

Energy-Specific

## FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES



November 4, 2024

### Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA), Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) and other state and federal funding announcements

The **Minnesota Department of Commerce** seeks to work with and facilitate connections with local and Tribal governments, utilities, businesses, communities and other entities interested in energy-related partnerships. The opportunities outlined below are funded by the Infrastructure Investments and Jobs Act (IIJA), the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) and other state and federal programs.

#### Announcements: Department of Commerce Energy Programs

##### Minnesota Residential Heat Pump Rebate Training Program

The Minnesota Department of Commerce's Division of Energy Resources seeks proposals from experienced responders to develop and deliver training in the technical aspects and installations of residential heat pumps.

Training will support the successful implementation of Minnesota's new Residential Heat Pump Rebate Program ([Minn. Stat. § 216C.46](#)), which aims to increase the use of energy-efficient heat pumps in residences across the state. The training provider will ensure that contractors are equipped with the knowledge and skills necessary to correctly install and service residential heat pumps, thus enhancing program efficacy and increasing customer satisfaction.

[Download the RFP](#) for more information and to access the grant portal to complete and submit a proposal.

##### Deadlines:

- RFP Proposals Due: Friday, November 15, 2024 - no later than 5:00 PM CT
- Questions Due: Monday, October 28, 2024 - no later than 5:00 PM CT. Final responses to questions will be posted on Monday, November 4, 2024

#### Energy-related Funding Awards to Minnesota Entities

Read on to learn more about the most recent innovative Minnesota energy projects (listed by Funding Opportunity Program), and the funding they have been awarded. **Congratulations to all the recipients!**

### Energy Auditor Training (EAT) Grant Program

DOE's Office of State and Community Energy Programs announced its first round of selectees through the [Energy Auditor Training \(EAT\) Grant Program](#). A program funded under the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL), EAT will distribute up to \$27.98 million to 15 State Energy Offices to increase the green building workforce across the country and support the implementation of national energy efficiency improvements.

- **Minnesota Department of Commerce - \$1,810,629** - This grant will establish the 'White Earth Tribal and Community College (WETCC) Energy Auditor Training Program' to support workforce development in northwest Minnesota. The WETCC Energy Auditor Training Program will ensure trainees have the necessary tools to overcome entry barriers and achieve success by offering a range of support services such as mentorship, career counseling, transportation solutions, and language support.

### Pilot-scale Testing of Advanced Carbon Dioxide Removal Technologies

DOE's Office of Fossil Energy and Carbon Management, along with DOE's Hydrogen Fuel Cell Technologies Office has announced \$58.5 million in federal funding for 11 projects to help develop a commercially viable carbon dioxide removal industry in the United States. The funding will support pilot projects and testing facilities to demonstrate and scale carbon dioxide removal technologies that reduce carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) pollution by removing it directly from the atmosphere.

- **Carba, Inc. – Minneapolis - \$7 million in DOE Funding** - will convert biomass to charcoal to demonstrate permanent CO<sub>2</sub> storage as solid carbon underground in oxygen-free chambers.

### USDA Empowering Rural America (New ERA) Award

The US Department of Agriculture announced a total of six rural electric cooperatives will move forward in the New ERA awards process. USDA will be investing nearly \$1 billion from the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) in grants and loans for these six new selectees, which will leverage investments of \$6.4 billion for 1.75 gigawatts of clean energy for rural communities across the country.

- **Connexus Energy - rural Minnesota** - This New ERA investment will be used to procure over 227 megawatts of renewable resources including hydro, solar, and wind energy, and purchase 20 megawatts of battery energy storage in rural areas of Minnesota. These projects will power nearly 80,000 homes annually. Connexus Energy will create up to 370 short and long-term jobs, stabilize costs to rural cooperative members, and reduce carbon emissions by over 1.1 million tons each year.

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## Recent and Expected Federal Funding Activity

The federal government issues a variety of announcements related to federal funding opportunities: Requests for Information (RFI), Notices of Intent (NOI) and energy Funding Opportunity Announcements (FOA). More information can be found on the Commerce Federal Funding Opportunities [web page](#) or by clicking the links below.

