Community Energy Association

A Policy Planning Companion for Local Governments

Advancing Energy Retrofits

Policies And Programs for More Energy Efficient and Low Carbon Existing Buildings.

August 2025

AT A GLANCE

While the BC Building Code regulates all *new* construction, its application to existing buildings, especially when considering energy efficiency, is not as straightforward or well-understood. In the absence of a clear Provincial framework to guide low carbon retrofits in existing buildings, local governments can comprehensively support retrofits in their community by advancing policies and programs in six key areas:

- planning and research
- regulations
- incentives
- training and capacity building
- education and outreach
- advocacy

The document summarizes the specific actions local governments can take within these areas with links to supplementary resources and examples of how actions are being applied in BC communities.

KEY TAKEAWAY

Local governments have options that fit their community context, align with climate targets, and support residents and businesses to retrofit their homes and buildings. Collaborating with other local governments, senior levels of government, and stakeholder organizations is key to advancing retrofit policies and programs.

Contents

Introduction

In the absence of a clear provincial framework to guide energy efficiency and low carbon retrofits in existing buildings, local governments are leading the way by taking action through innovative policy and program development in six key areas: planning, regulations, incentives, training, communications, and advocacy. This bulletin provides a summary of the policy tools and program options within each of these six categories that local governments are actioning to support Part 9 and Part 3 energy retrofits in their communities.

<table>
<tr><th rowspan="2">Part 9 Buildings</th><th colspan="2">Part 3 Buildings</th></tr>
<tr><th>Residential</th><th>Commercial</th></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="2">Single family home, coach house, smaller townhouse.</td><td>Larger multi-family and apartment projects.</td><td>Larger commercial, office, and retail buildings.</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Building area of 600 square metres or greater or more than three storeys.</td></tr>
</table>

Context

The Province of BC recognizes the importance of decarbonizing buildings and has made commitments to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions from buildings and communities by 59-64% over 2007 levels by 2030.[1]

While the BC Building Code regulates all new construction, these standards "only apply to existing buildings when making changes to them or changing their use,"[2] and the application is not as straightforward or well-understood. The lack of clear policy direction at the provincial and federal levels has resulted in a lack of clarity and understanding in how local governments can enable and regulate retrofits in existing buildings in their communities. However, clarity is on the horizon; both the federal and provincial governments are advancing programs or legislation to inform local actions.

Federal Levers

The proposed updates to the National Model Codes—which include the National Building Code (NBC) and National Energy Codes of Canada for Buildings (NECB)—for 2025 include provisions for alterations to existing buildings. These updates will provide guidance to provinces regarding alterations to existing buildings. In 2024, the federal government initiated engagement on a National Approach to Home Labelling (NAHL), which aims to provide jurisdictions with guidance and tools to implement home energy labelling programs, foster consistency and comparability across Canada, and increase energy literacy among Canadians.

Provincial Levers

Two key pieces of provincial legislation are anticipated to help provide regulatory clarity and direction: the Alterations to Existing Buildings Code (AEB or Alterations Code) and the Highest Efficiency Equipment Standards (HEES). BC has signaled their intention to adopt and incorporate this language into the BC Building Code. While these will likely be prescriptive requirements, there may be opportunity for performance-based solutions as well. The Alterations Code is expected to provide clarity for improving energy performance and emissions reductions for existing buildings undergoing renovations for building envelopes (air sealing, insulation, windows and doors) and mechanical systems (heating, cooling, hot water and ventilation).

Furthermore, the HEES is being developed under the Energy Efficiency Standards Regulation (EESR), which applies to the manufacture, sale, and transfer of products sold in the province, and requires products to hold third party energy performance certification. The HEES will require that all new space and water heating equipment be

[1] CleanBC Roadmap to 2030

[2] Province of BC Building Code Resources

at least 100% efficient. Hybrid electric heat pump and gas systems and high-efficiency gas heat pumps will also be allowed. This standard is expected to come into effect by 2030 and would apply to space and water heating systems installed in new construction and the replacement of those systems in existing buildings. Not only would HEES guide retrofits alongside the Alterations Code, but it could also impact decision-making for new builds in advance of 2030 as it may encourage builders and homeowners to choose electric heat pumps for new construction to avoid future costs of fuel-switching and electrification retrofits.

The Province of BC is also exploring the introduction of home energy labelling at time-of-sale as a way to encourage energy literacy among homeowners and buyers. As a first step, the Province launched the Home Energy Planner to help people better understand how their home uses energy. Having a home energy labelling program or requirement in place would enable energy and emissions considerations for buildings to be more at the forefront and impact decision-making when it comes to selling, purchasing, and renovating homes.

