

Introduction: Ameren Illinois launched a new program in 2024 to help public schools throughout its service territory to save money on utility bills and reduce the schools' carbon footprint.

The new program is called Public Schools Carbon-Free Assessment Program. Joining us today is Michael Pittman to talk about this FREE energy assessment.

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**Q: How does the Carbon-Free Assessment Program work?**

A: The Public Schools Carbon-Free Assessment Program provides a comprehensive, no-cost energy assessment designed to help schools reduce energy costs and transition to clean energy. The program evaluates both the interior and exterior of each school building and district facility, identifying cost-saving opportunities and energy efficiency strategies. Schools receive data-driven solutions to optimize energy usage, implement sustainable upgrades, and work toward a carbon-free future.

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**Q: How can schools schedule an assessment?**

A: Schools must schedule their assessment in advance. The process begins with a brief kickoff call to explain the program and next steps. K-12 public school districts can enroll in the program by visiting:

- Website: [www.amerenillinoisavings.com/pscfa](http://www.amerenillinoisavings.com/pscfa)

Early enrollment is encouraged to secure the most convenient assessment dates.

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**Q: What types of improvements are commonly identified during an assessment?**

A: Schools often uncover both immediate and long-term energy-saving opportunities that lead to substantial cost reductions. Common recommendations include:

- Upgrading outdated heating systems to modern, high-efficiency heat pump technology

- Sealing and weatherproofing windows and exterior doors to prevent energy loss
- Insulating mechanical piping and equipment to reduce operating costs
- Installing rooftop solar panels to harness renewable energy and lower electricity expenses

Each school receives a customized report detailing these and other energy-efficient upgrades.

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### Q: What are some low- or no-cost actions schools can take immediately to save money?

A: Using the assessment findings as a guide, schools can adopt simple but impactful energy-saving practices, such as:

- Switching to LED lighting to reduce electricity usage
- Adjusting HVAC schedules to optimize heating and cooling during school hours
- Installing smart thermostats for improved temperature control
- Performing tune-ups and maintenance on existing equipment to maximize efficiency

These small adjustments can result in immediate utility cost reductions while preparing the district for larger efficiency improvements.

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### Q: What does the school receive after the assessment?

A: Schools receive a detailed, customized report that provides:

- A list of recommended energy efficiency upgrades with estimated energy savings
- An evaluation of solar energy potential, including feasibility for rooftop solar installations
- Guidance on EV charging station installations for school buses, fleet vehicles, and driver education programs
- Recommendations for WELL Health-Safety improvements to enhance student and staff well-being

This report serves as a strategic energy roadmap, helping districts prioritize projects, secure funding, and implement long-term sustainability measures.

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### Q: How many school districts have completed the assessment? Any success stories?

A: 64 school districts have already completed the assessment, with dozens more scheduled.

Some notable success stories include:

- East St. Louis School District is implementing large-scale air sealing and mechanical insulation upgrades, significantly reducing energy costs.
- Fulton County School District identified no-cost HVAC scheduling adjustments, immediately saving the district an estimated \$1,700 per month.

These districts are now benefiting from long-term energy savings and sustainability improvements.

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### Q: Is this assessment required for Illinois state funding?

A: Yes. Illinois has linked certain school construction and modernization grants to the completion of a Public School Carbon-Free Assessment. This means that schools must complete the assessment to be eligible for specific state funding opportunities.

By participating, districts can:

- Qualify for potential state grants for energy-efficient school improvements
  - Lower operational costs through strategic energy-saving upgrades
  - Improve sustainability efforts, aligning with state and federal clean energy goals
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### Q: What public schools qualify for this program?

A: The program is available exclusively to K-12 public schools within the Ameren Illinois service territory.

Ameren Illinois works in alignment with state energy regulations to provide this assessment at no cost, helping schools meet evolving energy efficiency and sustainability standards.

By enrolling, districts gain expert energy recommendations, potential grant opportunities, and long-term cost savings—all with zero financial risk.

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