

Seven metro area projects receive CERTs Seed Grants for community-based clean energy efforts

SAINT PAUL, Minn. (01/22/2024)—Minnesota’s Clean Energy Resource Teams (CERTs) is awarding seed grants to 45 energy efficiency and renewable energy projects—including seven within the metro region of Minnesota. The projects range from educational outreach on clean energy incentives, to energy efficiency for manufactured homes, to innovative community uses for solar.

CERTs Seed Grants strive to support historically underserved communities.¹ 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, Vessyll is installing solar and battery storage at a rental property in the Hawthorne neighborhood of Minneapolis to collect data and report how solar plus storage can save residents money.

Financial and programmatic support comes from CERTs’ partner the Minnesota Department of Commerce, with additional support from the Morgan Family Foundation. Minnesota’s seven regions are each receiving \$43,000. The support will be distributed among the projects which were selected by a review panel made up of local individuals with diverse clean energy and community expertise.

“This round of CERTs Seed Grants includes several metro region projects focused on outreach and engagement about new clean energy incentives to reduce energy burden for underserved households,” says Diana McKeown, CERTs co-director.

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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¹ 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 | METRO REGION

City of Robbinsdale: Eliminating Barriers for Energy Burdened Neighborhoods

Robbinsdale, Minn. — In order to lower energy costs and increase energy efficiency for their most vulnerable community members, the City of Robbinsdale will pair volunteer outreach with Home Energy Squad audits and installation of energy efficient materials.

Dream of Wild Health: Farm Agrivoltaic System

Hugo, Minn.—Dream of Wild Health will work with Solar Bear—an Indigenous-owned solar company—on a ground-mounted agrivoltaic solar installation to power their new greenhouse and community gathering facility. The installation will serve as a demonstration and educational project for the wide variety of farm visitors.

Frogtown Green: FREE: Frogtown Residents (are) Energy Experts!

Saint Paul, Minn.—Frogtown residents will have better access to energy savings information from a neighborhood newsletter promoting clean energy opportunities, “FrogLab” educational workshops for kids, and energy activities at Frogtown Green's annual “Climate Carnival.”

Hastings Environmental Protectors: Hastings Home Energy Audit

Hastings, Minn.—This project will help Hastings residents understand home energy use and energy efficient upgrades by offering home energy audits and information on clean energy incentives available through the Inflation Reduction Act.

MN Interfaith Power and Light: Expanding the Base of IRA Ambassadors

Minneapolis, Minn.—MN Interfaith Power and Light will increase access to clean energy resources and information among residents of the Phillips and Ventura Village neighborhoods supporting efforts to reduce carbon emissions, build individual and local wealth, and uplift community health and well-being.

Northside Residents Redevelopment Council Financial LLC: Northside Clean Energy Outreach

Minneapolis, Minn.—In order to lower energy costs, equip households with heat pumps, and encourage clean energy job opportunities, NRRC will help Near North and Willard-Hay residents benefit from the clean energy incentives in the Inflation Reduction Act.

Vessyll LLC: Northside Solar + Storage Project

Minneapolis, Minn.—A solar and energy storage system will be installed in a four-unit residential building in the Hawthorne neighborhood. After installation, the system will be monitored to show how a project like this could be replicated in other communities.

Statewide project details are available: <https://CleanEnergyResourceTeams.org/2024grants>

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/

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/2024grants>

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