Until a provincial framework for existing buildings is available to guide energy efficiency and low carbon retrofits, local governments must utilize other avenues within their powers to advance retrofits.

Local Government Actions

There are six main areas where local governments have a role in advancing retrofits. Implementing actions in these categories can comprehensively support residents and businesses to lower emissions in existing buildings. This section summarizes of the policy tools and program options within each of these six categories.

Action Category	Goal
Research and Planning	Develop an understanding of community priorities, needs, and gaps that creates a foundation for effective retrofit programs and policies.
Regulations	Enact policies to regulate existing buildings, where possible.
Incentives	Develop and promote incentive programs to encourage desired actions, such as retrofitting.
Capacity Building	Support training and education opportunities that develop industry capacity, thereby ensuring availability and adequate expertise of qualified contractors to implement retrofit measures.
Education and Outreach	Communicate and engage with residents regarding upcoming events, policies, and programs to raise awareness of retrofits and seek feedback.
Advocacy	Advocate to other levels of government for more support and/or regulations to enable retrofits.

1. Research and Planning

Effective energy retrofit programs require local governments to invest in thorough research and planning to ensure initiatives are impactful, equitable, and aligned with long-term community goals. This begins with comprehensive data collection, including scanning existing building stock, available regulatory tools and policy frameworks, and existing incentives or support mechanisms. Understanding current capacity—such as workforce readiness and skill gaps—is crucial for assessing implementation feasibility. Planning efforts must also evaluate communication needs, including improving climate literacy and ensuring residents understand the benefits of retrofits. Consider overarching plans, such as Official Community Plans and Community Energy and Emissions Plans, and how retrofitting existing buildings can help achieve your community's goals and GHG emissions reduction targets.

Before implementing retrofit policies and programs, it is beneficial for local governments to first understand the building stock in their communities in order to identify which building types and/or neighbourhoods to prioritize. It is important to design and implement programs with clear objectives and outcomes that are aligned with community priorities.

ACTION SPOTLIGHT

The City of Vancouver and the District of North Vancouver are building out mapping tools with access to myriad datasets relevant to buildings, including number of permits issued and building types, as well as demographic data. Having access to building stock data at the community and neighbourhood levels can help inform where and how to prioritize retrofit initiatives.

KEY TAKEAWAY FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENTS

- Retrofit initiatives can often support overarching strategic plans like the OCP and Climate Plans.
- Ensure you have a solid understanding of the building stock in your community so you know which actions and neighbourhoods to prioritize.

2. Regulations

While it is unclear how the BC Building Code is applied to existing buildings, it is anticipated that the update to include Alterations to Existing Buildings will provide more clarity. In the meantime, local governments have various policy tools that are relevant to existing buildings, especially with regards to heat pump installations, that may support energy efficiency retrofits. These include:

- **Building permits**
  Building permits are typically required for any changes in use or occupancy of a building, additions, and major renovations, including altering or replacing HVAC systems. Requiring building permits can be an opportunity to ensure

retrofits are completed to a desired energy efficiency or performance standard.

- **Mechanical permits**
  Requiring a mechanical permit for the installation of heating and cooling equipment can help ensure systems are sized correctly and meet certain performance requirements.[3]

- **Benchmarking**
  One of the main policy tools available to local governments when it comes to their existing large building stock is requiring the reporting of energy and GHG emissions, also known as benchmarking. Benchmarking is the practice of measuring and reporting a building's annual energy usage and GHG emissions, setting an annual benchmark for how the building is operating, allowing for year-over-year comparison to see how and where the building's performance can be improved, as well as allowing for comparison across similar buildings. Through benchmarking, local governments can determine GHG reduction targets and limits to large buildings. While there are voluntary programs available (see Building Benchmark BC), mandatory benchmarking is more effective and impactful for reducing emissions across the community. City of Victoria and District of Saanich recently adopted Energy and Carbon Emissions Reporting requirements for large buildings. For more information on benchmarking, please see this Guide for local governments on implementing benchmarking.

While regulations can be highly effective, they can also act as a barrier. For example, residents may avoid retrofitting (or getting the appropriate permits) if the process is perceived as too onerous or expensive.[4] Attaching financial incentives, such as rebates for permits, or non-financial incentives such as expediting permitting processes, can help remove barriers.

