Fall 2026 Energy Saving Performance Contracting Cohort: Metroplan Announces Funding Availability



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Metroplan announced on July 13th that approximately $3 million has been allocated to support Energy Savings Performance Contracting ("ESPC") projects in Central Arkansas.

The funding is stated to be part of Metroplan's United States Environmental Protection Agency Climate Pollution Reduction Grant implementation funding, which awarded $100 million to the Arkansas Tri-Region Coalition, with Metroplan as the lead agency.

ESPC is described as supporting:

… eligible entities pursuing large-scale energy efficiency and infrastructure upgrades through contracts with Energy Services Companies.

Eligible projects are stated to potentially include:

- HVAC improvements
- Lighting upgrades
- Building automation systems
- Water efficiency measures
- Renewable energy integration
- Other facility improvements designed to reduce long-term energy costs and emissions

The stated goal of the ESPC is described as utilizing the upgrades to pay for themselves through energy savings over time.

Metroplan further states that the program is designed to support public and nonprofit institutions as they evaluate, procure, and implement building efficiency projects through a structured cohort model that combines:

- 1:1 technical assistance
- Peer learning opportunities
- Procurement and contracting guidance
- Access to state and national ESPC resources
- Support navigating utility incentives and financing pathways

Participants in the cohort may later apply for up to $500,000 in grant assistance to help "buy down" eligible project costs and improve overall project feasibility. Such funds are stated to potentially be layered alongside:

- Traditional financing
- Utility incentives
- Other grant opportunities to support facility modernization, deferred maintenance reduction, and long-term operational savings.

Metroplan further states that the cohort itself runs for approximately five months and helps participants:

- Organize facility and utility data
- Benchmark energy usage and identify high-priority facilities
- Understand Arkansas ESPC requirements and financing structures
- Navigate Energy Service Company (ESCO) procurement
- Review Investment Grade Audits and proposed performance contracts
- Evaluate risks, responsibilities, and long-term operational impacts

Metroplan has served as the area's federally designated metropolitan planning organization since 1972. Its stated function is described as a metro-planning organization working with local governments, the state Department of Transportation, and local transit providers to determine transportation needs and funding priorities for federal transportation investments.

A copy of the news release can be found here.