



Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund

2026 Request for Proposal

General Information

Proposal ID: 2026-397

Proposal Title: Community Climate Resilience Network Youth Apprenticeship Program

Project Manager Information

Name: Julia Nerbonne

Organization: Climate Justice Commons - Minnesota Interfaith Power & Light

Office Telephone: (612) 810-1577

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Project Basic Information

Project Summary: MNIPL will provide technical assistance and train youth apprentices and community decision makers to plan and build out resilience networks and hubs in 20 community based organizations over two years.

ENRTF Funds Requested: \$1,031,000

Proposed Project Completion: September 30, 2028

LCCMR Funding Category: Energy (E)

Project Location

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

Statewide

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

Statewide

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.

Communities across Minnesota are concerned about the changing weather and feel unprepared for emergency weather events or sustained heat or power outages. Aging building stocks and outdated power infrastructure leave them reliant on outdated fossil fuel based power systems and vulnerable to future weather disruption. Meanwhile an epidemic of social isolation is keeping people from working together to address community challenges such as providing reliable renewable energy and housing so that all community members can thrive in the future. For over a decade MNIPL has been working with houses of worship and community organizations across the state who are eager to lean into the challenge of decarbonizing their buildings and creating resilience plans, but they don't have information or support needed to move forward. Many of these organizations are looking to work with young people who can bring fresh perspectives and energy to the work.

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.

We hope to energize communities across the state to address the challenges described above by convening a Community Resilience Network Apprentice Training Program that will give young adults (age 18-29) the ability to explore a career in community resilience space while supporting community based organizations to create Resilience Hub and/or Resilience Network Plans. Oftentimes community organizations don't move forward on plans to mitigate and adapt to changing conditions because they feel isolated and unmotivated. By joining a network of organizations who are all supporting youth apprentices they too will receive inspiration, support and coaching. By walking through a series of assignments (with their apprentice) that have been created through the central program, the institutions will be able to take a "one bite at a time" approach to creating a resilience plan. Using an action/reflection model, regular site visits, and brining apprentices together for a deep dive into barriers and bridges to success, MNIPL and their partners at the Clean Energy Resource Teams will create a surround sound of support for both youth apprentices and their organizations. This program will be launched with the backdrop of each of these organizations having experience providing technical assistance and youth programming.

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 our project 20 youth apprentices will be trained to have the practical experience needed to be certified community resilience practitioners. They will work in community organizations to create 20 pilot resilience hub/network plans. 20 communities organizations located across Minnesota will create a resilience plan to mitigate carbon while preparing for the future impact of extreme weather. These communities will represent a wide range of different locations and communities across Minnesota. Collectively they will help inform the creation of a curriculum and program that will help train and inspire hundreds more communities to become Resilience Hubs in the future.

Activities and Milestones

Activity 1: Community Resilience Network Youth Training and Site Coaching Program

Activity Budget: \$307,000

Activity Description:

In each of 2 years MNIPL staff will create a year long educational curriculum and adaptive learning experience for 10 youth apprentices (Ages 18 to 30). Utilizing decades of experience in community based experiential learning MNIPL staff will guide students and their paired community based organization through an adaptive learning process that will create a resilience plan designed fundamentally change the community based organization and student alike. Students will begin their year long experience with an intensive residential weeklong training. They will then work in a site

Activity Milestones:

Description	Approximate Completion Date
Year 1 - 10 Apprentices and Sites Selected and Youth Receive Intensive Weeklong Training	September 30, 2026
Year 1 - 10 Apprentices participate in 10 one day trainings / group coaching sessions	August 31, 2027
Year 2 - 10 Apprentices and Sites Selected and Youth Receive Intensive Weeklong Training	September 30, 2027
Year 2 - 10 Apprentices participate in 10 one day trainings / group coaching sessions	August 31, 2028

Activity 2: Youth Apprentices Serve 20 Community Based Resilience Hubs

Activity Budget: \$500,000

Activity Description:

Each youth would be placed in a Community Based Organization/Site as a Community Resilience Network Apprentice. Supported by coaching from CERTs and MNIPL they would work at the site ~20 hours a week. They would have a supervisor at the site and do various tasks related to building out a Resilience Hub / Resilience Network including education about decarbonization of both the Resilience Hub site and the homes and businesses of community members that reside in the community. Each apprentice would be responsible for co-creating a Resilience Network Plan with a core team from the site. With guidance and training through MNIPL program staff they would conduct community asset mapping; help assess the current and future decarbonization potential; create emergency preparedness plans; communication plans and more. Apprentices will leave with a Resilience Network Ambassador certificate.