KEY TAKEAWAY FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENTS

- Review current policies related to existing buildings to ensure they do not unintentionally hinder or discourage energy retrofits.
- Where possible, introduce policies that require energy and emissions reporting.

[3] The City of Vancouver requires a mechanical permit to install heating and cooling systems in both residential and commercial buildings and the District of North Vancouver requires a heating permit to install or alter forced air heating or hydronic heating systems.

[4] In a case study about his deep energy retrofit, homeowner Brian Rippy noted, "We're not really incentivized to do deep energy retrofits. In fact, the more that I pay to do a deeper energy retrofit, the more cost it is, the higher my permit fee is. And to me that just seems a little backwards, right?"

3. Incentives

Low carbon retrofits can be expensive capital projects and costs are often cited as a barrier. Incentives can therefore help encourage retrofits where regulations may not be possible for a local government to enact, or when they are viewed as burdensome by the public.

There are a number of incentives available through federal and provincial programs, with Province of BC funding programs administered alongside BC Hydro and FortisBC. A key role local governments can play is simply increasing awareness and understanding of these programs among residents and the business community. Where possible, local governments maybe be able to top-up these incentives with their own programs for actions like switching to a heat pump or completing an EnerGuide Evaluation (see Appendix A for more details).

Available incentive and loan program options are summarized in Table 1 and more details about federal and provincial incentives can be found in Appendix A.

Municipal Property Tax Exemptions

Local governments also have opportunities to incentivise retrofits for large buildings through tax exemptions, or "tax holidays", where buildings undertaking retrofits may be eligible for property tax exemptions. An example of this is District of Saanich's Climate Action Tax Exemption program, which supports large commercial, multi-unit residential, and mixed-use buildings to access electrification retrofits by offering a municipal property tax exemption to help offset project costs.

Utility Incentives

While BC Hydro and FortisBC administer the CleanBC rebates, each utility also offers additional rebates to residents and businesses. Some of these utility-specific offers such as BC Hydro's solar and battery storage offer, may not be available to residents and businesses located in other utility service areas.

Five municipalities in BC own and operate their own utility—City of New Westminster, City of Penticton, City of Nelson, City of Grand Forks, and District of Summerland[5]—and this provides unique opportunities to customize incentives for their residents, primarily though on-bill financing and Property Assessed Clean Energy (PACE) programs.

On-Bill Financing

Utilities can offer on-bill financing (OBF), a financing model where homeowners pay for energy upgrades through the cost-savings on their energy bills. This option is typically available through utilities, such as City of Nelson's On-Bill Financing Program

[5] What are municipal utility providers? - Better Homes BC

and City of Penticton's Home Energy Loan Program (HELP). BC Hydro and FortisBC do not currently offer on-bill financing, though both utilities have run pilots in the past.[6]

Property-Accessed Clean Energy (PACE)

A popular program to support homeowners to access retrofits is through PACE programs. A PACE loan is a financing tool that is tied to the property as opposed to the individual homeowner and is paid through property taxes. If/when ownership of the property changes, the remaining balance of the PACE loan stays with the property. This is a helpful tool to support retrofits as it eliminates the barrier of high upfront costs. While PACE is in the CleanBC Roadmap, it is unclear when a provincial program will be available. The Province would need to make amendments to several statutes, including the Community Charter, the Vancouver Charter, the Local Government Act, and the Taxation (Rural Area) Act to enable local governments to collect PACE payments in a similar manner as municipal property taxes.[7] In the meantime, local governments are exploring other avenues to enable PACE-like programs, including City of Nanaimo's Home Energy Retrofit Financing Program and District of Saanich's Heat Pump Financing Program. These programs leverage funding from FCM's CEF program mentioned in Appendix A.

Table 1: Summary of Retrofit Incentive and Rebate Programs.

	Part 9	Part 3 Residential	Part 3 Commercial
Federal	• Canada Greener Homes Initiative • Community Efficiency Financing program	• Canada Greener Affordable Housing – Retrofit Funding	• Clean Technology Investment Tax Credit
Provincial	• CleanBC Better Homes program	• BC Hydro Multi-Unit Residential Building Retrofit program • Clean Buildings Tax Credit	• CleanBC Commercial Express program • Clean Buildings Tax Credit
Municipal	• CleanBC top-ups • EnerGuide evaluation rebates • Building permit rebates • PACE-like programs • On-bill financing	• Municipal property tax exemptions (eg. CATE)	• Municipal property tax exemptions (eg. CATE)

[6] Cheaper Power Bills, More Jobs, Less CO2: How On-Bill Financing Done Right can be a Quick Win for BC - Pacific Institute for Climate Solutions (2015)
[7] Review of existing property assessed clean energy (PACE) legislation in Canada - FCM

ACTION SPOTLIGHT

In 2024, the City of Victoria and the District of Saanich launched BC's first Revitalization Tax Exemption designed to encourage electrification of heating and hot water in large commercial, multi-unit residential, and mixed-use buildings.