**To facilitate a quick review of this newsletter, the subject matter of included items is previewed here; full details can be found in the body of the newsletter.**

[Funding Opportunity Announcements \(FOA\)](#), [Administrative and Legal Requirements Document](#)

[\(ALRD\), Notice of Funding Opportunity \(NOFO\), Requests for Applications \(RFA\)](#)

- Generation III+ Small Modular Reactor Pathway to Deployment
- Advanced Hydrogen and Fuel Cell Technologies to Drive National Goals
- Industrial Training & Assessment Centers (ITAC) Implementation Grants

[Request for Information \(RFI\)](#)

- US Department of Treasury's Clean Energy Storytelling Program
- Opportunities for Additional Support for Commercial Direct Air Capture (DAC) Demonstration Facilities

[Rebates](#)

- 2024 Clean School Bus Rebate Program

[Prizes/Awards](#)

- American-Made Tribal Colleges and Universities Energy and Food Nexus Prize
- EnergyTech University Prize 2025

[Student Scholarships/Internships/Fellowships](#)

- Geothermal INTERN Opportunity

[Webinars](#)

- WREN Webinar: Wind Turbine Design and Bats
- Is Sodium the New Lithium? How Table Salt Might Save the Energy Storage Industry
- Windows of Opportunity: Reduce Costs & Bird Collisions with Energy-Efficient Retrofits
- Resources and Best Practices for Growing the Green Building Workforce

[Workshops, Meetings, Conferences](#)

- Demonstrate, Deploy, Decarbonize 2024

[Publications/Videos/Webpages](#)

- Kansas City Streetlight EV Charging Case Study
- National Transmission Planning Study
- Community Benefit Guide

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## IJA Funding Opportunity Announcements (FOA)

- **Generation III+ Small Modular Reactor Pathway to Deployment**
  - [DE-FOA-0003485](#)
  - **Deadline:** January 17, 2025

DOE Offices of Clean Energy Demonstrations & Nuclear Energy offer this solicitation to spur “first mover” teams to deploy the first Gen III+ SMRs in the United States and to provide funding for “fast follower” deployment support, which will address key gaps that have hindered the domestic nuclear industry. To maximize the potential of these funds, DOE will offer project funding under this solicitation through two tiers:

**Tier 1:** Provides up to \$800 million to support up to two first mover teams of utility, reactor vendor, constructor, and end-users/off-takers committed to deploying a first plant while facilitating a multi-reactor, Gen III+ SMR orderbook, and the opportunity to work with the National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA) to incorporate safeguards and security by design into the projects.

**Tier 2:** Provides up to \$100 million to spur additional Gen III+ SMR deployments by addressing key gaps that have hindered the domestic nuclear industry in areas such as design, licensing, supplier development, and site preparation.

[Top of page](#)

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## Other Funding Opportunity Announcements (FOA)

- **Advanced Hydrogen and Fuel Cell Technologies to Drive National Goals**

- [DE-FOA-0003439 Part One](#)
- [DE-FOA-0003439 Part Two](#)
- **Deadlines:** Concept Paper: November 20, 2024 | Application: January 31, 2025

This NOFO advances DOE's Office of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy, along with national goals, to deliver an equitable, clean energy future, and put the United States on a path to achieve net-zero emissions, economy-wide, by no later than 2050. Projects selected in this NOFO will support:

~ The [U.S. National Clean Hydrogen Strategy and Roadmap's](#) "whole-of-government" approach to addressing the challenges facing clean hydrogen and drive innovation leading to the deployment of clean energy technologies that are critical for emissions reduction.

~ Enabling increased adoption of clean hydrogen across critical sectors, including heavy-duty vehicles, supporting the [U.S. National Blueprint for Transportation Decarbonization](#).

~ The goals of the [Hydrogen Energy Earthshot](#)<sup>TM</sup> targeting affordable, clean hydrogen production at \$1/kg by 2031.

~ The [H2@Scale Initiative](#) aiming to advance affordable hydrogen production, transport, storage, and utilization to enable decarbonization and revenue opportunities across multiple sectors.

Topic Areas include:

**Topic 1:** Photoelectrochemical Water Splitting Device Scale Up

**Topic 2:** High-Performance Materials for Hydrogen Service, Including Cryogenic and/or High-Pressure Conditions

**Topic 3:** Sustainable High-Temperature Proton Exchange Membranes and Ionomers for Heavy-Duty Transportation Applications

**Topic 4:** Domestic Hydrogen Fuel Cell Electric Motorcoach Bus Development and Demonstration

- **Industrial Training & Assessment Centers (ITAC) Implementation Grants**

- [Information](#)
- **Deadline:** Applications accepted on a rolling basis and reviewed quarterly
- **Informational Office Hours:** November 21, 2024 | 1:00 PM CT | [Register](#) or December 12, 2024 | 1:00 PM CT | [Register](#)

DOE's Industrial Training & Assessment Centers Program has re-opened applications for small and medium-sized manufacturing firms (SMMs) to receive grants of up to \$300,000 per unique assessment recommendation, at a 50% cost share, made in Industrial Training & Assessment Centers (ITAC) assessments and/or DOE Combined Heat and Power Technical Assistance Partnership (CHP TAP) assessments.

