



What is the Independence Home Energy Loan Program?

IndependenceHELP is a partnership between the City of Independence Power & Light Department (IPL) and the City Credit Union.

Who Qualifies for IndependenceHELP?

Owner-occupants of residences located in the City of Independence qualify for the program. The residence must have four dwelling units or less. The loan applicant must own the entire residence and occupy at least one dwelling unit. Non-residential properties, multi-unit apartment buildings and mobile homes do not qualify. Residents who qualify for free or lower cost weatherization programs are encouraged to take advantage of those programs before seeking loans through IndependenceHELP.

What are the loan terms?

HELP loans are unsecured. Interest rates may be as low as 3.02% and repayment may be as long as 120 months. Terms vary based on the loan amount requested. Loan terms may change after June 30, 2011. The City Credit Union will determine whether loan applicants qualify for HELP. For more information, contact the City Credit Union at 252-2415 or visit their web site at www.city-cu.com.

What Types of Projects Qualify for the Low-Interest Loans?

Energy efficiency measures that are either listed on the Program's "Eligible Measures List" or recommended by a qualified energy auditor that performs an approved energy audit of the whole house. A detailed "Energy Measures List" can be obtained by calling IPL at 325-7485 or visiting www.IndependenceHELP.org. Eligible measures include replacement air conditioners, furnaces, heat pumps, water heaters, windows, and doors that meet or exceed ENERGY STAR® specifications, as well as adding insulation up to certain levels. Any other work does not qualify for an IndependenceHELP loan unless included in an energy audit performed by a HELP qualified energy auditor. A qualified homeowner may perform the energy audit or the eligible energy efficiency upgrades at his or her own home, but the value of labor performed cannot be included in the requested loan.

What is the process for participating in the Independence HELP Program?

Step 1: The Independence homeowner works with a contractor or qualified energy auditor to identify qualifying energy efficiency measures for the home. The homeowner may choose any contractor or qualified energy auditor. A list of program participating contractors and qualified energy auditors can be found at www.IndependenceHELP.org. These contractors and energy auditors have received detailed information about program requirements and forms. If the selected contractor or energy auditor is not on the list of program participants, they should call IPL at 325-7485 to get detailed information on required forms and program rules *before* submitting a loan application. All contractors and energy auditors must have licenses, permits and insurance required at the local, state and federal level to do the work, including a City of Independence business license, and must follow IndependenceHELP requirements.

Step 2: All homeowners must submit to a **Home Energy Loan Application**.

Step 3: The homeowner submits a loan request by calling the City Credit Union at 252-2415 (if not a City Credit Union member, the homeowner will need to come in to the City Credit Union to fill out membership forms). The City Credit Union will collect the necessary information to process the loan request including:

- Project information and cost estimate from the contractor.
- Information to determine whether a loan will be approved. Work may not begin until the loan is approved.

Step 4: The City Credit Union notifies the homeowner of loan approval and the contractor installs eligible energy efficiency measures based on the agreement between the homeowner and the contractor.

Step 5: When the work has been completed, the homeowner notifies IPL by calling 325-7485. IPL will schedule a time with the homeowner to visit the residence to obtain the Certificate of Completion form completed by the homeowner, ask the customer to complete a short customer satisfaction survey and view and obtain photos of the newly installed energy efficiency measures. IPL does not assure quality of work performed.

Step 6: The City Credit Union issues proceeds from the loan in a joint check to the homeowner and contractor and sets up the loan repayment process.

Are there rebates or financial incentives I can apply for when installing energy efficiency measures?

Independence Power & Light offers rebates for qualifying air conditioners, heat pumps and heat pump water heaters. For information on available rebates from IPL, go to www.independencemo.org/pl. Missouri Gas Energy also has rebates available for qualifying gas water heaters and gas furnaces. For current information on MGE rebates, go to www.betterheatingnow.com. Information on the availability of any federal energy efficiency tax credits can most likely be found at www.ENERGYSTAR.gov. Specifications on the measures included on the IndependenceHELP “Eligible Measures List” can be found on the ENERGY STAR® web site.

Can I use the Home Performance with ENERGY STAR audit program offered by Missouri Gas Energy as the whole house energy audit for the IndependenceHELP Program?

Yes, as long as you are a qualifying MGE customer participating in the program. In fact, whole house energy audits are encouraged. The customer cost of the energy audit may be included as part of the IndependenceHELP loan. Energy auditors must be BPI certified and use program approved energy audit software.

Are geothermal systems limited to closed loop systems, 5.5 ton capacity or smaller under the whole house audit approach as is the case with the “Eligible Measures List”?

Yes.

Will there be any changes to the IndependenceHELP Program?

Loan interest rates and terms are subject to change every six months. Please check www.IndependenceHELP.org for up-to-date Program information.