KEY TAKEAWAY FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENTS

- Promote existing incentives from different levels of government.
- Where possible, offer and leverage incentives to enable greater adoption of retrofit measures.

4. Capacity Building

As incentives help drive demand, industry must be supported to meet that demand. Local governments can support industry capacity-building by offering and promoting training opportunities such as builder breakfasts and webinars on the programs that support retrofits, concepts such as house-as-a-system, examples and case studies of retrofits, and more technical details related to specific technology and retrofit measures. Offering continuing professional development (CPD) points helps boost attendance and participation.

Industry Stakeholders

CleanBC rebates for certain measures, such as heat pumps and insulation, require the use of a qualified contractor that is a member of the Home Performance Contractor Network, facilitated by the Home Performance Stakeholder Council (HPSC). This helps encourage contractors in the industry to access the training available through HPSC to become qualified and eligible for the rebates, and it also helps ensure quality assurance for retrofit installations. The training through HPSC is subsidized and they also offer wage subsidies to support businesses to have their staff appropriately trained.

Other stakeholder organizations who also offer training include BC Housing and the various chapters of the Canadian Home Builders Association (CHBA). Local governments can promote these training opportunities and collaborate with these organizations to offer sessions for local industry that will develop the workforce needed in their communities. Examples of dedicated capacity-building programs include Township of Langley's Builder Forum Series and the Kootenay Clean Energy Transition. These training events are also good opportunities to engage with local industry and get feedback and insights on what's happening on the ground to help inform appropriate policy and program design to support retrofits.

ACTION SPOTLIGHT

In 2023, the Resort Municipality of Whistler partnered with Prism Engineering and BC Hydro to host the first "Carbon Reduction at Your Hotel" workshop, bringing together general managers from Whistler's largest hotels. The session provided hotel owners with the tools and information they needed to begin planning meaningful action.

KEY TAKEAWAY FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENTS

- Promote existing training opportunities wherever available and appropriate.
- Partner with other municipalities and organizations to offer training opportunities according to your local needs and context. This can prepare and support industry to meet anticipated demand for retrofits.

5. Education and Outreach

Retrofits can be challenging processes, and while rebates can offer financial incentives to support retrofits, there are still many barriers to planning and completing energy upgrades. This includes the lack of understanding of what retrofits are and how to get started, and low awareness and understanding of active programs, resources, and financial supports.

Education Campaigns

A simple tactic to increase awareness is sharing readily available resources on municipal websites, especially alongside information about building regulations and permits. This could include linking to CleanBC rebate programs, utility programs, or places that update educational materials (e.g., Retrofit Canada, Retrofit 101, etc.).

For deeper engagement, local governments can also consider hosting booths at tradeshows, community events, or farmers markets with the goal of increasing awareness and understanding of retrofits, home energy efficiency, and local programs. Supporting and participating in community events such as the Climate Friendly Homes Tour enables knowledge sharing between neighbours and can also increase awareness and inspire action by showcasing local leadership of homeowners and builders who have taken steps to improve home performance.

EnerGuide Evaluations

EnerGuide Evaluations are valuable tools to guide decision-making when it comes to retrofits; they help inform the homeowner on how their home is performing and which upgrades make the most sense to save energy and improve comfort. Many rebate programs include a requirement to obtain an EnerGuide Evaluation to ensure homeowners are making informed decisions. However, they can be expensive, often costing between $500 and $700 and this may be a barrier, especially for those who are

less committed to retrofitting. Many rebate and support programs, therefore, include a rebate or subsidy for the evaluations, too.

Provincial Home Energy Planner

To support home energy literacy, the Province has developed the Home Energy Planner—an online tool where homeowners answer a series of questions about their home and the tool generates a preliminary report on options to decarbonize their home. This is not a replacement for an EnerGuide Evaluation but can offer an entry point for homeowners and serve to educate them on energy considerations and the benefits of home retrofits.

After pilot programs in 2024, the Planner is now available in all communities across BC. Local governments can support this roll-out by sharing information about the Planner to increase awareness of the tool and highlighting how it can help.

