

**The Better Buildings Case Competition
Office of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy
U.S. Department of Energy**

WELCOME TO THE BETTER BUILDINGS CASE COMPETITION

President Obama's Better Buildings Initiative

To build upon the energy efficiency investments made under the Recovery Act, The Administration announced the Better Buildings Initiative in February 2011. This effort, co-led by former President Clinton and President Obama's Council on Jobs and Competitiveness, is a broad, multi-strategy initiative ultimately designed to reduce the energy intensity in the commercial and industrial sectors by 20 percent by 2020, and to catalyze revolutionary change in energy use across US buildings. These end goals are being achieved through a portfolio of federal, state, and local policies, as well as a strong focus on the private sector. Some of the components of the Initiative include tax incentives for building efficiency, new financing opportunities for commercial retrofits, a streamlined and more efficient approach to retrofit project planning, and an emphasis on the next generation of professionals working within the retrofit industry. Additionally, The Better Buildings Challenge serves as a cornerstone of the Initiative by calling on corporate chief executive officers, university presidents, and state and local leaders to make a substantial commitment to energy efficiency. As Challenge Partners make progress toward these commitments, they simultaneously develop solutions to the many barriers to energy efficiency that have previously limited the energy efficiency marketplace.

The Better Buildings Case Competition

As part of its support for the Better Buildings Initiative, the DOE is holding its second annual Better Buildings Case Competition on the White House Campus on Friday, March 8, 2013. University teams will tackle cases that focus on a number of the most common, most stubborn barriers to energy efficiency in both the private sector and in state and local settings. The cases use real scenarios, information, and data provided by partner companies and municipalities that are tackling these barriers in their organizations. Through the Better Buildings Case Competition, the Department of Energy challenges university students to develop creative and innovative technical and business solutions for specific problems in the energy efficiency industry.

General Timeline and Next Steps

Please review the following sections and refer to the BBCC website for more information.

- On December 3, Secretary Chu announced the second annual Better Buildings Case Competition via e-mail. The materials contained here were included and were also made available on the BBCC website.

- On December 11, from 2-3pm EST, the DOE will hold an informational conference call to review the framework and details of the competition. You must RSVP by e-mailing BBCC@ee.doe.gov by December 10. Put “RSVP” as the subject, and type the names and e-mail addresses of all attendees in the body of the email. Please also include any questions you may have about the Competition in this e-mail.
- By December 17, universities must confirm participation in the competition by submitting the required preliminary registration form made available in this e-mail (as well as on the BBCC website). University teams will not be required to list their final team members until a later date.
- In early January 2013, registered university teams can expect the cases and detailed proposal guidelines, as well as a final timeline for the remainder of the competition, to be delivered via e-mail. Each participating team will be assigned two cases. Teams will then have approximately one month to complete a 10-page written proposal for each case, and formalize their list of team members. A proposal cover sheet will be provided for each submitted proposal.

Benefits of Participation

Through this competition, students have the opportunity to engage in the commercial real estate and public policy arena on real-world problems and solutions. Additionally, Team Finalists have the opportunity to attend the competition’s culminating workshop, which will occur on March 8, 2013 on the White House Campus. At the workshop, university teams will present both case proposals to a panel of practitioner judges, including DOE experts and representatives from the case partner organizations, as well as commercial real estate and public sector leaders. The winning university team proposals will be recognized at the workshop with awards and made available on the BBCC website.

COMPETITION ELEMENTS

Potential Down-Select Process

Due to capacity constraints on the White House Campus—and depending on the number of university teams that register for the competition—the DOE may employ a down-select process to limit the number of teams that travel to Washington, D.C. to present their two case proposals. The DOE will determine the necessity for such a process shortly after the December 17, 2012 registration deadline and will notify all registered university teams at that time. Should a down-select be required, Team Finalists will be notified approximately one month prior to the competition so that travel arrangements can be made. The DOE will provide a financial subsidy to attending teams for hotel accommodations, but not travel arrangements.

