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## **Five Central 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 five within the central 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.<sup>1</sup> 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, the Community Grassroots Solutions project will provide training and access to clean energy resources in a local immigrant community.

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](https://CleanEnergyResourceTeams.org/2024grants)

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<sup>1</sup> 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 | CENTRAL REGION

### **Akiing 8th Fire: Solar Thermal Outreach and Education**

Ponsford, Minn.—With solar thermal informational videos and community-based events in Tribal nations across Minnesota, Akiing 8th Fire aims to promote clean energy education, community engagement, and accessibility, while fostering partnerships and breaking down barriers to a sustainable energy future.

### **City of Detroit Lakes: Detroit Lakes Library Lighting Upgrade**

Detroit Lakes, Minn.—This GreenStep City is working toward its goal to become more energy efficient by upgrading the library lighting to LEDs.

### **Community Grassroots Solutions: Clean Energy Community Empowerment**

St. Cloud, Minn.—Community Grassroots Solutions will bring together clean energy experts and Somali heritage communities in the St. Cloud area to address barriers in access to energy efficiency education.

### **Midwest Tribal Energy Resources Association: Gap Funding to Pursue Federal Funding for Tribal Clean Energy Projects**

Central MN—MTERA will provide resources directly to Tribes to fund necessary aspects of clean energy project development and implementation, such as funding grant writers or hiring contractors for specific aspects of projects outside of their or MTERA's expertise.

### **Slipstream Group, Inc: Manufactured Home Building Basics Training**

Central 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.

Statewide project details are available: [CleanEnergyResourceTeams.org/2024grants](https://CleanEnergyResourceTeams.org/2024grants)

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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/](https://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](https://CleanEnergyResourceTeams.org)

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