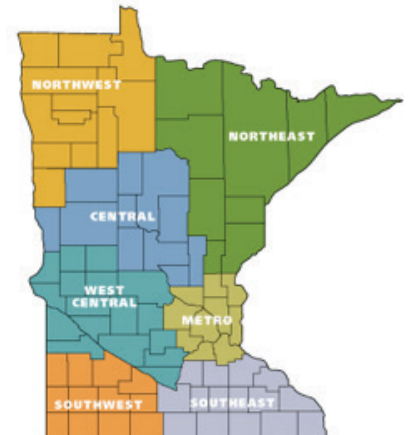


Clean Energy Resource Teams (CERTs) Seed Grants Request for Proposals (RFP) for Energy Efficiency & Renewable Energy Projects



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
- Spur projects that are highly visible in their community and replicable by others
- Provide a forum for community education about energy efficiency and renewable energy technologies and their many benefits

For full details and all materials, visit cleanenergyresourceteams.org/seedgrants

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

Regional Funding Availability for 2020

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 \$2,000 and \$5,000. In general there are more requests than funds available.

All projects must be completed and Final Report must be received by January 29, 2021. Projects may only invoice for up to half of their seed grant funds by June 19, 2020. 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 cleanenergyresourceteams.org/seedgrants.

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 cleanenergyresourceteams.org/map.

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, Friday, October 11, 2019. 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 (cleanenergyresourceteams.org/map)
- Project must seek funding for **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 6, 2020 through January 29, 2021).
- Preference will be given to proposals that are from, led by, and/or includes meaningful participation by historically underserved populations.
- 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.

Contractual Terms

- Applicant understands that the project will be paid *AFTER* work is completed. For applicants for whom having a delay in payment would be burdensome, or would even discourage applying, please contact Lissa Pawlisch (at either pawl0048@umn.edu or 612-624-2293). We may provide advance payments for up to a third of the awarded seed grant amount for a limited number of projects. (No advance payments will be given for SW CERT.)
- Applicant understands that up to 50% of the awarded amount may be paid before June 19, 2020, *only if* labor has been completed by that time and Interim Invoice and Interim Report are complete.
- Applicant understands that no invoices will be paid until the project report and associated data about project results are received.
- Applicant understands that final report will be completed by applicant organization itself, *not* by any contractor even if the contractor performed the labor.

- Project must demonstrate the ability and commitment to serve as a community-wide educational resource for renewable energy and/or energy efficiency. This includes making itself available for tours and interviews during and after the project grant period as well as being willing to share results via a case study (that CERTs will write).
- Project cannot seek funding for work completed prior to January 6, 2020.

Timeline

Date	Tasks
August 1, 2019	Issue RFP; start accepting applications
Fri., October 11, 2019 @ 4:00pm	Proposals MUST BE SUBMITTED ELECTRONICALLY to rfp@cleanenergyresourceteams.org
Early December 2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Funded projects notified • Non-funded projects notified
Fri., December 13, 2019	Contracting forms due (except for SW; SW is due December 20 th)
Mon., Jan. 6, 2020	<p>Projects may begin work</p> <p>Awards announced publically; CERTs does media outreach about funded projects</p>
Fri., June 19, 2020 @ 4:00pm	<p>Project Interim Report Due (form provided by CERTs)</p> <p>Projects may also submit an interim invoice with their Interim Report for eligible expenses up to 50% of the full project award.</p> <p><u>Any project that has yet to begin project activities will have funding revoked. Funds will be redirected to other project(s) in the region.</u></p>
Fri., Jan 29, 2021 @ 4:00pm	Project must be completed and Final Report submitted electronically (form provided by CERTs). Project must submit an invoice with their Final Report for eligible expenses up to the remainder of the full project award.
March 1 – July 2021	CERTs will work with Seed Grant Recipients to develop project case studies.

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
7. Preference will be given to proposals that are from, led by, and/or include meaningful participation by historically underserved populations

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scale-able/replicable • High-energy consumers (i.e. restaurants/small business) –projects that go beyond lighting • Outreach to connect underserved/underresourced (defined broadly) residential communities on energy efficiency resources • Preference for outer ring counties (Isanti, Sherburne, Wright, Carver, Anoka, Scott)
Northeast CERT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preference given to projects not previously funded • 25% match required (in-kind allowed)
Northwest CERT	<p>No special requirements, though Northwest CERT does place a special emphasis on projects that are high profile, could serve as a model for other like sites/entities, have a strong community education component, and can demonstrate long term sustainability.</p> <p>In addition, the Steering Committee is particularly interested in projects from smaller communities.</p>
Southeast CERT	<p>No special priorities specified.</p> <p>Southeast CERT is interested in seeing as many entities, with as wide a range of potential applications, apply as possible, though Southeast CERT does place a special emphasis on projects that are high profile, could serve as a model for other like sites/entities, have a significant community reach, or have strong community connections.</p>
Southwest CERT	<p>Only non-profit and public sectors eligible. They may work with and sponsor application by a private entity.</p> <p>Strong Preference for projects that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus on youth, partnerships, mixed/gap funding sources, and education • Have strong educational component • Demonstrate results AND clear about results, in particular about the educational results. • Emphasize community impact / action
West Central CERT	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 19, 2020) and Final Report (due January 29, 2021). You must show progress on your project – via your Interim Report – by June 19th or your funding will be revoked.

Questions & Proposal Review

Please consult the list of Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) at cleanenergyresourceteams.org/seedgrants 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. We also encourage you to contact your regional coordinator in advance of submitting a proposal.

Central Region:

Melissa Birch, Central CERT Coordinator
(218) 866-2338
melissa@cleanenergyresourceteams.org

Metro Region:

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

Northeast Region:

Colby Abazs, Northeast CERT Coordinator
(218) 353-1448
colby@cleanenergyresourceteams.org

Northwest Region:

Joel Anastasio, Northwest CERT Coordinator, Headwaters Regional Development Commission
(218) 333-6538
janastasio@cleanenergyresourceteams.org

Southeast Region:

Chris Meyer, Southeast CERT Coordinator
(507) 454-2691
chris@cleanenergyresourceteams.org

Southwest Region:

Annette Fiedler, Southwest CERT Coordinator, Southwest Regional Development Commission
(507) 836-1631
phydev@swrdc.org

West Central Region:

Jacob Selseth, West Central CERT Coordinator
(612) 801-7955
jacob@cleanenergyresourceteams.org