



NEWS RELEASE

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Seven Southwest Minnesota projects receive CERTs Seed Grants for community-based clean energy efforts

SAINT PAUL, Minn. (01/22/2024)—Minnesota’s Clean Energy Resource Teams (CERTs) is awarding seed grants to 45 energy efficiency and renewable energy projects—including seven within the southwest region of Minnesota. The projects range from educational outreach on clean energy incentives, to energy efficiency for manufactured homes, to skill-building for clean energy careers.

Seed grants strive to support historically underserved communities.¹ Underserved communities include Minnesota populations with high energy burdens, where households spend more than 5% of their annual income on energy costs (compared to 2% for the average Minnesota household). For example, United Community Action Partnership’s “Home Education and Energy Saving Program” includes education and installation of energy saving products for households with low incomes.

Financial and programmatic support comes from CERTs’ partner the Minnesota Department of Commerce, with additional support from the Morgan Family Foundation. Minnesota’s seven regions are each receiving \$43,000. The support will be distributed among the projects which were selected by panels of local residents known as CERTs Regional Steering Committees.

“This new round of CERTs Seed Grants will support community-identified initiatives, help provide jobs and training opportunities, plus engage communities in reaching their clean energy goals,” says Joel Haskard, CERTs co-director.

CERTs Seed Grants encourage projects that help people see clean energy working in their own communities. With over \$1.98 million awarded to 509 projects since 2006, the newly funded 2024 projects will provide more opportunities for Minnesota communities to tangibly learn about and experience the benefits of clean energy.

For more information, visit: CleanEnergyResourceTeams.org/2024grants

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¹ CERTs defines underserved communities as energy burdened communities—those who spend more than 5% of their income on energy costs—and groups historically excluded from energy decisions and opportunities. This includes (but is not limited to) Black, Indigenous, people of color, women, immigrant, low-income, disabled, LGBTQ+, and geographically-isolated communities.

CERTs Seed Grants | Southwest Region

City of Comfrey: Comfrey Lighting Upgrade

Comfrey, Minn.—LED lighting upgrade in the Comfrey Municipal Building, which houses the Fire Hall, Police Department, Community Center, and City Clerk’s Office.

City of Slayton: City Library and Senior Center LED Retrofit

Slayton, Minn.—Retrofit all of the interior and exterior lighting to LED fixtures with a longer life and no ballast maintenance.

Murray County 4-H: Lighting Upgrade for Murray County 4-H Building

Slayton, Minn.—LED lighting upgrade to save on energy expenses and offer more educational opportunities in quiet learning spaces.

Slipstream Group, Inc.: Manufactured Home Building Basics Training

Southwest MN—This project will develop a curriculum to provide contractors and weatherization staff with a foundation of knowledge on manufactured home structures, heating systems, ductwork, and building science principles.

Southwest Minnesota Housing Partnership: Air Source Heat Pump Feasibility Assessments

Southwest MN—Feasibility assessments and estimated costs associated with the conversion of heating and water heating systems to heat pumps in three of 66 multifamily residential properties.

United Community Action Partnership: Home Education and Energy Saving Program

Southwest MN—Staff will provide energy-saving ideas, install low-cost energy saving products (LED bulbs, pipe wrap, etc.), update appliances with energy-efficient ones available through local utility providers, as well as perform energy audits.

West Central Initiative: What Fuels You? Ways That Make ‘Cents’ Video Series

Southwest MN—The video series will educate and inspire viewers by featuring Minnesotans using clean energy resources within their homes, businesses, and communities.

Statewide project details are available: CleanEnergyResourceTeams.org/2024grants

For more info from the Minnesota Department of Commerce Energy Resources Division and to sign up for the New Energy Programs newsletter: mn.gov/commerce/energy

About the Clean Energy Resource Teams: The Clean Energy Resource Teams, or CERTs, connects individuals and communities in Minnesota to the resources they need to identify and implement community-based clean energy projects. CERTs is a partnership of the University of Minnesota Extension Regional Sustainable Development Partnerships, Minnesota Department of Commerce, Southwest Regional Development Commission, and the Great Plains Institute. Learn more:

CleanEnergyResourceTeams.org