The Cases

Cases have been selected from both public- and private-sector Better Buildings Challenge Partners, and include both single buildings and portfolios. Each case

presents a true scenario relating to these organizations' challenges in implementing energy efficiency such as technical constraints, policy hurdles, and business and financing barriers. In order for university teams to develop solutions that are as realistic as possible, cases will contain background information regarding the policy landscape, financial data, lease structures, and data about building(s) and energy efficiency opportunities.

Approximately one week after cases are delivered and university teams have thoroughly reviewed all materials, teams are welcome to submit any and all case-specific questions to the DOE. At the discretion of the DOE, questions will be sent to Better Buildings Challenge Partners for their review. Also at the discretion of the DOE, selected answers will be shared with all teams. Teams may not contact case-writers (or any entity named in a case) directly. Again, detailed proposal guidelines will be delivered at the same time as the case materials.

Judging of Proposals

Team Finalists will be selected based on combined scores of both written case proposals, and will present both proposals at the culminating workshop. Each case will have its own set of panelists to judge the proposals, and superlatives will be awarded for each case. Panelists may consist of DOE experts, industry experts, and/or Better Buildings Case Competition Partners. Additional networking opportunities are currently being planned for attending teams.

PARTICIPATION GUIDELINES

Team Membership Requirements

Teams must consist of a minimum of three (3) students with a maximum of ten (10) students; only this group of students will work on both the public and private cases assigned to the team in whatever manner the team decides. The team will also decide how many and which members present at the workshop should the team be selected as a Finalist, though the DOE may impose a cap on the number of student attendants per team. Only one team per university may participate in the competition. Undergraduate-level team members must be enrolled full-time, and graduate-level team members must be enrolled at least half-time (executive graduate programs are considered half-time). All team members must be current students at the participating university—teams cannot consist of alumni or any individuals outside the institution. Additionally, institutions cannot join together to create one team. Each university team must select one team leader.

Selecting Team Members and Advisor(s)

In an effort to obtain the best ideas possible, the DOE is asking that university teams consider recruiting members from all relevant colleges, departments, and programs within the university. The goal is to generate actionable innovative solutions to real barriers and teams should choose members that might comprise the ultimate

“dream team” that the university has to offer. The DOE strongly suggests including students with the following backgrounds so that all aspects of the cases may be well executed: engineering, real estate, management/finance, policy and urban planning. The DOE encourages teams to consist of both graduate and undergraduate students. Lastly, the DOE recommends that teams recruit a faculty advisor; however, the advisor may not be an active member of the team and may not produce any competition materials. Teams may also consult experts external to the DOE and university, so long as these experts do not represent any entity named within a case.

Competition Rules

By participating in the Better Buildings Case Competition, students acknowledge that the information contained in the cases is confidential and may not be shared beyond the team members and faculty advisor. External experts may assist with general questions regarding barriers and business practices but cannot learn of or consult on any specific data shared in the cases. Again, teams may not contact case-writers directly in any manner—all questions should be directed to the DOE. However, teams may use any publicly-available information (i.e. Better Buildings Challenge Partner website).

EXPECTATIONS

Deliverables

Teams are expected to produce a 10-page written proposal (including appendices) per case explaining all components of their solutions. The DOE will deliver detailed proposal guidelines alongside the cases in early January. The DOE will notify teams of the exact date that materials will be delivered at least two weeks in advance. Finalists will also present both of their case proposals with Power Point at the culminating workshop (approximately 10 minutes each). Solutions may include innovative financing mechanisms, business models, technology interventions, and management strategies; additionally, a firm understanding of the policy components of the cases should accompany all solutions resulting in comprehensive team proposals. Please note that while any relevant technological innovations may be included in the proposal, they should not constitute the entirety of the solutions proposed.

CONTACT INFORMATION/WEBSITE

Please direct all inquiries and submissions to BBCC@ee.doe.gov. Please also visit the following DOE website for up-to-date information regarding the competition: <http://www1.eere.energy.gov/buildings/betterbuildings/casecompetition>