

**Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund  
2010 Request for Proposals (RFP)**

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**LCCMR ID: 060-B2**

**Project Title:**

Clean Energy Resource Teams Community Energy Action Program

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**LCCMR 2010 Funding Priority:**

B. Renewable Energy Related to Climate Change

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**Total Project Budget: \$** \$528,000

**Proposed Project Time Period for the Funding Requested:** 2 years, 2010 - 2012

**Other Non-State Funds: \$** \$0

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**Summary:**

CERTs Community Energy Action Program will help fourteen Minnesota communities fully design, implement, and celebrate clean energy and energy efficiency projects, acting as a springboard for ongoing energy initiatives.

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**Location:**

**Region:** Statewide

**County Name:** Statewide

**City / Township:**

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_____ Knowledge Base	_____ Broad App.	_____ Innovation
_____ Leverage	_____ Outcomes	
_____ Partnerships	_____ Urgency	_____ TOTAL

## PROJECT TITLE: Clean Energy Resource Teams Community Energy Action Program

### I. PROJECT STATEMENT

Many communities want to implement an energy project, but don't have the necessary expertise. CERTs technical resources, combined with project funding, would catalyze communities to move beyond talk to action with measurable outcomes. This initiative would walk a community through the process of identifying a project with high impacts and a high likelihood of success, provide them with resources to implement the project, and help them celebrate and leverage their project as a springboard for further energy efforts both within their community and as models for other Minnesota communities.

Our goal is to help 14 communities in Minnesota identify, implement, and celebrate a successful community-energy project that can then spur other clean energy initiatives with measurable environmental benefits, including reductions in mercury, sulfur dioxide, nitrogen oxide, and green house gas emissions. Should this pilot be successful, we would include this work in CERTs' future core funding requests.

The Community Energy Action Program would allocate \$15,000 to two communities in each of CERTs' seven regions to implement an energy project action plan. Modeled after the Design Team concept, communities will submit a proposal to engage a team of "experts" to help them work through a clean energy prioritization process that would culminate in 4-5 focused action steps to initiate a community energy project. Communities would then receive grant funds to implement their project, in addition to other technical resources and tools.

### II. DESCRIPTION OF PROJECT RESULTS

#### Result 1: *Community Recruitment*

**Budget:** \$ 79,000

Recruit communities to participate via an on-the-ground organizing presence, press releases, email blasts, an online formal Request for Proposal, and networking via regional CERT Steering Committees.

Deliverable	Completion Date
1. Development of web content including the formal request for proposal.	August 15, 2010
2. Media outreach to MN communities announcing this opportunity & how to apply in addition to outreach using the existing CERTs network & partners.	September 15, 2010
3. Direct community recruitment by regional organizers who would meet with interested communities to help them develop their proposals, effectively highlight their community's resources, and explore potential project ideas.	December 15, 2010

#### Result 2: *Selection of Communities*

**Budget:** \$ 68,000

Regional CERT Steering Committees meet to review applications and recommend select communities to Office of Energy Security based on four key factors: potential energy savings or clean energy generation from project, community resources available, partnerships in place, and likelihood of success implementing a community-energy project. The Regional CERT Steering Committees each have 8-15 members and include educators, utility representatives, engineers, farmers, environmental activists, local government staff, and renewable energy installers among others.

Deliverable	Completion Date
1. CERT Staff & Office of Energy Security conduct initial screening of proposals	January 15, 2011
2. Regional CERT Steering Committees review & rank proposals.	February 15, 2011
3. Regional CERT Steering committees meet with top applicants for proposal presentations.	April 1, 2011
4. Office of Energy Security reviews recommendations and issues letters to successful and unsuccessful recipients.	April 30, 2011
5. Outreach campaign (media and CERT network) to promote award winners and lay out next steps to help garner broader community interest and support.	May 15, 2011

#### Result 3: *Project Prioritization with Selected Communities*

**Budget:** \$ 69,000

CERTs staff and regional organizers will convene conference calls and meetings with community partners to evaluate and prioritize potential projects and draw on additional resources for both project screening and

**PROJECT TITLE: Clean Energy Resource Teams Community Energy Action Program**

development of a project implementation plan. Both selected and non-selected communities would be able to access CERTs’ resources and participate in regional community networking forums (as part of a CERT regional meeting).

