minnesota clean energy community

The Clean Energy Community Awards are an acknowledgment of the work done by Minnesota communities to further the state's clean energy goals by implementing programs, policies, and technologies that encourage energy efficiency, conservation, and renewable energy generation.

Minnesota's Clean Energy Goals

Minnesota has a number of clean energy goals, including:

- Minnesota Next Generation Energy Act
- Renewable Electricity Standard
- Solar Electricity Standard
- Petroleum Replacement Goal
- Biofuel and Biodiesel Content Mandates

Support

The Minnesota Department of Commerce is the sponsor and coordinator of the program, with financial support from the U.S. Department of Energy and The McKnight Foundation. Additional support provided by:

- Clean Energy Resource Teams
- Climate Generation: A Will Steger Legacy
- U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Office of Sustainable Communities
- Great Plains Institute
- League of Minnesota Cities
- Minnesota Pollution Control Agency
- U.S. Department of Energy; Office of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy
- Southwest Regional Development Commission
- University of Minnesota, Center for Sustainable Building Research
- University of Minnesota, Institute on the Environment

Eligibility

- Communities can consist of any group united in implementing clean energy goals. Units of government (city, county, tribal nation, or other jurisdiction) must be among the participating members, but nonprofits, service organizations, and businesses will strengthen the application.
- Programs from the *Possible Initiatives* list will be given high priority by evaluators.
- Programs must be in operation during the last 12 months.
- Applications will be considered from throughout the state, regardless of population or geographic location.

Benefits

- Applicant communities will be invited to attend an event at the Eco Experience at the Minnesota State Fair, where award finalists will be announced.
- Finalist communities (up to 10) will have their initiatives featured as part of an exhibit at the Eco Experience. Additionally, they will receive admission tickets to the Fair to attend the announcement event.
- Award recipient communities (up to 5) will receive:
  - A stipend to send community members to attend a celebratory event and press conference during Energy Awareness Month in October.
  - Statewide media coverage including press packets for distribution to local media outlets.
  - Achievement Award and signage suitable for public display.
  - Web recognition on Commerce website.

Award Criteria

Successful Clean Energy Community applicants will have implemented initiatives that satisfy a majority (or demonstrate intense efforts in one or more) of the following criteria:

- Policy development, such as incorporation of energy goals in a community's Comprehensive, Sustainability, Zoning, or Climate Action Plans that provide measurable clean energy achievements in public buildings/infrastructure and/or private businesses/residences.
- Community partnerships and stakeholder education with local business/industry/agriculture, nonprofits, utilities, or residents to meet energy goals.
- Expansion of energy efficiency and/or renewable energy opportunities to historically underserved communities.
- Innovation that is replicable by Minnesota communities and that serves to advance Minnesota's clean energy goals.

Application Process

To apply to be a Minnesota Clean Energy Community, go to **mncerts.org/clean-energy-awards** and complete an application by **July 15, 2016**.

Questions to:
energy.info@state.mn.us

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Possible Initiatives

Communities can meet the Award Criteria from among a variety of initiatives that achieve demonstrated progress towards the state's clean energy goals. The listing below is a sample of possible initiatives that are of interest to the evaluators.

Planning

- Creation of multi-year Comprehensive, Sustainability, Zoning, or Climate Action Plans, including:
  - Prioritized steps towards mitigation of climate change through energy efficiency, conservation, and clean energy generation systems.
  - Goals of achieving net-zero energy in public buildings.
  - Participation in programs such as the Guaranteed Energy Saving Program.
  - Measuring efficient building operation through benchmarking tools such as B3.
  - Meeting the Better Buildings Challenge.

Energy Efficiency in Public Buildings

- Existing Buildings:
  - Implementing repairs and updates of public buildings to reflect priorities of energy efficiency/conservation through building shell improvements (including insulation, air sealing, windows), lighting upgrades, HVAC maintenance and replacements, appliance/equipment maintenance and upgrades.
- New Buildings:
  - Designing & speccing new building construction to high standards of efficiency, comfort, safety, and durability through certification such as ENERGY STAR, B3, SB 2030, and LEED.

Energy Efficiency in Private Buildings

- Facilitate improvements in existing buildings and new construction through codes, permitting, financing, or incentive programs.
- Benchmarking private buildings.
- Implement public engagement efforts that promote the benefits of going "beyond energy code."

Energy Efficiency in Public Infrastructure

- Relamping or upgrading public streetlights to energy efficient lighting.
- Achieving efficiencies in sewage or water treatment facilities that reduce energy usage.
- Other infrastructure improvements that provide energy savings.

Clean Energy Generation

- Facilitate installations of non-carbon based clean energy generation systems through land use, permitting, financing, or incentive programs:
  - Installation of clean energy generation systems on public buildings or public land.
  - Creation of streamlined permitting process for private or community-based clean energy generation systems.
  - Offering financing programs (PACE, etc.) for business/homeowners to install clean energy generation systems.
  - Offering incentives (TIF, etc.) for developments (business/residential) utilizing clean energy generation systems
  - Qualifying systems include solar electric, solar thermal, wind, ground source heat pumps, biomass, biogas, hybrid renewable, combined heat and power.

Transportation

- Conversion/replacement of city vehicle fleets to low/no carbon fuels.
- Infrastructure support for electric/NG/hydrogen vehicle fueling stations:
  - Siting on public property (public parking areas, schools, other public buildings).
  - Encouragement of private business to site on their property.

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