

# Clean Energy Resource Teams (CERTs) Seed Grants Request for Proposals (RFP) for Community-based Clean Energy Projects



**CERTs seed grants are available to assist community-based clean energy projects in Minnesota.**

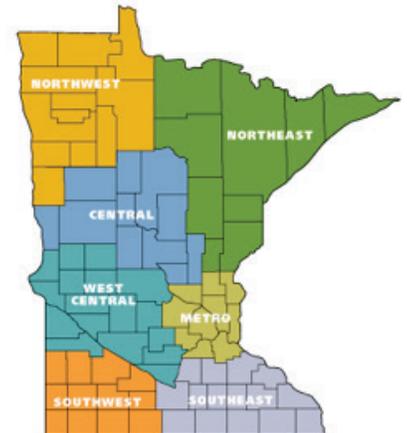
Applications are due by 4 pm on Friday, October 8, 2021.

Projects may start work in early December 2021 and must be completed by January 6, 2023.

CERTs seed grants can be used for labor and minor materials and supplies. They cannot pay for equipment. See details below.

Wherever you are with your project idea, you can contact us. Staff are available to assist you throughout your project including with completing your initial application. Start by contacting your CERT Regional Coordinator:

<https://www.cleanenergyresourceteams.org/staff>



## **The primary objectives of this funding are to:**

- Encourage community-based clean energy projects in each Minnesota CERT region. Clean energy projects can include projects such as: energy efficiency and conservation, renewable energy, electric vehicle-related projects, and energy storage.
- Spur projects that are highly visible in their community and can be replicated by others
- Provide an opportunity for community education about clean energy and its many benefits

## **Regional Funding Availability for 2022**

Each region has its own pool of funding: \$20,000 per region. **Each regional CERT Steering Committee will make the funding selections for its region.** See map above for 7 CERT regions of Minnesota.

Amounts: These are considered *seed* grants. Projects have historically received funding for amounts between \$2,000 and \$5,000. There are usually more requests than funds available.

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

**For the application form, examples of past projects, sample applications and a video tutorial about how to complete the application, visit: [cleanenergyresourceteams.org/seedgrants](https://www.cleanenergyresourceteams.org/seedgrants)**

## Eligibility

- Project must be located in Minnesota.
- Eligible applicants include but are not limited to: nonprofit organizations, community-based organizations, local governments, tribal nations, schools, libraries, civic associations, religious institutions, service clubs, student groups, business associations, cooperatives, food shelves, shelters, and for profit entities if the project has a larger public purpose. If you have questions about eligibility, email: [rfp@cleanenergyresourceteams.org](mailto:rfp@cleanenergyresourceteams.org).
- Eligible costs include labor and minor materials and supplies. Examples of eligible and ineligible costs are listed below. If you have questions about eligible costs, email [rfp@cleanenergyresourceteams.org](mailto:rfp@cleanenergyresourceteams.org).
  - Examples of eligible labor costs include: consultant fees, design professional fees, electrician costs, installer costs, student interns, or participation incentives.
  - Eligible material and supply costs include: printing, postage, office materials and supplies to conduct outreach and education, training and registration fees, mileage (at approved state rates).
  - **Not** eligible: capital costs, or substantial equipment and hardware
- Project must be completed within the funding period: December 1, 2021, through January 6, 2023.
- Preference will be given to proposals that are from, led by, and/or include meaningful participation by historically underserved populations. CERTs defines underserved populations as energy burdened communities—those who spend more than 5% of their income on energy costs—and other groups historically excluded from energy decisions and opportunities. This includes (but is not limited to) Black, Indigenous and People of Color, immigrants, low income, disabled, women, LGBTQ+ communities, and geographically isolated communities.

