



## Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund

### 2026 Request for Proposal

#### General Information

**Proposal ID:** 2026-017

**Proposal Title:** Cooperative Energy Futures: Home Energy Efficiency

#### Project Manager Information

**Name:** Audrey Pallmeyer

**Organization:** Cooperative Energy Futures

**Office Telephone:** (612) 208-7687

**Email:** audrey@cooperativeenergyfutures.com

#### Project Basic Information

**Project Summary:** Cooperative Energy Futures will implement a home energy efficiency program, targeting low-moderate income households, including home energy audits and upgrade proposals identifying the most cost-effective home upgrades for specific homes.

**ENRTF Funds Requested:** \$259,000

**Proposed Project Completion:** June 30, 2027

**LCCMR Funding Category:** Small Projects (G)

**Secondary Category:** Energy (E)

#### Project Location

**What is the best scale for describing where your work will take place?**

Region(s): Metro

**What is the best scale to describe the area impacted by your work?**

Region(s): Metro

**When will the work impact occur?**

During the Project and In the Future

## Narrative

**Describe the opportunity or problem your proposal seeks to address. Include any relevant background information.**

Residential building efficiency upgrades are essential to reducing Minnesota's reliance on fossil fuels. Current approaches to paying for home energy upgrades require expensive out-of-pocket investments, which reduces the ability of low and moderate income people to participate and leaves most Minnesotans unable to afford the programs. We have developed a program that helps reduce barriers. Our program includes:

- Home energy assessments to determine the most cost-effective upgrades in a specific home. These assessments will be completed in partnership with EEtility, a certified B-Corporation with expertise in home energy upgrades.
- Upgrade proposals, provided to property owners and renters, so they can select the best upgrades for their needs.
- Incorporation of available rebates and incentives from state, federal, local, and utility sources to buy down the cost of upgrades.
- A financing option so that households do not have to pay anything upfront, and instead pay off the cost of upgrades over time via a service agreement with our program without requiring a credit check.

However, implementing the above program is costly! Therefore, when participants join our program, our services which cannot be covered by existing rebates and incentives are passed down to participants, and must be paid back via their service contracts.

**What is your proposed solution to the problem or opportunity discussed above? Introduce us to the work you are seeking funding to do. You will be asked to expand on this proposed solution in Activities & Milestones.**

CEF's goal is to reduce costs to participants and therefore increase participant savings as much as possible. However, managing the process from initial energy assessment to completed energy upgrades costs CEF \$1,307 per home (2025 estimate). Currently, a portion of this cost is passed on to participants, which could make the program inaccessible. We are in the final stages of negotiating a contract with the City of Minneapolis that will partially offset the cost of our services for households who participate in this program between July and December, 2025. We anticipate that this contract will be renewed (and increased) in future program years.

Even with the funds anticipated from the City of Minneapolis, some portion of costs will be passed on to participants.

Funding from ENRTF will cover staff time associated with the energy assessment and offer delivery. This will enable us to reduce the costs passed on to participants, saving low and moderate Minnesota households money while increasing their access to energy efficient upgrades.

**What are the specific project outcomes as they relate to the public purpose of protection, conservation, preservation, and enhancement of the state's natural resources?**

Through this project, and with support from ENRTF, CEF will be able provide low-cost services that will enable a CO2 savings of nearly 12,000 tons of CO2 emissions avoided over the lifetime of the installed improvements, which will occur across a portfolio of 300 Minnesota homes.

## Activities and Milestones

### Activity 1: Complete home energy assessments and provide home efficiency proposals for at least 300 homes in the Twin Cities.

**Activity Budget:** \$174,000

**Activity Description:**

The Home Energy Data Collector will complete detailed data collection of the current status of homes in the Twin Cities. The data collected will be utilized to predict the most energy efficient upgrades that can be made within particular homes.

**Activity Milestones:**

Description	Approximate Completion Date
Complete home energy assessments in 150 homes.	December 31, 2026
Deliver home energy efficiency program offers to at least 150 households.	December 31, 2026
Deliver home energy efficiency program offers to 150 more households (total: 300 during project period).	December 31, 2026
Complete home energy assessments in 150 more homes (total of 300 during project period).	June 30, 2027

### Activity 2: Recruit households to sign up for the Sustainable Homes Program.

**Activity Budget:** \$85,000

**Activity Description:**

Attend community events, build relationships with community partners, and identify and enroll 500 households in the Sustainable Homes program. Provide home efficiency goody bags (with LED lightbulbs, low-flow showerheads, etc.) to residents at events to assist with recruitment.

