



Energy Savings for Schools Program Frequently Asked Questions

The Energy Savings for Schools (ESS) program builds off of many years of the Colorado Energy Office's programmatic work in the K-12 area and schools across Colorado have been able to save energy and money through energy audits and implementation support. As one example, Cripple Creek Victor Re-1 school district (CCV) saved 20% in electricity costs by working with the Colorado Energy Office's K-12 program in 2012. Not only is the district saving money from the improvements each year, it has improved the reliability of its building automation system; saved on operation and maintenance costs; improved the quality of lighting for the bus barn; and improved occupant comfort for elementary school students, teachers, and staff.

Is my school eligible to participate in the ESS Program?

All schools in Colorado are eligible for consideration and any school that is interested in participating is encouraged to apply. Strong preference will be given to schools located in rural parts of Colorado, particularly in areas where residents also have low annual incomes. The Colorado Department of Education categorizes school districts according to how rural they are (view the Data Center tool [here](#)), while U.S. Census Bureau data on income determines areas of low income. Schools in rural parts of Colorado that are interested in ESS are encouraged to contact the program manager to begin the application process or fill out an application.

What are the main steps in the process?

Once a school fills out an application, the ESS team will screen it for need based on certain factors, such as location, income, and commitment from school leadership. Schools that are accepted into the program will be asked to sign a memorandum of understanding (MOU) and agree to program Standards for Success to ensure a level of commitment to make the project successful.

To kick off the project, the ESS team will first collect and review the school's energy utility data. The audit team will then schedule an on-site visit to walk through the school and its grounds to identify opportunities to save energy and water and, if applicable, explore renewable energy opportunities. The team will then prepare a report with recommendations and help the school prioritize next steps to get projects completed, including helping identify funding and contractors. Throughout the process, the ESS team will work in partnership with each school and provide support and coaching along the way.

How much time is required of school staff and what expertise is needed?

The ESS Program provides start-to-finish support to help schools manage their energy and get projects done. We anticipate that over the course of engagement with an individual school (up to 12 months from initial application to implementation), approximately 20 to 30 hours of school staff support time may be required. This will include filling out a program application, compiling and sending energy utility data, reviewing an audit report and recommendations, overseeing projects, and participating in webinars and recognition events. Supporting staff do not need to be energy experts. In smaller schools a principal, a teacher, or other staff member may be the primary point of contact.



How much will my school save on utility bills?

The degree of energy and cost savings will vary from school to school depending on age, type of equipment, and other factors. All participating schools, however, are expected to achieve measurable energy and cost savings from participating in the ESS Program as well as other benefits, such as optimized systems and improved teacher and student comfort.

Are there costs to participate?

There are no direct monetary costs for a school to participate in the ESS Program. The only costs for which a school will be responsible are associated with staff time to interact with the ESS team and any costs to implement projects after utility rebates and other funding and financing have been applied.

Can students participate?

Yes! We encourage student participation to provide hands-on learning opportunities about saving energy and water. Our audit reports and recommendations will be provided in a format that's easily transferrable to curriculum or other student activities. We also can provide opportunities for students to shadow our audit team, or explore other options.

What happens during the site visit?

Members of the energy audit team will meet with you and walk through your school building and grounds to identify opportunities to save energy and water. Audits will take anywhere from a few hours to a day to complete depending on the size of the building and the complexity of its systems.

How long does the process take?

Overall, the process from filling out an initial application to helping schools install and implement projects varies, but the ESS program goal is to complete the process for each school within 12 months. Once a school and the Colorado Energy Office sign an MOU, an on-site audit and renewable energy assessment will be scheduled within the next two months.

Who will be helping us?

The Colorado Energy Office's program administrator, Brendle Group, is a Colorado-based consulting firm that frequently works with schools on energy management and sustainability. Brendle Group's team of energy engineers and program experts will be your main point of contact and will work with you throughout the process.

When can I get started?

An applications form is available on the ESS Program website at bit.ly/CEOenergysavings. Applications can be submitted to ESS@brendlegroup.com and will be accepted on a rolling basis, with the capacity to serve up to 24 schools over the course of the next year.

What other programs are supported by ESS?

The ESS Program supports, and in turn is supported by, a number of CEO and other related programs including the Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency for Schools (REEES) loan program, Supplemental Environmental Projects (SEPs), High Performing School Program (HPSP), Energy Performance Contracting (EPC), and the Renew Our Schools Program (RNOS). For more information about these programs visit bit.ly/CEOenergysavings.