



Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund

2027 Request for Proposal

General Information

Proposal ID: 2027-603

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 16 community based organizations over two years.

ENRTF Funds Requested: \$300,000

Proposed Project Completion: September 30, 2029

LCCMR Funding Category: Small Projects (G)

Secondary Category: Education and Outdoor Recreation (C)

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.

Many Minnesota youth worry about their future prospects. Climate change, social conflict, and a changing, constricting job market make future planning daunting. Meanwhile, communities across the state are increasingly vulnerable. Aging building stocks, outdated power infrastructure, and reliance on outdated fossil fuel-based power systems foster vulnerability to climate-driven emergency weather events, sustained heat or power outages, and global political events. Increasing social isolation keeps people from working together to tackle community challenges. There is a pressing need for engaged young people, capable of bringing community members together across divides and equipped with core technical knowledge, confidence, and leadership skills to facilitate local planning and actions toward meaningful local sustainability. MNIPL/CJC has for years been working with community organizations statewide that are eager to lean into the challenge of building local resilience, yet often lack staffing time, resources, or energy to advance. Since 2025, we have been intensively supporting 10 community-based organizations in developing resilience hub plans. Following their extensive, largely volunteer effort, these groups are approaching readiness to implement their plans. This project and these partners offer a unique and powerful laboratory in which to train and prepare young people to be and see opportunity as community sustainability leaders.

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 will develop and implement a two-year, community resilience youth leadership apprentice program, through which we will train and support 16 youth (ages 18-29, 8/yr) in the planning, implementation, and management of community-based resilience hubs. Each apprentice will work within one of CJC's existing partner community organizations, which are currently participating in or slated to join our Resilience "Community of Practice" and are fully committed or in process of planning or implementing a CBRH. The apprentices will have opportunities to participate in and help lead the diverse elements of CBRH development including facilitating community planning and visioning meetings, outreach campaigns, building assessments, green technology and energy efficiency education, budget development, grant-writing, and outdoor green space planning. The apprentice cohort will meet 10 hours monthly for specialized education, training, peer support, and workshopping strategies. Through 1:1 guidance, problem-solving support, and regular site visits, CJC staff will scaffold the active participation and professional growth of apprentices in all aspects of the CBRH work and content. Through this immersive apprenticeship experience, the apprentices will become exposed to the array of career pathways in the community resilience leadership realm, while the community partners will benefit from vital staffing support and youth perspective.

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?

Sixteen youth apprentices will gain practical experience and key knowledge to work as community resilience leaders. Apprentices will receive specialized training and career exposure in multiple aspects of community resilience leadership, e.g., meeting facilitation, grant writing, communications, building weatherization, and budgeting. Each apprentice will work for one year in a community organization that is actively working to plan or implement a CBRH plan, thus supporting implementation of 16 community resilience hubs. CJC will document the apprentice and community experience, learnings and reflections, challenges, and outcomes, creating a curriculum and replicable training program that we will share widely, and repeat.

Activities and Milestones

Activity 1: Develop and pilot community resilience youth training and apprenticeship curriculum

Activity Budget: \$120,000

Activity Description:

In year 1, CJC/MNIPL staff will develop, pilot, and document a year-long educational curriculum and adaptive learning experience for youth ages 18 to 29. Building on our decades of experience in community-based experiential learning, we will guide our first year cohort of 8 students and their paired community partners through an adaptive learning process that will begin with an intensive weeklong residential training, followed by monthly cohort gatherings, targeted skill building workshops, and 1:1 coaching by CJC staff. Year 1 will conclude with reflection and evaluation to inform a finalized curriculum, which we will share widely and implement with the year 2 cohort. We will have sites in Minneapolis (Al Maa'uun), Duluth (Lake Superior Network including AICHO, UUCD, Gloria Dei), and Pine Point (Native Sun) and 5 other sites that will apply using a selection process. In year 2 we will select another set of youth apprentices and place them with a new cohort of emerging or existing resilience hubs.

