



American-Made Challenges

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2025 Renew America's Schools Prize

Funding energy efficiency and renewable energy projects at public K-12 schools to lower energy costs and improve indoor air quality.

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Stage:
Informational Webinar

Prize:
\$4,200,000

Background

The U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) launched the \$500 million [Renew America's Schools Program](#) to promote the implementation of energy improvements at K-12 public schools across the country. This is a first-of-its-kind investment made possible by the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law. The program supports the implementation of infrastructure improvements in schools, with a focus on local educational agencies (LEAs) that qualify as rural and/or high poverty. The program will help create healthier learning environments, lower utility costs, and redirect funds to support students and teachers.

The Renew America's Schools Program released its first round of funding in 2022 with the [Renew America's Schools Grant](#). In March 2024, the program announced applications were open for a second round of funding, the [2024 Renew America's Schools Prize and Grant](#). This opportunity advanced its efforts to stimulate investments in the K-12 energy infrastructure sector and create pathways for school districts across the country to plan, finance, and implement energy upgrades. To date, the Renew America's Schools Program has invested \$372.5 million in public school districts across America, supporting capacity-building initiatives for energy management at over two dozen Local Educational Agencies (LEAs), and funding improvement projects at approximately 410 facilities across 36 states - directly benefitting approximately 197,000 students and 14,000 teachers.

The 2025 Renew America's Schools Prize implements a prize-to-cooperative-agreement funding model to streamline and expedite the application process and provide winners earlier and more targeted support. Like the 2024 Renew America's Schools Prize, the 2025 Renew America's Schools Prize will fund energy-efficient and clean energy infrastructure improvements at school districts across America.

Prize Overview

The 2025 Renew America’s Schools Prize, a \$90 million investment in K-12 public schools across the country, was launched by DOE in December 2024 and the application period will close in April 2025. This three-phase opportunity will help districts build capacity, perform energy audits, and plan/implement energy improvement projects across a portfolio of school facilities.

The 2025 Renew America’s Schools Prize consists of three phases. During Phase 1, competitors will build teams and curate lists of at least 10 schools and school facilities that demonstrate compelling need and eligibility for investment. Up to 14 Phase 1 Winners will earn a cash prize of \$300,000 for successfully building teams and submitting compelling applications identifying need. DOE will down select to identify winners who may move on to Phases 2 and 3, wherein they will enter and execute Cooperative Agreements with DOE.



Guidelines

Successful competitors will:

1. Establish the need for both energy improvements and financing across the proposed portfolio
2. Demonstrate overall team capacity to manage projects across the portfolio

3. Propose a comprehensive plan for executing Phase 2 (energy auditing and design) activities
4. Engage in replicable, strategic partnerships to build capacity at LEAs/across the K-12 sector, while leveraging funds to enhance the impact of federal dollars
5. Establish a strategic approach to delivering community benefits that advance the following goals:
 - Community and labor engagement
 - Investing in job quality and workforce continuity
 - Advancing diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility (DEIA)
 - Contributing to the Justice40 Initiative.

Questions?

- Review the official rules for the complete application process and instructions for competing.
- Review the 2025 Renew America's Schools Fact Sheet (see 'Resources' tab in HeroX).
- Review the 2025 Renew America's Schools Q&A Spreadsheet (see 'FAQ' tab in HeroX).
- Join the informational webinar: **Tuesday, Jan. 7, 2025 at 3 p.m. ET** (see HeroX Platform for Zoom Link)
- Join prize office hours:
 1. Office Hours #1: **Wednesday, February, 12th, 2025 at 3 p.m. ET** (see HeroX Platform for Zoom Link)
 2. Office Hours #2: **Wednesday, March 12th, 2025 at 3 p.m. ET** (see HeroX Platform for Zoom Link)

If you want to receive updates on the prize or have any questions, please follow this HeroX page or email us directly at schools@doe.gov.

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