



CERTs 2016 Seed Grants Official Request for Proposals (RFP)

RFP for Assistance for Energy Efficiency & Renewable Energy Projects

The Minnesota Clean Energy Resource Teams (CERTs) seeks applications for limited financial assistance for energy efficiency and/or renewable energy projects requiring technical assistance.

Project funding can support technical assistance services (i.e., **labor costs only**, such as for a consultant, design professional, installer, or student labor) for projects in all seven **Minnesota** CERT regions: Central, Metro, Northeast, Northwest, Southeast, Southwest, and West Central.

The Clean Energy Resource Teams—or CERTs—are a statewide partnership with a shared mission to connect individuals and their communities to the resources they need to identify and implement community-based clean energy projects.

The primary objectives of this funding are to:

- Encourage the implementation of community-based energy efficiency and renewable energy projects in Minnesota CERT regions
- Provide a forum for community education about energy efficiency and renewable energy technologies and their economic, ecological, and community benefits

For full details and all materials, visit <http://rfp.mncerts.org>.

Funding for these projects is provided through the MN Department of Commerce, Division of Energy Resources.

Regional Funding Availability for 2016

Each region has its own pool of funding—\$20,000 per region—available for technical assistance to catalyze community energy efficiency and renewable energy projects. Each regional team's Steering Committee will make its own selections and project funding levels will vary by region, though for all regions, these are considered *seed* grants and are not intended to fund a project in its entirety.

Amounts: Most projects have historically received funding for amounts between \$1,000 and \$5,000.

All projects must be completed by December 30th, 2016. Projects may only invoice for up to half of their seed grant funds by June 15th, 2016. Funding is provided for labor services only and will be provided on a *reimbursement* basis.

Materials & Submission Information

The CERT Funding Application Form can be found at <http://rfp.mncerts.org>.

A note about identifying your CERT Region: Indicate in your RFP application in which region your project resides. To identify your region, download a CERTs map of Minnesota at <http://bit.ly/certsmap>.

Applying to multiple regions: A single project may apply for funding from more than one region if the project spans more than one region. **Applicants applying to multiple regions are required to complete a Multiple-Regions Application Addendum** that must be requested from either Lissa Pawlisch or Joel Haskard at RFP@CleanEnergyResourceTeams.org or by calling 612-624-2293 or 612-625-8759, respectively.

Proposals must be submitted electronically to RFP@CleanEnergyResourceTeams.org no later than 4:00pm, Monday, October 26th, 2015. Please be sure to include:

- **CERT Seed Grant Application form (Word format preferred)**
- **Documentation of project impacts (if applicable)**
- **Letters of Commitment from project team members based outside of applicant organization (if applicable)**
- **Documentation of secured funding (if applicable)**
- **Multiple-Regions Application Addendum (if applicable)**

Eligibility

- Project must be located within one of the seven Minnesota CERT regions: Central, Metro, Northeast, Northwest, Southeast, Southwest, or West Central (<http://bit.ly/certsmap>)
- Project must seek funding for technical assistance support: **Labor costs ONLY** (such as for a consultant, design professional, installer, or student labor). *Ineligible* costs include: materials, hardware, printing, food and travel.
- Applicant must demonstrate that the project will be completed within the funding period (January 4, 2016 through December 30, 2016).
- Applicant understands that the project will be **paid AFTER work is completed.**
- Applicant understands that up to 50% of the awarded amount may be paid before June 30, 2016, *only if* labor has been completed by that time and Interim Invoice and Interim Report are complete.
- Project must demonstrate the ability and commitment to serve as a community-wide educational resource for renewable energy and/or energy efficiency.
- Project must make itself available for tours, interviews, etc. during and after the project and be willing to have a case study written about it.
- If project includes implementation, the project should utilize technologies that are technically sound with well-demonstrated and documented effectiveness, ideally vetted by an independent third-party. Should you have any questions about the viability of the technology you propose to use, please contact Lissa Pawlisch prior to starting a proposal at either pawl0048@umn.edu or 612-624-2293.
- Any applicant considering a small wind project application must contact Lissa Pawlisch prior to starting a proposal at either pawl0048@umn.edu or 612-624-2293.
- Project cannot seek funding for work completed prior to January 4th, 2016.

Timeline

Deadline/Date	
October 26, 2015 @ 4:00pm	Proposals MUST BE SUBMITTED ELECTRONICALLY to RFP@CleanEnergyResourceTeams.org
December 4, 2015	Selections made by each regional CERT Steering Committee
Second week in December	Seed grant applicants notified of award. Seed grant awardees need to confirm ability to move forward on project.
December 18, 2015	Contracting forms due
January 4, 2016	Seed grant awards announced publicly
January 4, 2016	Project may begin work
June 15, 2016 @ 4:00pm	Project Interim Report due (form provided by CERTs). Projects may submit an Interim Invoice with their Interim Report for eligible expenses up to 50% of the full project award.