Activity Milestones:

Description	Approximate Completion Date
Year 1 - 8 youth apprentices selected and assigned to sites.	September 30, 2027
Youth receive intensive weeklong introductory training	September 30, 2027
CJC staff will create, pilot and evaluate efficacy of 10 month Youth Resilience Apprentice Training.	June 30, 2028
Year 2 - A new cohort of 8 youth are selected and assigned to sites.	September 30, 2028
Program Storytelling and Evaluation - 16 stories over 2 years; 2 media stories; program evaluation	August 31, 2029

Activity 2: Youth Apprentices Serve 20 Community Based Resilience Hubs

Activity Budget: \$160,000

Activity Description:

The apprenticeship will run as a cohort model, with youth meeting for an initial, intensive residential orientation and training, followed by monthly gatherings for training, reflection, support, problem-solving led by CJC staff. In addition, they will participate in 4 technical, skill-building, or professional weekend workshops throughout the year, potential topics to include grant writing, meeting facilitation, program evaluation, green energy technologies, building weatherization, and more. Meanwhile, each youth will be placed in a community organization/site where they will work ~60 hours per month. There they will be fully included in the diverse tasks associated with building out a resilience hub, and gain opportunities to apply learned skills and expand into leadership roles. They will receive ongoing coaching and 1:1 support from CJC/MNIPL and CERTS staff, and a designated on-site supervisor. LCCMR funds will support us to run 2 cohorts of students, allowing us to learn from student experience so that we can adapt the program between year 1 and 2.

Activity Milestones:

Description	Approximate Completion Date
Year 1 - Apprentice Placement	July 31, 2027
Year 1 - Mid year Apprentice Review with MNIPL and site supervisor	January 31, 2028
Year 2 - Apprentice Placement	July 31, 2028
Year 1 Final Check in with Report Due and Certificate Awarded	August 31, 2028
Year 2 - Mid year Apprentice Review with MNIPL and site supervisor	January 31, 2029
Year 2 - Final Check in and Report Due and Certificate Awarded	July 31, 2029

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

Activity Budget: \$20,000

Activity Description:

By the end of their year long experience each apprentice will have gained valuable professional experience through working with onsite resilience hub staff to implement site-specific, comprehensive Resilience Hub plans. Alongside the apprenticeship coaching, MNIPL will host monthly trainings for site supervisors that will help coach them through creation and implementation of resilience hub plans. By inviting a cohort of resilience hub site supervisors to attend a monthly "Community of Practice" meetings, each resilience hub will create and implement a resilience hub plan that will include categories outlined by the Urban Sustainability Directors Network's (USDN): 1) programs/services (for example household energy coaching); 2) operations 3) communications; 3) site infrastructure; 4) power systems. Plans will also identify assets within the broader community that are available to help the site respond to community resilience needs. Each site will be responsible for helping their apprentice to create, evaluate and report on a parallel work plan. Each site will have access to CERTs coaching and the TA Collaborative so that they can develop decarbonizing plans that will address their individual site needs. The \$20,000 in this budget includes only funds for CERTs staff or consultants to coach apprentices and their site supervisors.

Activity Milestones:

Description	Approximate Completion Date
Year 1 Site Goals Drafted, work plan for apprentice created	October 31, 2027
Year 1 Site Final Report created by Apprentice and reviewed by site and MNIPL	July 31, 2028
Year 2 Site Goals Drafted, work plan for apprentice created	October 31, 2028
Year 2 Site Goals Drafted, work plan for apprentice created	July 31, 2029
Monthly Resilience Hub site "Community of Practice" meetings - 10/year for 2 years	August 31, 2029
Site Storytelling (16 sites completed) and Earned Media (2 sites completed)	August 31, 2029

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

Dissemination

Describe your plans for dissemination, presentation, documentation, or sharing of data, results, samples, physical collections, and other products and how they will follow ENRTF Acknowledgement Requirements and Guidelines.

We will be creating a curriculum to use with this cohort and will share with the broader Interfaith Power and Light national network as part of our existing collaboration on a Resilience Hub Curriculum website. This will reach >1000 people through the multi-state network. We will write up stories of each of our Apprentices, and collaborate with CERTS to publicize the successes and emerging questions. Total of 16 stories, reaching 2000 people per story through newsletters and web traffic for a total of 32,000 reached. We will regularly invite our larger network to hear from our youth in a series of Monthly webinars. (Total of 8 webinars featuring youth stories, total of 500 people reached). We will create a final report for MNIPL base and LCCMR, reaching 8000. We will attempt to have at least 2 mainstream media stories reaching 10,000 each.

