§ 1894. Competitive grants for outreach, enrollment and related services. 1. The authority shall issue one or more program opportunity notices or requests for proposals to solicit applications from partnerships or consortia comprised of constituency-based organizations which can connect community members to the program, including facilitating awareness of the program and enrollment, and (a) distribution utilities, (b) contractors that have signed enforceable agreements to meet standards set by the authority, including standards for local hiring and pre-apprenticeship and apprenticeship and other labor-management training program participation, (c) workforce development organizations that will recruit unemployed individuals, and provide training and job placement in conjunction with contractors pursuant to section eighteen hundred ninety-seven of this title; and/or (d) organized trades and their certification or apprenticeship programs. The authority shall specifically solicit applications that propose to demonstrate the feasibility of innovative financing mechanisms, including but not limited to applications undertaken in partnership with distribution utilities that propose to demonstrate the feasibility of on-bill financing. The public service commission and other appropriate agencies are authorized to coordinate with the authority and applicants in developing and implementing proposed demonstrations of innovative financing mechanisms.

2. In awarding grants, the authority shall:

(a) target communities in areas where energy costs are particularly high in relation to a measure of median household income as determined by the authority; or which have been designated as a nonattainment area for one or more pollutants pursuant to section 107 of the federal Clean Air Act (42 U.S.C. section 4207);

(b) give preference in awards to applicants that include significant participation by minority and women owned business enterprises and/or to applications to serve economically distressed communities;

(c) ensure that the awards as a whole reflect the geographic diversity of the state; and

(d) award a sufficient number of grants to make it possible to fully commit the resources allocated during the initial phase of the program.

3. (a) The authority is authorized to consult with the department of public service, the division of housing and community renewal, the department of labor and the department of environmental conservation, as appropriate, in making any determinations contemplated by this section.

(b) The authority shall consult with representatives of businesses who provide home heating oil, propane and other petroleum-based heating products to develop innovative financing mechanisms for energy efficiency retrofits.

(c) The authority shall consult with the division of housing and community renewal and the council established pursuant to section eighteen hundred ninety-eight of this title to develop strategies to mitigate any adverse economic impact of the program on tenants, including but not limited to residents of in rent-regulated housing or recipients of housing subsidies.

4. Any organization using funding provided under the program for marketing or other outreach activities shall not commingle such marketing or outreach activities with any other advocacy or policy promotion efforts.