Eligible applicants include small- and medium-sized manufacturing firms, water treatment facilities, and Controlled Environment Agriculture (CEA) facilities. In contrast to traditional DOE funding opportunities, the ITAC grant program works through a Partnership Intermediary Agreement, called ENERGYWERX, resulting in a very simple and straightforward application form and process via Submittable.com.

[ENERGYWERX Submission Manager - ITAC Workstream 1 \(submittable.com\)](#)

[ENERGYWERX Submission Manager - ITAC Workstream 2 \(submittable.com\)](#)

[Top of page](#)

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## Request for Information (RFI)

- **US Department of Treasury's Clean Energy Storytelling Program**
  - [Information](#)

The Department of Treasury has created the Clean Energy Storytelling Program to invite individuals, workers, businesses, tax-exempt organizations, and other eligible taxpayers to voluntarily share their stories about how the Inflation Reduction Act's (IRA) clean energy tax incentives are lowering energy costs for families, bringing back and strengthening manufacturing, and creating good-paying jobs across the country. The program's goal is to educate more Americans using some of the best examples around: stories from other people and organizations who are pursuing and benefitting from these incentives.

- **Opportunities for Additional Support for Commercial Direct Air Capture (DAC) Demonstration Facilities**
  - [DE-FOA-0003478](#)
  - **Deadline:** December 17, 2024

The DOE's Office of Clean Energy Demonstrations in collaboration with the Office of Fossil Energy and Carbon Management have issued a Request for Information (RFI). Public input is requested regarding additional approaches that current and future DOE programs could implement to help direct air capture (DAC) developers address challenges in raising project investment capital and achieving sustained facility operations. The RFI seeks to understand how federal funding may complement existing DOE financial assistance mechanisms - offering development, construction, and partial operations funding for first-of-a-kind commercial demonstrations - and supplement other government incentives (e.g., 45Q tax credit) in support of direct air capture technology commercialization and spurring the development of the [Regional Direct Air Capture Hubs](#).

[Top of page](#)

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## Rebates

- **2024 Clean School Bus Rebate Program**
  - **Deadline:** January 9, 2025
  - [Information, Program Guide & Application](#)
  - **Webinar:** Panel Discussion with CSB Rebate Program Selectees and Electric Utility Providers | November 7, 2024 | 12:00 PM CT | [Register](#)
  - **Webinar:** 2024 CSB Rebate Program Frequently Asked Questions Overview with Live Q&A | November 18, 2024 | 12:00 PM CT | [Register](#)

The Bipartisan Infrastructure Law of 2021 authorizes the EPA to offer rebates to replace existing school buses with clean and zero-emission models. The Clean School Bus Program prioritizes applications that will replace buses serving high-need local education agencies, rural areas, Tribal school districts funded by the Bureau of Indian Education, and public-school districts receiving basic support payments for students living on Tribal land.

**NOTE:** The program guidance and application process differ from prior EPA school bus rebate programs, so please review the summary of program requirements and the detailed program guide before proceeding.

[Top of page](#)

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## Prizes/Awards

- **American-Made Tribal Colleges and Universities Energy and Food Nexus Prize**
  - **Deadline:** December 4, 2024
  - [Information & Rules](#)
  - [Recorded Information Webinar](#)

This DOE \$4.1 million Prize is exclusively for students and faculty from the 35 eligible U.S.-based Tribal Colleges and Universities (TCUs) and funding will go to the TCU. Student-led, faculty-supported teams will use renewable energy to support Tribal food sovereignty initiatives on Tribal College and University campuses. These projects may include but are not limited to:

~ Greenhouses heated or cooled by geothermal (ground-source) energy

~ Greenhouses powered by wind or solar

~ Solar arrays that provide shade for crops to grow or livestock to graze.

As students and faculty advance through three phases of the prize, they will form teams and create a plan, complete all permitting and pre-work, build their project, and demonstrate their learnings.

TCUs are encouraged to incorporate local traditional crops and/or livestock into their designs, as well as relevant clean energy systems to ensure food is sustainably grown for their environments. Students' valuable exposure and hands-on experience in energy and food sovereignty can then be shared to benefit Tribes.

