

1 **2024 RES-080**

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3 **AMENDING THE OFFICE OF ENERGY & CLIMATE CHANGE BUDGET TO ACCEPT AN ENERGY EFFICIENCY**  
4 **AND CONSERVATION BLOCK GRANT FROM THE US DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY**  
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6 The Office of Energy & Climate Change (OECC) was established to lead countywide climate action  
7 efforts. To spur climate action OECC makes local stakeholders aware of state and federal resources that  
8 can help individuals and entities pursue clean energy projects to save energy and money, expand access  
9 to family-sustaining careers in clean energy, and leverage resources to expand equity and environmental  
10 justice in Dane County. Consistent with Dane County’s 2020 Climate Action Plan, OECC prioritizes  
11 equity—making sure that all Dane County stakeholders see benefits of our transition to clean energy.  
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13 Since passage of the federal Inflation Reduction Act in fall 2022 the OECC team has prioritized making  
14 Dane County residents, businesses, nonprofits, local governments and school districts aware of the  
15 many funding opportunities available in the legislation. State officials and other stakeholders have  
16 praised OECC’s efforts to increase awareness of funding opportunities, with many noting that the OECC  
17 webpages on federal tax credits are the best in the state.  
18

19 To date, OECC’s efforts have focused on increasing awareness of the tax credits and parallel Elective Pay  
20 credits for tax-exempt entities; these federal resources are enormously valuable for organizations and  
21 for more affluent households that have funds to invest up front in clean energy projects. However, tax  
22 credits are less useful to low and moderate income households. Beginning this fall, though, the State of  
23 Wisconsin will roll out new instant rebate programs that help low and moderate income households  
24 reduce their energy costs. Accordingly, OECC staff have been strategizing about how to ensure local  
25 households take advantage of these new opportunities.  
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27 As part of the federal 2021 Infrastructure Investment & Jobs Act (IIJA), Dane County is eligible to receive  
28 a \$266,890 Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grant (EECBG). This is a formula funding grant,  
29 based on Dane County’s population.  
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31 The US Department of Energy (DOE) administers the EECBG funding. DOE created a set of ‘blueprints’  
32 for EECBG funds; entities can expedite DOE approval of their grant funds if they use one or more of the  
33 blueprints. Additionally, DOE strongly encourages all EECBG recipients to make sure that at least 40% of  
34 their EECBG funds target populations historically underserved by energy conservation programs; this is  
35 consistent with the Biden Administration’s Justice40 initiative. OECC staff opted to leverage DOE’s  
36 blueprints for Energy Efficiency / Electrification Campaigns and Workforce Development.  
37

38 As part of the plan development OECC staff sought input from about a dozen local community-based  
39 organizations that serve populations that have been historically underserved by energy programs. Staff  
40 also met with officials at Focus on Energy and Madison Gas & Electric to discuss strategies for reaching  
41 underserved populations.  
42

43 OECC’s EECBG plan is to contract with three (3) community-based organizations to build those  
44 organization’s capacity to support increased household participation in the new clean energy rebates as

45 well as existing programs that provide low-income support for energy efficiency. OECC will select the  
46 organizations via an RFP. OECC’s priority is for organizations to focus on households with incomes  
47 between 60% state median income and 80% Dane County area median income because those  
48 households will be newly eligible for substantial instate rebates under the new federally-funded  
49 program.

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51 OECC will provide funding, training and support to the three selected community-based organizations so  
52 that they can help their constituents—whether homeowners or tenants—take advantage of energy  
53 programs. The organizations will increase household awareness of programs and also provide one-on-  
54 one support to households so that households overcome barriers to participation. And as part of this  
55 effort OECC will also work with the organizations to develop career pathways so that more community  
56 members can pursue family-sustaining clean energy careers.

57  
58 DOE has been enthusiastic about OECC’s proposed model. On June 28, 2024 DOE showcased the OECC  
59 approach in their press release about newly approved EECBG efforts. Additionally, DOE is providing  
60 OECC with a Community Energy Fellow, a full-time staff resource located at OECC and funded by DOE,  
61 for 18 months to support the County’s EECBG work.

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63 OECC will dedicate at least \$240,000 of the \$266,890 to fund the three community-based organizations.  
64 The remaining funding will be used to train the staff at those organizations and to provide them with the  
65 supplies and support they need for outreach and engagement.

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67 Although this is one-time funding, state agencies have indicated interest in providing additional funding  
68 to local outreach efforts. OECC intends its model to empower the participating organizations to be  
69 poised to pursue additional funding as it becomes available.

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71 The climate action funding available under the Biden Administration is unprecedented; it provides an  
72 amazing opportunity to address long-standing inequities in household energy burdens. OECC’s objective  
73 with this program is to partner with community-based organizations so that the households that can  
74 benefit the most from this funding are empowered to participate in the available programs.

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76 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the County Executive and County Clerk are authorized to  
77 execute the grant agreement for the EECBG program; and

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79 BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED that the County Board approves amending the Office of Energy & Climate  
80 Change budget by increasing the following accounts:

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82	OECC NEW	“EECBG Grant Expense”	\$266,890
83	OECC 83167	“EECBG Grant Revenue”	\$266,890

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