## Contractual Terms

- Projects will submit an interim and final report.
- CERTs cannot fund work completed before December 1, 2021.
- Payments are normally made on a reimbursement basis, after the work is completed. However, pre-payments may be allowed if you ask before October 8th at [rfp@cleanenergyresourceteams.org](mailto:rfp@cleanenergyresourceteams.org).
- Projects can request payment as soon as their projects are done. Project can also request interim payments. 50% of the project award can be paid when 50% of the project is complete.
- Invoices will not be paid until reports are received, reviewed and approved.
- If there has been no progress on the project by the time of the interim report (June 1, 2022), funding may be revoked and reallocated to another project in the same region.
- Projects agree to share results publicly via a case study (that CERTs will write).

## Materials & Submission Information

All proposals meeting the eligibility requirements described in the RFP and received by the deadline will be evaluated based on the statewide and regional criteria described below.

Responders are **encouraged to seek appropriate collaborators and/or partners as necessary**. In addition, CERT staff are available to help potential applicants with their proposals. **Please reach out with questions about the application, the proposal process or for other assistance:** [cleanenergyresourceteams.org/staff](https://cleanenergyresourceteams.org/staff).

Complete responses will include the following:

- A completed CERTs Seed Grant Application form (Word format preferred)
- Documentation (email, letter of support) from project team members not in applicant organization (if applicable)
- Documentation of secured funding (award letter, email) (if applicable)

- Multiple-Region Application Addendum (if applicable)

The seed grant application form can be found at [cleanenergyresourceteams.org/seedgrants](https://cleanenergyresourceteams.org/seedgrants).

**Applying to multiple regions:** A single project may apply for funding from more than one region if the project spans more than one region. If you wish to apply to multiple regions, you must submit the application form **and** the Multiple-Region Application Addendum. **Request the addendum** by emailing [rfp@cleanenergyresourceteams.org](mailto:rfp@cleanenergyresourceteams.org) or by calling 612-624-2293.

**Proposals must be submitted electronically to [rfp@cleanenergyresourceteams.org](mailto:rfp@cleanenergyresourceteams.org) no later than 4pm, October 8, 2021. Please feel free to contact [CERTs staff](#) for help writing your application.**

### Timeline

Date	Tasks
July 7, 2021	CERTs Issues RFP and begins accepting applications.
July 7 - Oct. 8, 2021	CERTs staff available to assist applicants with seed grant ideas, questions and applications.
Fri., October 8, 2021 @4pm	Final deadline for applications. Email to <a href="mailto:rfp@cleanenergyresourceteams.org">rfp@cleanenergyresourceteams.org</a> .
Oct. 11 – Nov. 12, 2021	Steering Committees review applications and meet to determine project funding.
Nov. 19 - Dec. 3, 2021	CERTs notifies all applicants of funding decisions. CERTs works on contract paperwork with projects awarded funding. If applicable, projects may be asked if they would accept less money than requested.
Early Dec. 2021	Organizations will receive an email notifying them when they can begin work.
Early January 2022	Public announcement of awards; CERTs does media outreach about funded projects.
June 1, 2022 @4pm	Project Interim Report Due (form provided by CERTs) Projects may also submit an interim invoice for up to 50% of the full project award. <b><u>Any project that has not begun work may have funding revoked.</u></b> Funds will be redirected to other project(s) in the region.
January 6, 2023 @ 4pm	Final Invoice and Final Report are due to <a href="mailto:rfp@cleanenergyresourceteams.org">rfp@cleanenergyresourceteams.org</a> Project work must be completed. (Final Report form provided by CERTs).
January - July 2023	CERTs will work with Seed Grant Recipients to develop project case studies.

## Review Process

*CERTs staff do not vote on projects.* Projects will be selected by Regional CERT Steering Committees in Central, Northeast, Northwest, Southeast and West Central. In the Metro, a designated Review Committee will select projects. In the Southwest, the Regional Steering Committee reviews projects and recommends projects for funding to the Rural Minnesota Energy Board and the Southwest Regional Development Commission Board, which make the final decisions.