**Activity Milestones:**

Description	Approximate Completion Date
Recruit 250 households to sign up for energy assessments through Sustainable Homes.	December 31, 2026
Recruit 250 additional households to sign up for energy assessments through Sustainable Homes.	June 30, 2027

## Project Partners and Collaborators

Name	Organization	Role	Receiving Funds
Tammy Agard	EEtility	Offering program support and providing backend data analysis for home energy assessments. EEtility is not expected to receive funding from ENRTF should CEF be awarded a grant.	No
Isaac Evans	City of Minneapolis	The City of Minneapolis is currently providing program design and funding support to this program. While CEF does not have a contract with the City for July 2026 - June 2027, we anticipate that this partnership will continue.	No
Ulla Nilsen	Unidos MN	Unidos MN is currently providing outreach and engagement support to this program. Unidos MN has funding support from the City of Minneapolis through December 2025 to do this work. We anticipate they will be an ongoing partner during the ENRTF grant term, if awarded.	No

## Long-Term Implementation and Funding

**Describe how the results will be implemented and how any ongoing effort will be funded. If not already addressed as part of the project, how will findings, results, and products developed be implemented after project completion? If additional work is needed, how will this work be funded?**

During the project year, Cooperative Energy Futures staff will work to identify additional program funding. We will share actual energy (kWh and therm) savings that result from this work via our website.

## Project Manager and Organization Qualifications

**Project Manager Name:** Audrey Pallmeyer

**Job Title:** Program Developer

**Provide description of the project manager's qualifications to manage the proposed project.**

The Project Manager of this project will be Audrey Pallmeyer, Program Developer for Cooperative Energy Future's Home Energy Upgrades program.

Audrey has worked at Cooperative Energy Futures for over a year building the Home Energy Upgrades program for which we are applying for funding. She holds a Master of Science in Environment and Sustainability, as well as a Master of Social Work with a focus on Social Policy and Evaluation.

She has experience managing grants, planning, and implementing programs through her experience at CEF and at the Wilder Foundation. Additionally, she previously oversaw a grantmaking program at Michigan Medicine, giving her insight into the expectations and requirements of grantmaking organizations.

**Organization:** Cooperative Energy Futures

**Organization Description:**

Cooperative Energy Futures (CEF) is a 308B Minnesota cooperative association that makes clean energy accessible to all. CEF's mission is to empower communities across Minnesota to build energy democracy through solutions that are clean, local, and ours. We exist to create access to, benefit from, and provide ownership of clean energy for low-income households, communities of color, and renters. Our cooperative model ensures our projects are accountable to – and build wealth for – local communities.

## Budget Summary

Category / Name	Subcategory or Type	Description	Purpose	Gen. Ineligible	% Benefits	# FTE	Classified Staff?	\$ Amount
<b>Personnel</b>								
Home Energy Data Collector		Complete in-home energy assessments in homes in the Twin Cities region to identify the most cost effective upgrades that will reduce energy use.			25%	1		\$87,000
Program Coordinator (Tentative Title)		Interact with participants, present home upgrade offers to participants, and coordinate Contractors making home energy upgrades.			25%	1		\$87,000
Outreach and Engagement Representative		Attend community events and do outreach to communities to identify prospective households and enroll households in the Sustainable Homes Program.			25%	1		\$75,000
							<b>Sub Total</b>	<b>\$249,000</b>
<b>Contracts and Services</b>								
							<b>Sub Total</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>Equipment, Tools, and Supplies</b>								
	Tools and Supplies	LED Lightbulbs - \$8 per two-pack, 625 packs	Giveaways at events, recruitment materials					\$5,000
	Tools and Supplies	Low-Flow Shower Heads \$10.5 each 475 units	Outreach and engagement, reduce home water consumption, reduce water heating fuel use					\$5,000
							<b>Sub Total</b>	<b>\$10,000</b>
<b>Capital Expenditures</b>								
							<b>Sub Total</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>Acquisitions and Stewardship</b>								
							<b>Sub Total</b>	<b>-</b>

<b>Travel In Minnesota</b>								
							<b>Sub Total</b>	-
<b>Travel Outside Minnesota</b>								
							<b>Sub Total</b>	-
<b>Printing and Publication</b>								
							<b>Sub Total</b>	-
<b>Other Expenses</b>								
							<b>Sub Total</b>	-
							<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>\$259,000</b>