June 15, 2016	Any project that has yet to begin project activities may have funding revoked. Funds will be redirected to other project(s) in the region.
December 30, 2016 @ 4:00pm	Project must be completed and Final Report submitted electronically (form provided by CERTs). Project must submit a Final Invoice with their Final Report for eligible expenses up to the remainder of the full project award. Invoices must be dated December 30, 2016 or earlier. Early project completion will expedite payment.

Review Process

Proposals will be reviewed and projects selected by Regional CERT Steering Committees in Central, Northeast, Northwest, Southeast and West Central. In the Metro, a designated Review Committee will review and select projects. In the Southwest, the Regional Steering Committee reviews projects and recommends a slate of projects for funding. This recommendation is then reviewed by the Rural Minnesota Energy Board and the Southwest Regional Development Commission Board for official approval. Please note: CERT staff do not vote on projects.

Review Criteria

Projects will be evaluated on Statewide Criteria as well as Regional Criteria. Please review the Statewide Criteria and the additional Regional Criteria specific to your project's region.

Statewide Criteria:

1. Advance community energy efficiency and/or renewable energy
2. Ideally, provide measurable energy savings/offsets
3. Have high potential to provide replicable models
4. Engage and involve a variety of community partners
5. Demonstrate clear goals, benchmarks, timelines, and budgets
6. Have a well-articulated plan to share their work and use it to educate a broader audience

Additional Regional Criteria and Preferences:

Central CERT	Central CERT is interested in working with awarded applicants on developing the “well-articulated plan to share their work and use it to educate a broader audience,” as stated above in Criteria #6
Metro CERT	Metro CERT will give preference to projects that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrate an innovative approach to utilizing existing energy programs, technologies, organizations and resources (for example, taking advantage of available utility rebates or utility-funded assistance programs) • Maximize cost-effectiveness by demonstrating efforts to achieve energy efficiency before deploying renewable energy • Engage communities or audiences that are underserved by energy programs, organizations, and resources
Northeast CERT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preference given to projects not previously funded • 25% match required (in-kind allowed)
Northwest CERT	No special priorities specified. Northwest CERT is interested in seeing as many entities with as wide a range of potential applications apply as possible.

Southeast CERT	No special priorities specified. Southeast CERT is interested in seeing as many entities with as wide a range of potential applications apply as possible.
Southwest CERT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ONLY non-profit and public sectors eligible • Preference to focus on youth, partnerships, mixed/gap funding sources and education • Demonstrable results AND clear about results, in particular about the educational results
West Central CERT	No special priorities specified. West Central CERT is interested in seeing as many entities with as wide a range of potential applications apply as possible.

Reporting

CERTs will provide a template for your Interim Report (due June 15, 2016) and Final Report (due December 30, 2016). You must show progress on your project – via your Interim Report – by June 15th or your funding will be revoked.

Questions

Please consult the list of Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) at <http://rfp.mncerts.org> to find an answer to your question. FAQ will be updated on an ongoing basis. Questions regarding the proposal process may also be directed to CERT staff, listed below.

Central, Northeast, Northwest, Southeast, and West Central Regions:

Lissa Pawlisch & Joel Haskard, University of Minnesota Regional Sustainable Development Partnerships & Extension
(612) 624-2293 or pawl0048@umn.edu and (612) 625-8759 or haska004@umn.edu

Central Region:

Sarah Hayden Shaw, Central CERT Coordinator
(218) 760-6837
hayden@cleanenergyresourceteams.org

Northeast Region:

Bill Mittlefehldt, Northeast CERT Coordinator
(218) 726-6146
bill@cleanenergyresourceteams.org

Northwest Region:

Anna Carlson, Northwest CERT Coordinator
(218) 755-2979
anna@cleanenergyresourceteams.org

Southeast Region:

Michelle Palm, Southeast CERT Coordinator
(612) 325-1441
michelle@cleanenergyresourceteams.org

West Central Region:

Erin Smith, West Central CERT Coordinator
(320) 289-1981 Ext.110 or erin.smith@umrvdc.org

Southwest Region:

Annette Fiedler, SW Regional Development Commission
(507) 836-1631 or phydev@swrdc.org

Metro Region:

Diana McKeown, Great Plains Institute
(612) 278-7158 or dmckeown@gpisd.net