## 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. See the map on page 1 to identify your CERT region or for a more detailed version see: <https://www.cleanenergyresourceteams.org/map>

### Statewide Criteria:

1. Advance community-based clean energy projects
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. Preference will be given to proposals that are from, led by, and/or include meaningful participation by historically underserved populations

### Regional Criteria and Preferences:

<b>Central CERT</b>	Central CERT encourages first time applicants to apply.
<b>Metro CERT</b>	Looking for projects that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Are creative, out of the box, ideas to reduce energy use or create clean energy and/or engage communities through clean energy.</li><li>• Creative ideas to increase electrification of transportation (e.g., E-bikes, electric vehicles, mass transit).</li><li>• Reduce energy burden for lower-income or historically underserved communities especially with a focus on single and multi-unit residents, including manufactured housing through energy efficiency/conservation and solar adoption strategies.</li><li>• Reduce energy costs for small businesses by utilizing both energy efficiency/conservation and solar adoption strategies.</li></ul>
<b>Northeast CERT</b>	Preference given to projects not previously funded
<b>Northwest CERT</b>	Northwest CERT places a special emphasis on projects that are highly visible, could serve as a model for other like sites/entities, have a strong community education component, and can demonstrate long term sustainability. In addition, the Steering Committee is particularly interested in projects from smaller communities and populations that have been historically marginalized such as Indigenous, Black, and people of color.
<b>Southeast CERT</b>	Southeast CERT does not have additional priorities beyond the primary seed grant funding priorities. We are interested in seeing as many entities, with as wide a range of potential applications, apply as possible.

<b>Southwest CERT</b>	<p>Only non-profit and public sectors eligible. They may work with and sponsor application by a private entity. Strong Preference for projects that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Focus on youth, partnerships, mixed/gap funding sources, and education</li> <li>• Have strong educational component</li> <li>• Demonstrate results AND clear about results, in particular about the educational results.</li> <li>• Emphasize community impact / action</li> </ul>
<b>West Central CERT</b>	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 1, 2022) and Final Report (due January 6, 2023). You must show progress on your project – by noting it in your Interim Report or your funding may be revoked.

**Questions & Proposal Review**

If you have an idea, or even if you feel like this could be an opportunity but don't yet have a concrete idea, please reach out! Staff are available to help you with your application. Regional Coordinator contact information is listed below.

In addition, please consult the list of Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) at [cleanenergyresourceteams.org/seedgrants](http://cleanenergyresourceteams.org/seedgrants) to find answers to common questions.

<p><b>Central Region:</b> Melissa Birch, Central CERT Coordinator (218) 866-2338 <a href="mailto:melissa@cleanenergyresourceteams.org">melissa@cleanenergyresourceteams.org</a></p> <p><b>Metro Region:</b> Diana McKeown, Metro CERT Director, Great Plains Institute (612) 278-7158 <a href="mailto:dmckeown@gpisd.net">dmckeown@gpisd.net</a></p> <p><b>Northeast Region:</b> Colby Abazs, Northeast CERT Coordinator (218) 353-1448 <a href="mailto:colby@cleanenergyresourceteams.org">colby@cleanenergyresourceteams.org</a></p> <p><b>Northwest Region:</b> Shannon Stassen, Northwest CERT Coordinator, (218) 281-8693 <a href="mailto:shannon@cleanenergyresourceteams.org">shannon@cleanenergyresourceteams.org</a></p>	<p><b>Southeast Region:</b> Chris Meyer, Southeast CERT Coordinator (507) 454-2691 <a href="mailto:chris@cleanenergyresourceteams.org">chris@cleanenergyresourceteams.org</a></p> <p><b>Southwest Region:</b> Jason Walker, Southwest CERT Coordinator, Southwest Regional Development Commission (309) 255-0961 <a href="mailto:jasonw@swrdc.org">jasonw@swrdc.org</a></p> <p><b>West Central Region:</b> Jacob Selseth, West Central CERT Coordinator (612) 801-7955 <a href="mailto:jacob@cleanenergyresourceteams.org">jacob@cleanenergyresourceteams.org</a></p>
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