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 two-year pilot stage we are proposing, we will create and document a year of training activities and a replicable program, and solidify a proof of concept illustrating how placing and supporting young people within community organizations helps to launch capable young green leaders and catalyze sustainable community resilience. We believe the expected outcomes and impacts will help community-based organizations and associated residents to justify raising and allocating their own funds to host apprentices in future. Meanwhile, we will continuously explore and seek sustainable funding pathways to sustain the model as an ongoing project.

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 led an immersion 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/CJC for 13 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 is part of Climate Justice Commons, a collective of organizations that includes MN Interfaith Power & Light, The Rise & Repair Alliance, Youth N’ Power Network, Healing MN Stories. We are working for an equitable, sustainable green future for Minnesota. Our strategies include educating on and promoting practical solutions to mitigate climate change and expand a just, decarbonized energy economy; training youth and adults to lead environmental justice and climate mitigation campaigns; and building coalitions to center Indigenous priorities in land, water, and natural resource management. Among our key programs, we convene a “Youth N’ Power” network of young people who meet monthly to share and support each other as they work on environmental activities in their home campuses or communities. We host ~10 youth interns per year, with an annual summer cohort of 5 to 8. We also support communities to develop and lead community-based resilience hubs (CBRHs); these are trusted public spaces led by residents with substantial community engagement, incorporating green energy and building efficiency strategies, and equipped to support residents with critical services before, during, and after emergencies, and host year-round “fair weather” programming to strengthen overall community health.

Budget Summary

Category / Name	Subcategory or Type	Description	Purpose	Gen. Ineligible	% Benefits	# FTE	Classified Staff?	\$ Amount
Personnel								
CCRN Apprenticeship Program Director		Create Curriculum, Recruit Sites, Train Apprentices, Work with sites to integrate coach and manage students, coach students and sites to create and implement resilience hub plans. Work to tell the story of successful initiatives (16 stories); Work with CERTS and other experts to serve CCRN sites in achieving their goals.			20%	1.6		\$120,000
Student Apprentice		Total of 8 apprentices per year will be hired to work ~ 15 to 20 hours per week at their sites.. They will participate in MNIPL weeklong and monthly training program and will apprentice at community resilience hub network location; work with site to create resilience hub or network plan. Each apprentice will receive an honorarium.			0%	6		\$160,000
							Sub Total	\$280,000
Contracts and Services								
CERTs	Service Contract	CERTs will provide training and coaching throughout the program				0.2		\$20,000
							Sub Total	\$20,000
Equipment, Tools, and Supplies								
							Sub Total	-
Capital Equipment								
							Sub Total	-
Acquisitions and Stewardship								
							Sub Total	-

Travel In Minnesota								
							Sub Total	-
Travel Outside Minnesota								
							Sub Total	-
Printing and Publication								
							Sub Total	-
Other Expenses								
							Sub Total	-
							Grand Total	\$300,000

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. 16 organizations would each contribute 5 -10 hours per week ~ 15000 of in kind time.	Potential	\$300,000
Cash	McKnight Foundation; Thrivent Foundation; Congregational Donations	Support Community of Practice program development and monthly coaching of the 16 resilience hubs including technical assistance around decarbonization and infrastructure, as well as programming, infrastructures, communications and network building.	Secured	\$120,000
			Non State Sub Total	\$500,000
			Funds Total	\$500,000

Total Project Cost: \$800,000

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
Good Standing	2d05832c-0ba.pdf
Audited Financials	1b5a6473-246.pdf
2024 990 Public Copy	9f0392f2-a55.pdf

Board Resolution or Letter

Title	File
Board Resolution	73b0f520-a97.pdf

Supplemental Attachments

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

Title	File
Pine Point Resilience Hub Letter of Support from committed site	435ebd1a-7df.pdf
MNIPL Intern Report from 2025, To Illustrate example of MNIPL Supported Youth Product	4b22602f-009.pdf
Lake Superior Network, Committed Site Letter of Support	1557b51c-fb8.pdf
Letter of Support from Al Maa'uun, North Minneapolis Committed Site	f47ab330-9ed.pdf
Letter of Support from TA Collaborative	493fd996-8bc.pdf
CERTs Letter of Support	dfc2a538-ff6.docx
CERTs Newsletter Story about MNIPL Resilience Hub Community of Practice	2bcc38b0-1b2.pdf
Resilience Hub One Page Recruitment Doc	521da60a-480.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?

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:

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