Activity Milestones:

Description	Approximate Completion Date
Year 1 - Apprentice Placement	September 30, 2026
Year 1 - Mid year Apprentice Review with MNIPL and site supervisor	January 31, 2027
Year 1 Final Check in with Report Due and Certificate Awarded	August 31, 2027
Year 2 - Apprentice Placement	September 30, 2027
Year 2 - Mid year Apprentice Review with MNIPL and site supervisor	January 31, 2028
Year 2 - Final Check in and Report Due and Certificate Awarded	August 31, 2028

Activity 3: Community Organization Create a Resilience Hub/Network Plan

Activity Budget: \$224,000

Activity Description:

At the end of the year each apprentice works with staff from their host site to create a Resilience Hub / Network Plan for

their site. Apprentices will be coached and mentored by MNIPL staff through individual meetings at their sites. Each plans will include what the site will do in the 5 categories of work as described by the Urban Sustainability Director's Networks Resilience Hub planning process including a section on each of the following: Programs/Services (for example household energy coaching); Communications; Site Infrastructure; Power Systems and Operations. Plans will also identify assets within the broader community that are available help the site respond to community resilience needs. Each site will also have access to CERTs coaching so that they can develop decarbonizing plans that will address their individual site needs. Budget includes funds for each of the site organizations to receive 10,000 plus funds for CERTS coaching and staff support.

Activity Milestones:

Description	Approximate Completion Date
Year 1 Draft Plans	July 31, 2027
Year 1 Final Plans	September 30, 2027
Year 2 Draft Plans	July 31, 2028
Monthly Resilience Hub Plan Assignments Through MNIPL training program	August 31, 2028
Year 2 Final Plans	September 30, 2028

Project Partners and Collaborators

Name	Organization	Role	Receiving Funds
Joel Haskell	Clean Energy Resource Teams	CERTS will support this project with active participation on training the Youth Cohort through their CERTS ambassador program. They will participate in the weeklong training as well as in monthly day long trainings. They will support resilience sites in addressing barriers to climate adaptation.	Yes
Margaret Dexheimer Pharris	Redeemer Lutheran Church	Redeemer Lutheran Church will host one of the youth through the program. They are already underway working on a resilience hub and will help us to review the program and provide adaptive feedback on the process.	Yes

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?

We are requesting 2 years of funding to jumpstart this program. After 2 years we will have created 20 resilience hub plans and created a proof of concept that illustrates how placing young people within a community organization catalyze change. By year 3 we believe that community based organizations and houses of worship will be able to raise their own funds to host an apprentice. This will bring the cost of the program down to just under \$250,000 a year. We also expect to have piloted a range of resilience hub plans that we can share and grow from.

Project Manager and Organization Qualifications

Project Manager Name: Julia Nerbonne

Job Title: Executive Director

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

Julia Nerbonne has a Ph.D. in Conservation Biology and has been working to educate young adults for >30 years. She teaches the capstone course for the University of Minnesota Sustainability Minor: Sustainable Communities. For 12 years she lead an emersion program for college students on Environmental Sustainability at the Higher Education Consortium for Urban Affairs. She is a graduate of the Harvard Executive Leadership program on Social Action and Social Change. She has been the Executive Director of MNIPL for 12 years where she has grown the organization from one 1/2 time position to 12 employees. Together they have helped over 100 faith communities convene teams to address decarbonization and equity, and have helped >40 congregations do energy efficiency and solar retrofits.

Organization: Climate Justice Commons - Minnesota Interfaith Power & Light

Organization Description:

Minnesota Interfaith Power & Light (MNIPL) is a Program of the Climate Justice Commons. MNIPL works in partnership with faith and spiritual communities and all Minnesotans to build transformative power and bring the lights of people's unique gifts to addressing the climate crisis. We grow the climate movement in Minnesota by empowering individuals and communities across the state to take action that is authentic, effective, and energizing in their context. Since 2023 MNIPL has been organizing congregations, and community organizations across the state, to create Resilience Hubs or Networks. We work to coach and support organizations on decarbonization (Including financing, designing, implementing and evaluating solutions such as solar, geothermal heating systems, energy efficiency and lighting systems, and regenerative landscapes). For 4 years we have also run a youth empowerment apprenticeship program Youth N' Power where underserved youth are paid to work on environmental justice campaigns as well as lead a national climate reparation camp. We have coached hundreds of congregational leaders since 2013 in our leadership development program "Be The Spark".