Classified Staff or Generally Ineligible Expenses

Category/Name	Subcategory or Type	Description	Justification Ineligible Expense or Classified Staff Request
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## Non ENRTF Funds

Category	Specific Source	Use	Status	Amount
<b>State</b>				
			<b>State Sub Total</b>	-
<b>Non-State</b>				
Cash	City of Minneapolis	<p>Partially offset cost of energy assessments and administrative costs associated with completing upgrades.</p> <p>These funds are listed as pending as we have not yet begun negotiating contracts with the City for the term of this grant. However, we do hold a \$4,000,000 Master Service Agreement with the City which expires December, 2026. Funds are therefore anticipated.</p> <p>Fund Breakdown Expected:            - Upgrade Incentives: \$1,974,450            - Assessment and Administrative Support: \$574,545            - Loan Loss Reserves: \$35,000</p>	Pending	\$2,583,995
Cash	CenterPoint Energy	<p>Incentives and Rebates for Home Energy Upgrades. Actual numbers will depend on the specific upgrades that occur. Our estimate provided here is based on modeling of upgrades completed in 300 homes.</p> <p>These funds will not offset any administrative funds, but instead will be applied for at time of upgrade completion, and will offset direct upgrade costs.</p>	Potential	\$630,000
Cash	Xcel Energy	<p>Incentives and Rebates for Home Energy Upgrades. Actual numbers will depend on the specific upgrades that occur. Our estimate provided here is based on modeling of upgrades completed in 300 homes. These funds will not offset any administrative funds, but instead will be applied for at time of upgrade completion, and will offset direct upgrade costs.</p>	Potential	\$234,000
Cash	Inflation Reduction Act - HEAR Program	<p>Incentives and Rebates for Home Energy Upgrades. Actual numbers will depend on the specific upgrades that occur. Our estimate provided here is based on modeling of upgrades completed in 300 homes. These funds will not offset any administrative funds, but instead will be applied for at time of upgrade completion, and will offset direct upgrade costs.</p>	Potential	\$957,000
			<b>Non State Sub Total</b>	<b>\$4,404,995</b>
			<b>Funds Total</b>	<b>\$4,404,995</b>

**Total Project Cost: \$4,663,995**

**This amount accurately reflects total project cost?**

Yes

## Attachments

### Required Attachments

#### *Visual Component*

File: [1327b150-611.pdf](#)

#### *Alternate Text for Visual Component*

A map of the Twin Cities, with primary communities of focus highlighted in green, other Disadvantaged Communities where we hope to expand highlighted in blue, and possible CBO partners noted....

#### *Financial Capacity*

Title	File
Financial Capacity Note	<a href="#">a6e58c2f-0dc.pdf</a>

### Supplemental Attachments

#### *Capital Project Questionnaire, Budget Supplements, Support Letter, Photos, Media, Other*

Title	File
CEF Letter Authorizing Application	<a href="#">0b8aebad-d3f.pdf</a>

## Administrative Use

**Does your project include restoration or acquisition of land rights?**

No

**Do you understand that travel expenses are only approved if they follow the "Commissioner's Plan" promulgated by the Commissioner of Management of Budget or, for University of Minnesota projects, the University of Minnesota plan?**

N/A

**Does your project have potential for royalties, copyrights, patents, sale of products and assets, or revenue generation?**

No

**Do you understand and acknowledge IP and revenue-return and sharing requirements in 116P.10?**

N/A

**Do you wish to request reinvestment of any revenues into your project instead of returning revenue to the ENRTF?**

N/A

**Does your project include original, hypothesis-driven research?**

No

**Does the organization have a fiscal agent for this project?**

No

**Does your project include the pre-design, design, construction, or renovation of a building, trail, campground, or other fixed capital asset costing \$10,000 or more or large-scale stream or wetland restoration?**

No

**Do you propose using an appropriation from the Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund to conduct a project that provides children's services (as defined in Minnesota Statutes section 299C.61 Subd.7 as "the provision of care, treatment, education, training, instruction, or recreation to children")?**

No

**Provide the name(s) and organization(s) of additional individuals assisting in the completion of this proposal:**

Audrey Pallmeyer and Charlie Rybak, Cooperative Energy Futures

**Do you understand that a named service contract does not constitute a funder-designated subrecipient or approval of a sole-source contract? In other words, a service contract entity is only approved if it has been selected according to the contracting rules identified in state law and policy for organizations that receive ENRTF funds through direct appropriations, or in the DNR's reimbursement manual for non-state organizations. These rules may include competitive bidding and prevailing wage requirements**

N/A

