

*Professional Education
Exemplary Program*

***New York Energy SmartSM FlexTech Program
New York Energy Research and Development Authority***

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

The New York State Energy Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA) Flexible Technical Assistance (FlexTech) Program provides New York State facilities with custom-tailored services that help the facilities make informed energy decisions. FlexTech's primary goal is to increase productivity and economic competitiveness by identifying and encouraging the implementation of cost-effective energy efficiency measures. FlexTech services focus more on proven, conventional technologies for energy efficiency rather than innovative answers typically associated with research and development projects. This service is provided through competitively selected pre-qualified consultants. Customers wishing to work with their own selected contractor also may receive cost-sharing through a separate NYSERDA technical assistance solicitation.

NYSERDA technical assistance programs study a wide variety of customer options, including energy efficiency improvements, process and productivity improvements, waste minimization opportunities, energy operational procedures, energy planning, commissioning, performance contracting and project financing proposals, strategic energy plans, rate analysis, load shapes, and aggregation opportunities. In addition, the FlexTech consultants are sometimes used to measure and verify the energy savings generated from NYSERDA implementation programs.

Eligible customers include industrial and commercial facilities, state and local governments, nonprofit and private institutions, public and private K-12 schools, universities, and hospitals.

FlexTech connects highly qualified firms with customers to provide a range of technical assistance services at half the cost. Because of the contracts already in place between NYSERDA and the recommended consulting firms, there are no forms or paperwork for the customer to complete. Individual projects can be initiated within days. Whether it is an energy audit for an apple orchard or evaluating the feasibility of an energy management system for a skyscraper, the FlexTech program generally reimburses the customer 50 percent of the cost of the technical assistance study. The strength of this program comes from the cost-sharing incentive, the diversity of assistance the program can offer, and a simple application process.

FlexTech consultants are selected for three-year periods. Many of the consulting firms use the NYSERDA affiliation as part of their marketing and corporate advertising. In order to improve the performance of the contracted consultants, NYSERDA staff take a proactive role in projects by meeting with the customer, and reviewing the scopes of work and final reports.

FlexTech's innovative approach makes it extremely customer-friendly. There is no paperwork or forms for the customer to complete. The NYSERDA request for proposal (RFP) process can meet a customer's need to competitively procure services and reduce the contracting time frame by six months or more. Each project receives a scoping visit to the site and a customized scope of work and cost proposal from the FlexTech consultant prior to any obligation to proceed with the study. The ensuing commitment is a simple one-page participation agreement. Projects have been completed in less than one week, but two to three months is more typical.

PROGRAM PERFORMANCE

In the 2001–2002 fiscal year, 300 projects were initiated. This is a quadrupling (4X) in activity in the first two years of the New York State Systems Benefit Charge program.

NYSERDA periodically surveys the recipients of FlexTech services to improve the quality of service and measure the results. The last update was completed in the fall of 2002 and built on two previous program assessments. These surveys are used to determine whether recommendations made from technical assistance programs have been implemented. In addition, customer satisfaction with NYSERDA and the third-party consulting firms, which conduct the studies, are also assessed.

Evaluations have shown that over the ten-year life of the program, two-thirds of the customers installed recommendations. From 77 studies completed in the first year of the New York State Systems Benefit Charge program (1999–2000), 60 million dollars of energy efficiency improvements were installed, which will annually save 250,000 MMBtu of fossil fuels and 20 million kWh of electricity, and reduce peak demand by 5,000 kW.

NYSERDA has routinely surveyed participants to determine program results and effectiveness. Highlights from over a decade of program performance include:

- Every dollar spent by NYSERDA leverages a \$23 investment by customers on energy efficiency improvements.
- Every dollar spent by NYSERDA leverages a \$7 energy savings by customers.
- Emissions reductions of 0.1lbs NO_x, 0.2 lbs SO₂, and 70 lbs CO₂ for each dollar spent by NYSERDA.
- 66% of customers implemented recommendations of the energy studies.
- 79% of customers stated that the technical assistance consultant exceeded their expectations.
- 87% of customers stated that the NYSERDA technical assistance staff and service exceeded their expectations.

LESSONS LEARNED

The feedback obtained through program surveys and related evaluation efforts has guided program development to meet customer needs and allowed the program to evolve and improve. FlexTech's innovative approach makes it an extremely customer-friendly program.

FlexTech not only results in customers saving money on energy bills, but also simultaneously helps to either reduce electricity use, fuel consumption, greenhouse gas emissions, or environmental wastes, thus providing New York State with a more vibrant economy and cleaner environment.

Other states or utilities could replicate this program. Past RFPs are available upon request. In the fall of 2003, NYSERDA will be issuing the fifth RFP, which will be available on NYSERDA's website.

The strength of this program comes from the diversity of assistance it can offer. This program is a good example of the flexible, customer-friendly government that people want.

PROGRAM AT A GLANCE

Program Name: New York Energy Smart FlexTech Program

Targeted Customer Segments: All facilities located in New York State, except for residential properties comprised of less than five units, are eligible.

Program Start Date: 1992

Program Participants: During the last fiscal year, 300 projects were initiated.

Approximate Eligible Population: NA

Participation Rate (or Total/Annual Number of Participants): NA

Annual Energy Savings Achieved: 80 million kWh electricity and 1 million MMBtu natural gas saved (from projects funded in 2002)

Peak Demand (Summer) Savings Achieved: 20,000 kW (from projects funded in 2002)

Budget

Year	Program Costs	Customer Costs	Total Costs
2001	\$1.9 million	\$1.9 million	\$3.8 million
2002	\$2.2 million	\$2.2 million	\$4.4 million
2003 (budgeted)	\$1.6 million	\$1.6 million	\$3.2 million

Funding Sources: New York State Systems Benefit Charge (SBC); State Energy Plan (SEP) Base Grant; SEP Competitive Grants; and Other Miscellaneous Federal Grants

Best Person to Contact for Information about the Program

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