

## **45 community-based clean energy projects across Minnesota to receive over \$300,000 in CERTs Seed Grants**

SAINT PAUL, Minn. (01/22/2024)—The Clean Energy Resource Teams (CERTs) is awarding seed grants to 45 energy efficiency and renewable energy projects in communities across Minnesota. From Comfrey to Crookston, Welch to Wrenshall, communities are being funded for a wide scope of projects. The projects range from educational outreach on clean energy incentives, to energy efficiency for manufactured homes, to skill-building for clean energy careers.

CERTs 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, one project engages residents of manufactured homes to ensure their spaces are winter weather ready, saving residents energy and money.

Financial and programmatic support comes from the Minnesota Department of Commerce Energy Conservation and Optimization Program and the U.S. Department of Energy State Energy Program, with \$245,000 allocated for 2024 CERTs Seed Grants. The Morgan Family Foundation continues its support with an additional \$56,000. Local residents who make up CERTs Regional Steering Committees selected the projects. \$43,000 will be distributed among the projects in each of the seven regions of Minnesota.

“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.

“The innovations that come from these seed grants add to the momentum of our actions to transition to a clean energy future in Minnesota,” says Michelle Gransee, Deputy Commissioner of Energy Resources at the Minnesota Department of Commerce. “The range of ideas we see here shows the ability to find creative solutions. These projects support efforts across Minnesota to advance a cleaner, more equitable, resilient Minnesota for the future.”

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 <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 BY REGION**

### **CENTRAL REGION**

- Akiing 8th Fire: Solar Thermal Outreach and Education—Ponsford, Minn.
- City of Detroit Lakes: Detroit Lakes Library Lighting Upgrade—Detroit Lakes, Minn.
- Community Grassroots Solutions: Clean Energy Community Empowerment—St. Cloud, Minn.
- Midwest Tribal Energy Resources Association: Gap Funding to Pursue Federal Funding for Tribal Clean Energy Projects—Central MN
- Slipstream Group, Inc: Manufactured Home Building Basics Training—Central MN

### **METRO REGION**

- City of Robbinsdale: Eliminating Barriers for Energy Burdened Neighborhoods—Robbinsdale, Minn.
- Dream of Wild Health: Farm Agrivoltaic System—Hugo, Minn.
- Frogtown Green: FREE: Frogtown Residents (are) Energy Experts!—Saint Paul, Minn.
- Hastings Environmental Protectors: Hastings Home Energy Audit—Hastings, Minn.
- MN Interfaith Power and Light: Expanding the Base of IRA Ambassadors in BIPOC Communities—Minneapolis, Minn.
- Northside Residents Redevelopment Council Financial LLC: Northside Clean Energy Outreach—Minneapolis, Minn.
- Vessyll LLC: Northside Solar + Storage Project—Minneapolis, Minn.

### **NORTHEAST REGION**

- Arrowhead Cooperative: Grand Portage Community Backup Power Feasibility Study—Grand Portage, Minn.
- Food Farm: In-depth Energy Analysis for Organic Farms—Wrenshall, Minn.
- Just Housing: EmPOWERment - Introducing Green Building—Duluth, Minn.
- Midwest Tribal Energy Resources Association: Gap Funding to Pursue Federal Funding for Tribal Clean Energy Projects—Northeast MN
- MN Interfaith Power and Light: Northland Heat Pump Helpers—Duluth, Minn.
- Slipstream Group, Inc: Manufactured Home Building Basics Training—Northeast MN

### **NORTHWEST REGION**

- Aaron's Grocery: Energy Efficiency Cooling Equipment—Fertile, Minn.
- Care and Share of Crookston: Energy Efficient Utilities Upgrade—Crookston, Minn.
- City of Halstad: Wimmer Home HVAC Efficiency Pilot—Halstad, Minn.
- Midwest Tribal Energy Resources Association: Gap Funding to Pursue Federal Funding for Tribal Clean Energy Projects—Northwest MN
- Thief River Falls Food Shelf: Going Green, Going Clean—Thief River Falls, Minn.
- West Central Initiative: What Fuels You? Ways That Make 'Cents' Video Series—Northwest MN

### **SOUTHEAST REGION**

- City of Faribault: Energy Assessment Tool Library—Faribault, Minn.
- Growing Up Healthy: Weatherization for Mobile Home Residents—Rice County, Minn.
- LifeGate Services: Clean Energy for African Immigrant Communities—Rochester and Austin, Minn.
- Midwest Tribal Energy Resources Association: Gap Funding to Pursue Historic Amount of Federal Funding for Tribal Clean Energy Projects—Southeast MN
- Project FINE: Energy Efficiency Outreach—Winona, St. Charles, Lewiston, Altura, Minnesota City,

Goodview, Minn.

- Slipstream Group, Inc: Manufactured Home Building Basics Training—Southeast MN

## **SOUTHWEST REGION**

- City of Comfrey: Comfrey Lighting Upgrade—Comfrey, Minn.
- City of Slayton: City Library and Senior Center LED Retrofit—Slayton, Minn.
- Murray County 4-H: Lighting Upgrade for Murray County 4-H Building—Slayton, Minn.
- Slipstream Group, Inc.: Manufactured Home Building Basics Training—Southwest MN
- Southwest Minnesota Housing Partnership: Air Source Heat Pump Feasibility Assessments—Southwest MN
- United Community Action Partnership: Home Education and Energy Saving Program—Southwest MN
- West Central Initiative: What Fuels You? Ways That Make ‘Cents’ Video Series—Southwest MN

## **WEST CENTRAL REGION**

- City of Morris: Exploring Opportunities for Heat Pump Electrification—Morris, Minn.
- City of St. Cloud: Public Outreach on Green Hydrogen Production at St. Cloud Recovery Facility—St. Cloud, Minn.
- City of Willmar Parks and Recreation: Willmar Civic Center Scoreboard Lighting Upgrade—Willmar, Minn.
- Neighbors United Resource Center Food Shelf: Food Shelf Energy Saving Initiative—Granite Falls, Minn.
- River of Life Lutheran Church: Friends Building Lighting Upgrade—St. Peter, Minn.
- Slipstream Group, Inc: Manufactured Home Building Basics Training—West Central MN
- Southwest Minnesota Housing Partnership: Air Source Heat Pump Feasibility Assessments—West Central MN
- United Community Action Partnership: Home Education and Energy Saving Program—West Central MN

Project details are available: <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:

<https://CleanEnergyResourceTeams.org>

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