affordable and dependable for your organization for the long term.

If your organization is a nonprofit, school, public k - 12 school, community college or public university, or state, federal or local (county, township, municipal, public safety, water and park districts) government facility, please contact the IFF and SEDAC to learn how your organization can begin reducing energy costs.