- **EnergyTech University Prize 2025**
  - **Deadlines:** Explore Phase Student Registration: February 3, 2025 | Faculty Explore Prize: January 13, 2025
  - [Information](#)
  - **Information Webinars:** December 10, 2024 | 12:00 PM CT | [Register](#) and January 23, 2025 | 12:00 PM CT | [Register](#)

Sponsored by DOE's Office of Technology Transition, the American-Made EnergyTech University Prize (EnergyTech UP) challenges student teams to compete for \$400,000 in cash prizes for successfully identifying a promising energy technology, assessing its market potential, and creating a business plan for commercialization. Faculty are challenged to create innovative implementation plans that expand energy technology commercialization, with \$100,000 available in cash prizes.

[Top of page](#)

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## Scholarships/Student Competitions/Fellowships

- **Geothermal Intern Opportunity**
  - [Information](#)
  - [Application](#)

The Geothermal INTERN opportunity, a collaboration between the DOE's Geothermal Technologies Office and the National Science Foundation's [Intern Program](#), supports a diverse community of graduate students forming the next generation of the growing geothermal workforce.

Geothermal INTERN is open to graduate students across the United States and applications may be submitted at any time, with a target date of April 15 to be considered for the current fiscal year.

[Top of page](#)

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## Webinars

- **WREN Webinar: Wind Turbine Design and Bats**
  - November 6, 2024 | 11:00 AM CT | [Register](#)

The International Energy Agency Wind Task 59: Wind energy-environmental Research & Engagement Network (WREN) is hosting this webinar along with researchers from the United States who will present findings on how turbine size and wake influence bat interactions.

- **Is Sodium the New Lithium? How Table Salt Might Save the Energy Storage Industry**
  - November 7, 2024 | 12:00 PM CT | [Register](#)

This webinar, a presentation of the Energy Storage Technology Advancement Partnership, will explore the potential applications, benefits, and challenges for sodium-ion batteries. Guest speakers Alex Bates and Ramesh Koripella of DOE's Sandia National Labs will overview sodium-ion battery technologies and share information about their potential applications and safety considerations. Jack Pouchet of Natron Energy, a U.S. based sodium-ion battery manufacturer, will share his perspective on the markets and industrial use cases for sodium-ion batteries. Dr. Imre Gyuk, Chief Scientist of Energy Storage Research at DOE's Office of Electricity, will make introductory remarks.

- **Windows of Opportunity: Reduce Costs & Bird Collisions with Energy-Efficient Retrofits**
  - November 14, 2024 | 2:00 PM CT | [Register](#)

DOE's Renew America's Schools Program along with the US Fish and Wildlife Service will present this webinar discussing how to incorporate bird-safe measures with energy and cost-saving retrofits to create dual benefits for the natural environment.

- **Resources and Best Practices for Growing the Green Building Workforce**
  - November 21, 2024 | 12:00 PM CT | [Register](#)

In this DOE webinar, speakers will discuss various ways to improve training and incorporate building science and energy technologies into curriculum, grow the green building workforce, and prepare workers for in-demand job opportunities.

[Top of page](#)

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## Workshops/Meetings/Conferences

- **Demonstrate, Deploy, Decarbonize 2024**
  - December 4 – 5, 2024 | Washington DC | [Register](#)

Hosted by the DOE, Deploy24 is the second annual gathering of industry executives, investors, community leaders, and other public and private sector decision makers from across the clean energy supply chain, all working towards a common goal: to accelerate the deployment of critical energy and decarbonization technologies in the United States. The event will showcase the importance of public-private collaboration and solution-forward strategies as new and innovative clean energy technologies reach commercial scalability.

[Top of page](#)

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## Publications/Videos/Webpages

- **Kansas City Streetlight EV Charging Case Study**
  - [Go to the Case Study](#)

This case study focuses on a pilot streetlight charging project in Kansas City, Missouri, and highlights the role of community engagement when addressing EV charging deserts. The pilot project was funded by the DOE's Vehicle Technologies Office.

- **National Transmission Planning Study**
  - [Download the Report](#)

DOE has released the final National Transmission Study, a set of long-term planning tools and analyses that examine a wide range of potential future scenarios through 2050 to identify pathways to maintain grid reliability, increase resilience, and reduce costs, while meeting local, regional, interregional, and national interests and supporting the changing energy landscape.

- **Community Benefit Guide**
  - [Download the Guide](#)

Produced by Fair Shake (environmental non-profit law firm) and Riverwise (organizer of Justice40 communities), the Community Benefit Guide is intended for community advocates, leaders, and other stakeholders who want to bring community benefits – through Community Benefit Agreements, Plans, or ordinances – to their communities. The guide provides tools, templates, and examples that communities and stakeholders can adapt to bring forth tangible benefits, protections, and transparency, along with new development.

[Top of page](#)

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## Energy-specific funding opportunities, Commerce is here for you

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