



Minnesota ENERGY STAR® Challenge Community Partner Request for Proposals

The Minnesota ENERGY STAR Challenge (Challenge) invites proposals for a community partner that will work with the Challenge to demonstrate significant energy savings in local commercial buildings and increase the number of ENERGY STAR certified buildings within that community.

Eligible Applicants: Minnesota city governments, local chambers of commerce, or business associations are eligible applicants. Electric utilities, gas utilities, and county governments are encouraged to participate in proposals as partners.

Proposal Due Date: **October 22, 2015**

Project Background

ENERGY STAR certified buildings confer a variety of benefits to local businesses, the local economy and the environment. A growing body of research demonstrates that ENERGY STAR certified buildings on average use 35% less energy than comparable buildings, command higher occupancy rates and rental premiums, and reduce air emissions as well as operating costs.¹

Minnesota Statute 216B.241 establishes a goal of achieving 1,000 ENERGY STAR certified buildings in the state. The goal of the Minnesota ENERGY STAR Challenge is to work toward increasing ENERGY STAR buildings in the state to 1,000 and encourage participants to achieve >20% energy savings over 10 years.

The Challenge will provide resources to help businesses save energy and achieve ENERGY STAR certification, including:

- Free energy assessments and energy benchmarking
- Assistance identifying energy saving projects eligible for rebates and financing
- Incentives to help pay for ENERGY STAR certification of buildings
- Recognition of participants

The Challenge is open to any building that is eligible to achieve an ENERGY STAR score of 1 – 100 ([see the list of building types here](#)). For the purpose of this RFP, communities are encouraged to consider an emphasis on high energy use, private sector commercial buildings such as hospitals, medical offices, hotels, supermarkets and bank branches.

¹ “Ten reasons to pursue ENERGY STAR certification” <http://www.energystar.gov/buildings/about-us/how-can-we-help-you/build-energy-program/business-case/10-reasons-pursue-energy-star>

The Challenge is a joint project of the Great Plains Institute, the U.S. Green Building Council – Minnesota, and the Minnesota Chamber of Commerce’s Energy Smart program. The Challenge is supported by a grant from the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency and in-kind contributions from several utilities.

Benefits of Participation & ENERGY STAR Challenge Commitment to Local Partners:

The Minnesota ENERGY STAR Challenge partners will provide targeted technical assistance and incentives to eligible building owners and managers in the selected partner community. At a minimum this will include:

- Free energy benchmarking assistance for at least 30 buildings
- Free on-site energy assessments for at least 15 buildings, along with information about rebates and financing for energy-saving projects
- Free assistance in pursuing ENERGY STAR certification for eligible businesses
- Outreach assistance to increase participation
- \$5,000 available (up to \$500 cost match per building) to support the cost of PE verification for ENERGY STAR building certification, on a first come first serve basis
- Tracking participation metrics and documenting the local results of the Challenge

The Minnesota ENERGY STAR Challenge will further work with the community partner to convene a team of local stakeholders that guide and assist with local implementation including:

- Setting relevant local goals for the project
- Developing a plan to engage local building owners and tenants
- Conducting outreach through their local networks
- Recognizing local participants and their accomplishments

Community Partner Commitment to ENERGY STAR Challenge:

The community partner will assist with the planning and local implementation of the Minnesota ENERGY STAR Challenge to ensure that the project meets the needs of local participants. The community partner will:

- Designate a local coordinator (this could be a Green Corps member) who will serve as the point of contact for the Minnesota ENERGY STAR Challenge and local stakeholders. The local coordinator will serve a key role in the planning and implementation. Estimated time commitment: 5 hours/week through early 2016, followed by 1 – 3 hours/week thereafter.
- Assist with identifying and convening a team of local stakeholders to set local goals for the challenge and coordinate outreach, implementation and recognition.
- Provide a matching contribution to support implementation of the Minnesota ENERGY STAR Challenge in your community. The ENERGY STAR Challenge strongly encourages, but does not require, a cash match at an amount meaningful to the community in order to offset some of the direct costs of the program. An in-kind match is required, and may include staff time and other resources to support any of the following activities (among others):
 - Supply a list of local businesses along with contact information.
 - Provide information about local businesses and buildings (e.g. size, use type, year built).