<b>Deliverable</b>	<b>Completion Date</b>
1. Meet with the successful applicants to identify project steps & resources-14 mtgs	July 30, 2011
2. Communities formalize project work plan & agree to implementation milestones.	Sept. 30, 2011

**Result 4: *Implement a Community Energy Project***

**Budget:** \$ 272,000

Communities would implement their energy efficiency and/or renewable energy project plan. Funding would go toward technical assistance to further develop the project plan and project implementation. Types of eligible projects might include: insulate a community building; conduct business energy efficient lighting upgrades; or erect a small-scale wind and/or solar system at a local school.

<b>Deliverable</b>	<b>Completion Date</b>
1. Specific community project completed	April 30, 2012
2. Project report, photographs and evaluation	June 15, 2012

**Result 5: *Host a Community Energy Rally and Celebration Event***

**Budget:** \$ 40,000

CERT regional organizers will work with CERT staff and community partners to plan a celebratory event that showcases the selected project and spurs the community to pursue additional clean energy actions.

<b>Deliverable</b>	<b>Completion Date</b>
1. Community Energy Rally and Celebration	May 30, 2012

**III. PROJECT STRATEGY**

**A. Project Team/Partners:** CERTs is a collaboration among the organizations listed below. Our jointly held mission is to connect people with the technical resources they need to identify and implement community-scale energy efficiency and clean energy projects. Three organizations (as highlighted in the map to the right) staff the regional teams and as such would work directly with those teams to coordinate the community outreach, supervise regional organizers, guide community selection, and facilitate technical assistance.

- Office of Energy Security: Fiscal agent; will coordinate and issue community grants.
- UM Regional Sustainable Development Partnerships: Staffs the Central, Northeast, Northwest, Southeast, and West Central regions.
- Southwest Regional Development Commission: Staffs the Southwest region.
- Green Institute: Staffs the Metro region.
- Minnesota Project: Communication, web and media hub for all partners.

**B. Timeline Requirements:** Six months will be required for initial community recruitment with a proposal deadline in mid-December. We conservatively estimate it could take up to five months to review all proposals, meet with applicants and award grant funding. Once chosen, communities will have 4 months to work through their community process and formalize a project work plan and 8 months to implement their project and host a celebration.

**C. Long-Term Strategy:** The action program would be one component of CERTs’ technical assistance and grant services. We are requesting the resources to fully support regional organizers, their travel, and community grants, although the program will also draw on existing CERTs staff, our expertise, and our project planning tools and resources. In the coming year we plan to develop our organizing capacity in each region and thus plan to draw upon these resources—and expand them—if funded. Long term, if this effort is successful, we would plan to build this assistance program into our base legislative request and/or to seek private foundation funding to support these expanded community efforts.

