

[Choosing a contractor to help with energy improvements](#)

A contractor can be an excellent resource for energy efficiency recommendations, tips and advice. But not all contractors are equally experienced or knowledgeable about energy efficiency options for your business. This guide will help you select a contractor to partner with you on energy efficiency.

[Finding a Contractor](#)

Many people have a contractor they've worked with for years. Sometimes those people can be shaped into being a good energy resource and sometimes they lack the knowledge, interest, and experience necessary. You can find out if they'll be helpful by asking them to bid efficient equipment on your next project.

If you don't have a contractor you trust already, you'll need to start by getting recommendations from other businesses and to getting multiple bids on a project. This will allow you to experience the different skills, experience, interest, and communication styles that contractors bring to a job. You want someone who is knowledgeable about energy efficiency and encourages you to consider your options, not someone who only bids the lowest cost option and begrudges doing extra work to consider energy efficiency.

[Qualifications](#)

At a minimum, ensure the contractor is properly licensed. The Minnesota Department of Labor and Industry (DLI) provides a "license lookup" feature on this site: <https://secure.doli.state.mn.us/lookup/licensing.aspx>

When it comes to energy efficiency specifically, look for a contractor who:

- Stays current on new technology and partners with suppliers of efficient technology.
- Communicates well, specifically telling you why an improvement or repair would save energy.
- Has an understanding of available programs, financing, and tax credits available for you. Willing to help with needed paperwork for these incentives and will accommodate a delayed timeline while you wait for approval.
- Is familiar with utility rebate programs, contractors should fill out prescriptive rebate applications for you, and at a minimum to provide information to you for custom rebates (you'll have to work with your Utility representative and your contractor to complete those more complicated forms).
- Installs equipment in a way so it can be maintained easily
- Promotes preventative maintenance which reduces maintenance and extends equipment life

[Questions to Ask](#)

In the end, most contractors only talk energy efficiency when you ask for it. So ask questions—the ideal is to get multiple choices so you can weigh the energy savings with cost to install.

Here are some questions you might ask a contractor:

- What is the efficiency rating of this piece of equipment? How does that compare to other units?
- Have you installed equipment like this before? How did it perform?
- How have you helped a business obtain a rebate for energy efficient equipment?
- What routine maintenance is needed to maintain efficiency and extend equipment life?
- Is there an Energy Star certified piece of equipment that would meet my needs?

The bottom line is that you may not always choose the most efficient piece of equipment, but at least you'll have the necessary information and a trusted partner to help you make educated decisions.