Part 9 Retrofit Concierge Programs

Navigating the retrofit journey can be very tricky for most homeowners. Rebate programs have different eligibility criteria and requirements, the average homeowner doesn't know where to start or who to call, and many don't know which activities will work for their context. Local governments can offer comprehensive support in the form of a "concierge" program. Various models have been developed and implemented in BC and the service and support they offer can vary. Homeowner support might include providing initial information, connecting them with qualified contractors, reviewing EnerGuide Evaluations, and helping with rebate applications.

Programs are often aligned with rebate programs, and some also offer financing components. Where the municipality has its own utility, additional features might also be available, such as on-bill financing.

Model type	Program name	Who administers	Where it's active
Municipal-owned and funded	Regional Energy Efficiency Program	City of Nelson, Regional District of Central Kootenay	Nelson, Central Kootenay
	RDKB HomeSmart	Regional District of Kootenay Boundary	Kootenay Boundary
	Energy Save New West	Energy Save New West, City of New Westminster	New Westminster
Third-party, municipal-funded	Retrofit Assist	Community Energy Association	Whistler, Squamish, Rossland, Kamloops, East Kootenay, Vernon
	Home Energy Navigator	City Green	Greater Victoria, Nanaimo, Comox Valley, Vancouver, Kelowna

Third-party, not municipal-funded	Clean Energy Neighbourhoods	HomeZero Collective	Vernon

Part 3 Retrofit Concierge Programs

As is the case with Part 9 buildings, the retrofit journey for Part 3 buildings is also complex and involves many components and challenges. To help building owners navigate this process, concierge programs, like the BC Retrofit Accelerator, provide support based on Part 3 occupancy types: commercial, nonprofit housing, rental apartment buildings, and condominiums.

Building/ occupancy type	Program	Who administers	Details
Commercial buildings	Decarb Accelerator Program	Building Owners and Managers Association of BC (BOMA BC)	A three-year initiative designed to support commercial building owners and managers in BC with reducing GHG emissions and enhancing energy efficiency.
Nonprofit housing	Deep Energy Retrofit Accelerator for Nonprofit Housing	BC Nonprofit Housing Association (BCNPHA) & Aboriginal Housing Management Association (AHMA)	Supports nonprofit housing providers to access energy retrofits by increasing awareness and the various programs available to support them, developing pathways for buildings to become more energy efficiency.
Market rental buildings	RARA—Rental Apartment Retrofit Accelerator	Landlord BC (LLBC), FRESCo	A free program designed to assist market rental building owners in British Columbia with energy efficiency and decarbonization retrofits.
Condominiums	Strata Energy Advisor	Zero Emissions Innovation Centre (ZEIC) & Condominium Home Owners Association (CHOA)	A free service designed to assist strata-owned multi-unit residential buildings (condos) across British Columbia in planning and implementing energy efficiency and decarbonization upgrades.

ACTION SPOTLIGHT

Local governments can increase the impact of these programs by collaborating with program administrators, sharing and amplifying the service, or even providing capital funding. For example, the City of Vancouver provided funding to develop the Rental Apartment Retrofit Accelerator pilot which led to the success and expansion of the program. The District of Saanich and City of Victoria incorporated the RARA program into their CATE program to support retrofits for rental buildings in their communities.

KEY TAKEAWAY FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENTS

- Develop and offer retrofit programs in their community.
- Share and leverage messaging and communications to increase awareness.
- Co-create case studies to highlight learnings.
- Provide capital funding where possible to support retrofit programs and enable more retrofits.

6. Advocacy

Ultimately, local governments need more enabling legislation and a framework to regulate and guide existing building retrofits. As local governments are responsible for the direct implementation of many buildings policies and programs, they are best-positioned to advocate to senior levels of government on the legislation and the corresponding programs and funding support that is needed to enable retrofits in their communities at the scale required to achieve the targets that have been laid out.

An added value of peer networks is the opportunity to connect with peers from different local governments, share knowledge and ideas, and form a collective voice for greater advocacy efforts. The Zero Carbon Step Code is in part the result of a collaboration between various local governments looking to explore how to reduce operational emissions from buildings. This collaboration led to a working group under the Step Code Peer Network, whose feedback informed what was then known as the Carbon Pollution Standards.

Similarly, the Retrofit Peer Network provided feedback to the Province on the anticipated Highest Efficiency Equipment Standards and included specific asks around enabling early adoption pathways. This highlights how local governments are able to voice their concerns and ask for the ability to advance policies to reach climate targets.