# CERTs Community Energy Action Program Budget

## IV. TOTAL PROJECT REQUEST BUDGET (2 years)

<b>BUDGET ITEM</b>	<b>AMOUNT</b>
<b>Personnel:</b> Each region (7) will hire a half-time (50% time) organizer. 82% of the budget would go toward salary; 18% toward benefits and each of the seven organizers would be employed for a total of two years. Assumes a full time base salary = \$36,000 with benefits = \$6,500. UM RSDP = \$212,500 (to hire organizers for the 5 regions it staffs including the Cen, NE, NW, SE, & WC regions), Green Institute = \$42,500 (to hire an organizer for the Metro region), SW RDC = \$42,500 (to hire an organizer for the SW region).	\$ 297,500
web-maintenance and support (20% time, salary). MN Project = \$8,000	\$ 8,000
<b>Contracts:</b>	
Total of 14 contracts with community-groups (2 per each of the 7 regions), or with community-selected contractors, to fund the implementation of the identified clean energy project (e.g., air sealing and insulation in a community building, upgrading lighting in a local school, installing a solar or wind system in a community). Each contract (one per community) would total \$15,000. Office of Energy Security = \$210,000 as OES would handle all of the community grant contracting.	\$ 210,000
For a web-development firm to develop a new community-energy action fund page on the CERT website. MN Project = \$2,000	\$ 2,000
<b>Equipment/Tools/Supplies:</b>	
paper/printing for agendas and meeting materials. UM RSDP = \$650, Green Institute = \$350, SW RDC = \$150	\$ 1,150
<b>Travel:</b> Travel (all in-state) for community organizer to: meet with communities in advance of proposal deadline, meet with selected communities 2-3 times during project prioritization, attend community energy rally. Travel for applicant finalists to present their proposal to a regional steering committee (3 trips/region). Assumes: 17,000 miles @ \$0.55/mile. UM RSDP = \$7,350 (to cover travel in Cen, NE, NW, SE, WC region), Green Institute = \$750 (travel in Metro), SW RDC = \$1,250 (travel in SW).	\$ 9,350
<b>TOTAL PROJECT BUDGET REQUEST TO LCCMR</b>	<b>\$ 528,000</b>

## V. OTHER FUNDS

<b>SOURCE OF FUNDS</b>	<b>Status</b>
<b>Other Non-State \$ Being Applied to Project During Project Period:</b> Bush Foundation will fund CERTs for FY2010 and 2011 including organizing support in Metro, statewide event planner and evaluation assistance.	Secured
<b>Other State \$ Being Applied to Project During Project Period:</b> Renewable Development Fund (RDF) renewal to support core CERT staff (which engages local steering committees and establishes statewide network)	Pending
<b>In-kind Services During Project Period:</b> time of core-staff to develop RFP & direct the process and from Steering Committee members to evaluate proposals and meet with applicants	Pending
<b>Funding History:</b> \$ from RDF (via OES) to pilot this effort in WC MN (during FY2009) and in organizing support in NE & SE to generate community connections (in FY2008 and FY2009).	Secured

# CERTs Community Energy Action Program



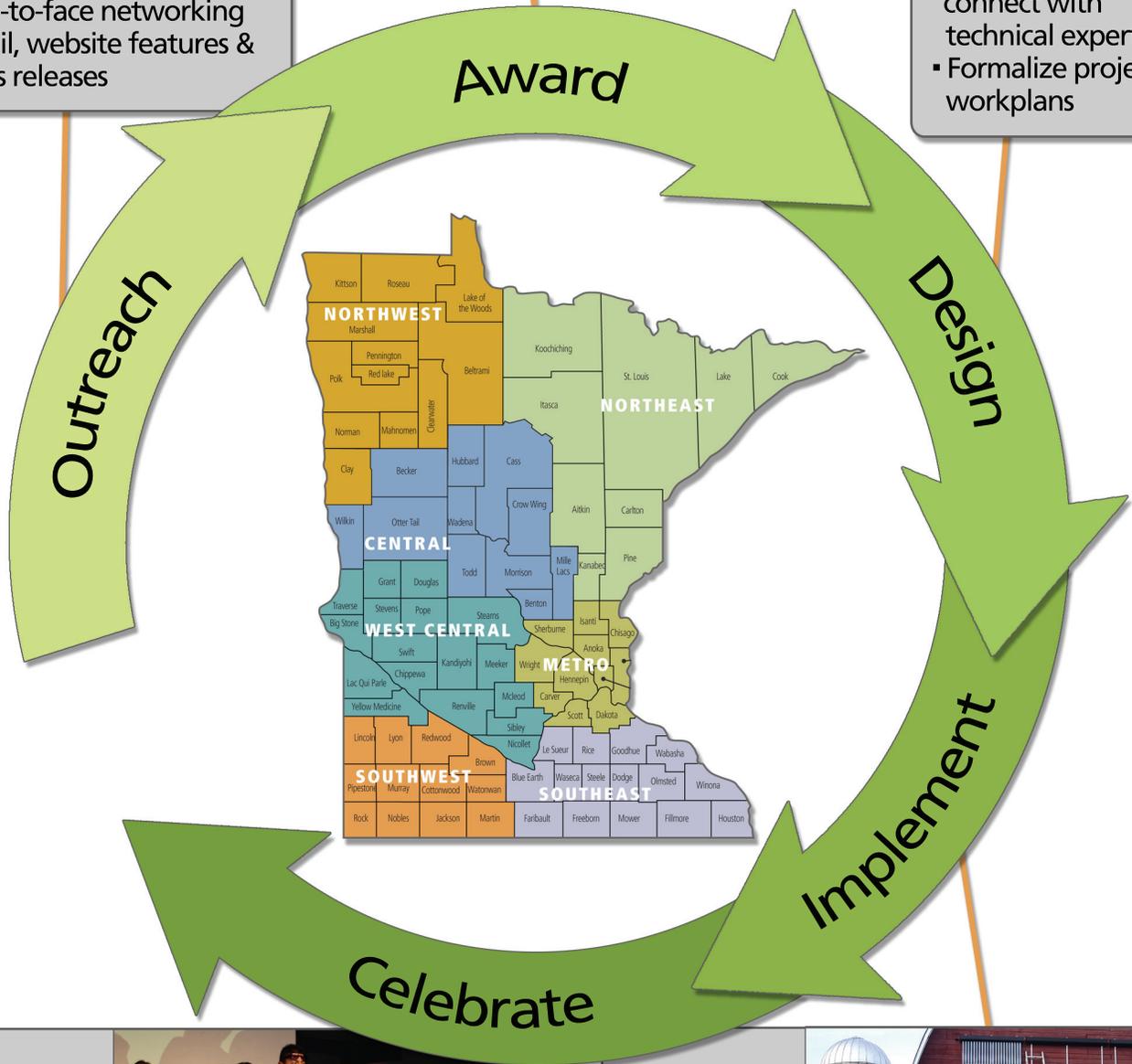
- Face-to-face networking
- Email, website features & press releases