Budget Summary

Category / Name	Subcategory or Type	Description	Purpose	Gen. Ineligible	% Benefits	# FTE	Classified Staff?	\$ Amount
Personnel								
Program Director		Create Curriculum, Recruit Sites, Train Apprentices, Work with sites to integrate coach and manage students, coach students and sites to create resilience hub plans			20%	1.6		\$200,000
Student Apprentice		10 people will be hired to work 20 hours per week. They will participate in training program; apprentice at community resilience hub location; work with site to create resilience hub or network plan			0%	10		\$500,000
							Sub Total	\$700,000
Contracts and Services								
TBD	Service Contract	Each of 10 community based organizations will work with a student apprentice to create a resilience hub plan. This will involved site evaluation, renewable power planning, energy efficiency and lighting retrofits, as well and community programing, communication planning, emergency disaster preparedness planning and more.				-		\$200,000
CERTs	Service Contract	CERTs will provide training and coaching throughout the program				0.4		\$24,000
							Sub Total	\$224,000
Equipment, Tools, and Supplies								
							Sub Total	-
Capital Expenditures								
							Sub Total	-
Acquisitions and Stewardship								

							Sub Total	-
Travel In Minnesota								
	Miles/ Meals/ Lodging	20 Trips at an average of 100 miles per trip for the Program Director to do site visits = \$2000. In some 5/20 visits there will be an overnight stay. 3 overnight trips per year x \$200 per trip x 2 years = \$1200	Program director will visit individual resilience hub sites to meet with site team and apprentice. 3 overnight trips per year x \$200 per trip x 2 years = \$1200					\$3,000
	Miles/ Meals/ Lodging	Youth Apprentices will participate in a week long intensive residential training that will include meals and lodging. 100 per day x 10 youth x 2 years	Youth will undergo intensive Resilience Hub training at a central location at the beginning of the program.					\$10,000
	Miles/ Meals/ Lodging	Apprentices will meet in person with their cohort one time per month for 10 months. 10 apprentices will travel to a central site and one meal x 20 gathering over 2 years x ~ 50 per student for food and mileage	Apprentices will continue with their training, and share feedback and insights from their sites.					\$10,000
							Sub Total	\$23,000
Travel Outside Minnesota								
							Sub Total	-
Printing and Publication								
							Sub Total	-
Other Expenses								
		Honoraria for speakers	We anticipate giving 10 honoraria per year for 2 years * \$200 each					\$4,000
		Administrative Overhead	Standard fee 8 percent fee MNIPL to process this grant, pay our accountants at Clifton Larson Associates, maintain our office and bookkeeper					\$80,000
							Sub Total	\$84,000
							Grand Total	\$1,031,000

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
State				
			State Sub Total	-
Non-State				
In-Kind	MNIPL navigator and communications staff time	Other staff on the MNIPL team will also be consulting on resilience hubs, offering training to the broader state network, collaborating with state and local government, financial networks and more. They will be working to broadcast what is accomplished here so that more institutions will follow suit.	Secured	\$80,000
In-Kind	In kind staff time from community based orgs hosting youth and creating the resilience hub plan.	Community organizations who are hosting an apprentice and creating a resilience hub will contribute significant in kind time in working to mentor the youth and create the resilience hub plan. 20 organizations would each contribute 5 -10 hours per week ~ 15000 of inkind time.	Potential	\$300,000
			Non State Sub Total	\$380,000
			Funds Total	\$380,000

Total Project Cost: \$1,411,000

This amount accurately reflects total project cost?

Yes

Attachments

Required Attachments

Visual Component

File: [dcc90a13-1e8.pdf](#)

Alternate Text for Visual Component

This is a map of sites who are interested in hosting a CRN Youth Apprentice through this program in year one. Most of these sites have already applied to be part of a community of practice and would engage the youth apprentice in this work. See Proposed Partner List below....

Financial Capacity

Title	File
990 (Congregations Caring for Creation is now named Climate Justice Commons)	2ff37c9f-509.pdf

Board Resolution or Letter

Title	File
Board Resolution	924f6da3-401.pdf

Supplemental Attachments

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

Title	File
Proposed Partner List	f76f1ea7-7ff.pdf
Letter of Support From Redeemer Lutheran	d4a0af68-aeb.pdf
Resilience Hub Recruitment Flyer	21ae62e9-f43.pdf
Letter of support from CERTs	d0734754-fe2.pdf

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?

Yes, I understand the Commissioner's Plan applies.

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:

Julia Nerbonne (Climate Justice Commons DBA Minnesota Interfaith Power & Light); Joel Haskell (CERTs)

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

Yes, I understand