Through collaboration and coordination, local governments can work together to present a collective voice to advocate their needs and those of their communities.

KEY TAKEAWAY FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENTS

- Connect with other local governments and stakeholder organizations.
- Advocate for resources and enabling conditions, such as legislation that will allow local governments to enact the programs and policies needed to encourage and require energy retrofits.

Conclusion

In addition to, and in preparation for, upcoming provincial regulations, local governments can utilize various policy tools, such as permitting, to support and enable energy retrofits. However, policy alone is not enough to support the scale of retrofits needed to decarbonize and build the resilience of the existing building stock.

Where policy levers do not exist or are insufficient, local governments are implementing program options to help fill those gaps. These program options are often needed as a precursor to regulation or can work in tandem to provide a whole suite of supports that encourage and enable retrofits. Retrofits can be expensive and time-consuming processes, and especially confusing for those who lack the knowledge and expertise. To target these barriers, programs are available that:

- Provide financial incentives (e.g., rebates) to make retrofits more accessible.
- Deliver training programs that develop the capacity and skills of industry.
- Support homeowners to navigate the retrofit journey, access rebates, and connect with qualified contractors (e.g., concierge programs or coaching services).

A key strength of local governments is their ability to collaborate and partner—with each other, senior levels of government, and other stakeholder organizations—to leverage resources and opportunities that will collectively deliver and advance policies and programming for greater impact.

Retrofitting the existing building stock requires an immense and co-operative effort. No local government can do it all nor do it alone. Therefore, it is imperative that local governments connect and work together with partners and collaborators to leverage strengths, powers, and opportunities to enable retrofits.

Appendix A – Federal and Provincial Incentives

Incentives are subject to change; these program details are active as of the publication of this document in August 2025.

Federal Incentives

At the federal level, the Canada Greener Homes Initiative provides various rebate and loan program streams to support retrofits. The program previously offered a one-time grant of up to $5,000 total for various retrofits, plus an additional $600 grant for EnerGuide evaluations as they were required under the grant program. Seeing the value of EnerGuide evaluations to support homeowners' decision-making around retrofits, many local governments also offer rebates for evaluations, including the Resort Municipality of Whistler and the City of New Westminster through Energy Save New West. While the Canada Greener Homes grant program ended in February 2024, leaving a gap of financial support for homeowners, other programs are still available, including the loan program, which offers an interest-free loan of up to $40,000, and the Oil-to-Heat-Pump Affordability program, which provides additional support for homes with oil heating systems to switch to heat pumps. The Canada Greener Homes Affordability Program, which will provide low to median income homeowners and tenants with no-cost home retrofits, is expected to launch in 2025.

The Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM), through the Green Municipal Fund, offers the Community Efficiency Financing program, which provides local governments with loan and grant funds to enhance local retrofit programs by offering loans and financing options to their residents.

The Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) administers the Canada Greener Affordable Housing – Retrofit Funding program, which provides low-interest repayable and forgivable loans to support multi-unit residential buildings (MURB) to access deep energy retrofits.

The Federal government also offers a federal tax credit, the Clean Technology Investment Tax Credit, which is a refundable tax credit for capital invested in adopting clean energy technology, such as heat pumps and solar panels and batteries for buildings owned by businesses, including market rental MURBs and commercial buildings.

Provincial Incentives

At the provincial level, the CleanBC Better Homes program, administered alongside BC Hydro and FortisBC, offers various rebate amounts for retrofit measures. While no longer available as of April 2025, local governments had the option of providing 'top-ups'— additional rebates—to the CleanBC rebates to further support and incentivise uptake. An added benefit of the top-up approach is that CleanBC administers the program and, reducing the administrative burden for local governments.

While incentives have mostly been geared to Part 9 homes, new incentive programs are now available for Part 3 multi-unit residential buildings. In fall 2024, BC Hydro launched their Multi-Unit Residential Building Retrofit program, which provides rebates for whole-building energy upgrades. It is anticipated that this program will be expanded to offer rebates for individual units in 2025. There may be opportunity for local governments to provide 'top-ups' in a similar manner as for the CleanBC Better Homes rebates. CleanBC also has rebates for large commercial buildings through the Commercial Express program.

The provincial government also offers a tax credit, the Clean Buildings Tax Credit, which provides a refundable income tax credit for qualifying energy efficiency retrofits for eligible commercial and multi-unit residential buildings with four or more units.