- Review proposals & meet top applicants
- Publicize winners & build support



- Prioritize opportunities & connect with technical experts
- Formalize project workplans



- Plan & host community energy rally
- Harness community momentum



- Project work executed
- Reporting completed



## PROJECT TITLE: Clean Energy Resource Teams Community Energy Action Program

The CERT Program launched in 2003 as a collaboration among the University of Minnesota Regional Sustainable Development Partnerships, the Minnesota Project, the Southwest Regional Development Commission and the (then) Minnesota State Energy Office. These partners, in addition to the Green Institute which joined the partnership in 2007, have a solid track record of working in conjunction with each other to catalyze clean energy projects across the state. Indeed, we were awarded the MEI Partnership of the Year award for our work in 2006. We have received funding twice from the Legislative Commission on Minnesota Resources (LCMR) (in 2003 and 2005), once from the legislature via the Renewable Development Fund (RDF), and were recently awarded funding from the Bush Foundation.

**Project Manager:** Melissa Pawlisch is the Clean Energy Resource Teams (CERTs) coordinator for the University of Minnesota's Regional Sustainable Development Partnerships program. The University of Minnesota Regional Sustainable Development Partnerships are citizen-driven University partnerships in five regions that work to foster sustainable development for regional resilience. Melissa has spent the past five and half years coordinating the CERTs program, including managing the program's financials for the University of Minnesota, working with regional steering committees, convening clean energy forums, and connecting communities with technical and funding resources to implement their clean energy ideas. Before joining CERTs she spent several years working as an environmental consultant and project manager with a focus on environmental investigations at large scale power plant facilities. She works with all of the Regional Partnerships in organizing, informing, and connecting the regional CERTs teams. She has a Masters degree in Science, Technology and Environmental Policy.

**Grants Manager:** The Minnesota Office of Energy Security (OES) will serve as the CERTs' fiscal agent, and has done so for both of CERTs previous rounds of LCMR funding and our RDF funding. OES will also coordinate the 14 community grants - a task for which it is well-suited given its past experience managing both state and federal dollars.

### CERTs Organizational Chart