- Offer in-kind professional engineering staff time needed to achieve ENERGY STAR certification of local buildings (if your entity or partners have a PE on staff).
- Implement direct outreach to local businesses (e.g. in newsletters, social media, website, etc.).
- Identify of local entities that may provide a project sponsorship or additional in-kind support.
- Obtain meeting space for local project meetings.
- Obtain meeting space for (optional) public events such as a launch, trainings for businesses, recognition, etc.
- Provide light refreshments for meetings.

Partnership Summary and Timeline:

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| • Select Community Partner | Fall 2015 |
| • Convene local project team, set community goals, and plan outreach strategy | Fall/Winter 2015 |
| • Launch local project | Winter 2016 |
| • Provide businesses with assistance to track energy use, identify and implement energy savings, and pursue ENERGY STAR certification | 2016 |

Application and Selection Process Timeline

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|---|---------------------------------------|
| • Request for Proposals released to communities | September 2015 |
| • Community Partner proposals due | October 22nd, 2015 |
| • Community partner selected | December 01st, 2015 |

Proposal Components

Please include the following information in your proposal:

1. Applicant Information:
 - a. Which entities are partnering on this proposal?
 - b. Which organization is the lead entity?
 - c. Name, title and contact information of the individual who will serve as community's project lead.
2. Community Information:
 - a. Gas and electric utilities that serve your community.
 - b. Population of community.
 - c. Description of the business sector and the commercial, industrial and institutional building stock.
 - d. Any information readily available about the number of buildings (total and by different type), the age distribution of buildings in the community, etc.
3. Local energy and sustainability goals: Describe how this project aligns with goals and priorities already identified by the community. Please note any of the following items if they apply, providing attachments or weblinks to more information, where possible:

- a. Participation in GreenStep Cities and other relevant programs.
 - b. Energy or sustainability goals adopted by applicant or other community partners (please provide specific information about the goals and partners).
 - c. Location of energy or sustainability goals (e.g. comprehensive plan, annual strategic plan, city council or commission work plan, etc.).
4. Proposed Implementation Details: Briefly describe how the community partners will target and implement the Challenge locally.
 - a. Community partners that will be engaged in goal setting, planning and implementation.
 - b. Desired focus areas -- target business sectors, building types, or locations (if any).
 - c. Initial goals and outcomes (e.g. number of businesses your community intends to engage in benchmarking, energy savings, and ENERGY STAR building certification). If none, please address your community's willingness to establish goals as part of the project.
 - d. Recognition opportunities (e.g. state of the city, city council meeting, chamber event, press, local events, and other venues).
5. Local match: Provide a letter of commitment that details the type and amount of cash and in-kind match that the local partners will provide if selected to participate in the challenge. Cash matches will be remitted to the Great Plains Institute no later than December 31, 2015.
6. Letters of support (Optional): Please provide a letter of support from any entities that will either participate in, or otherwise support, local implementation of the Minnesota ENERGY STAR Challenge. Optional letters of support may come from the following entities, among others:
 - a. Mayor and City Council
 - b. Chamber of Commerce or other business associations
 - c. Local businesses
 - d. Utility providers (electric, gas)
 - e. City Administrator and department directors

Questions

All questions concerning this RFP may be directed to:

Abby Finis
Great Plains Institute
612-767-7295
afinis@gpisd.net

Proposal Submission

Please send 1 hard copy and 1 electronic copy of proposals to:

Great Plains Institute
ATTN: Abby Finis
2801 21st Ave S., Suite 220
Minneapolis, MN 55407

And: afinis@gpisd.net

Proposal Due Date: **October 22, 2015**