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ABOUT THE EMPOWERMENT GRANT PROGRAM

The Midwest Building Decarbonization Coalition is committed to building a movement for everybody to equitably decarbonize the building sector in the Midwest.

To align the Coalition’s work with Justice40 and the Climate Funder’s Justice Pledge, MWBDC has committed 40 percent of its annual budget to re-granting work, either through Participation Stipends for our Coalition Members or through our Empowerment Grants.

Empowerment Grants are available to organizations that take action on one or more of the Coalition’s five domains of work: equity, market transformation, consumer inspiration, public policy, and research. Grants can be awarded to fund a specific project or initiative or build capacity in an organization.

The grant period is one year, and the grants range in amount from $10,000 - $50,000. We know that environmental injustices have not impacted all communities the same - BIPOC, members of Frontline Communities, historically marginalized groups, and environmental justice communities are strongly encouraged to apply.

Last year, we had more applications than available funding - we cannot guarantee everyone will receive a grant at their requested level. Please fill out your application thoughtfully, and contact staff to discuss it further if you'd like!

Learn more about Participation Stipends at midwestdecarb.org
APPLICATION PROCESS

Empowerment Grants range in amount from $10,000 - $50,000. Applications are due on August 1st, 2023. Decisions will be made by August 30, 2023, and the money will be disbursed on October 1, 2023.

The MWBDC Grants and Stipends Committee will score the applications on a rubric and conduct a Zoom call "site visit" with applicants to discuss their projects, goals, and ask any questions they may have.

We will conduct quarterly check-ins via Zoom with grant recipients to check in on progress and offer any support or guidance that we can.

There will be a mid-year and final reflection that we ask grant recipients to complete.
APPLICATION RUBRIC

Each grant application will be scored on a scale from 1-5 on various aspects of the proposal.

Feel free to use this information when writing your application - however, if your proposed project does not align with every scoring point listed, that is okay! The Grants Committee looks at the proposals holistically, these are just some of the guiding points used.

- **Level of demonstrated financial need**
- **Specific and clearly communicated project goals**
  - Using "SMART" goals (specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound) can be a good starting place
- **Alignment with MWBDC's Priorities**
  - You can find more information on our website under the "What We Do" tab
- **Movement building - is the project based in one of the eight MWBDC target states?**
- **Movement building - will the project empower BIPOC, and underserved community members, and/or focused on Environmental Justice?**
- **Has the applicant received MWBDC funding before?**
  - Applicants are eligible to receive funding again, but it is important to describe how an additional grant will build on accomplishments from previous funding.
PAST RECIPIENTS

More about these organization and their projects can be found in a blog post on the MWBDC website. By no means does your organization or proposed project have to mirror those funded in the past - but feel free to look into them as it may offer inspiration for the work that can be done with this funding!

2022-2023 recipients:
- Black Women Rising, Ohio
- Eco-Environmental Solutions, Michigan
- Zero-Carbon InitiativeMN, Minnesota
- Soulardarity, Michigan
- WI NAACP Environmental and Climate Program, Wisconsin
- Zeta Phi Beta Sorority at Michigan State, Michigan
- Pilgrim Baptist Church, Indiana

2021 - 2022 recipients:
- Aces4Youth, Illinois
- Community Development Corporation of Pembroke Hopkins Park, Illinois
- Illinois Green Alliance, Illinois
- Black Women Rising, Ohio
- Michigan and Beyond, Michigan
- Environmental Justice Coordinating Council, Minnesota
- Clean Energy 4 All, Ohio
- Pilgrim Baptist Church, Indiana
Soulardarity started out of necessity when Highland Park residents were left in the dark by DTE Energy’s repossession of over 1000 streetlights in 2011. When Soulardarity came together, it was with the simple goal of restoring light to the darkness. 10 years later, they have become a locally and nationally recognized leader in energy democracy. To date, Soulardarity has installed about 17 solar street lights in their community, many of which have mesh wifi, and are on track to install 10 more by 2023.

With the funding provided by the Empowerment Grant, Soulardarity plans on:

- Collaborating with PBSE (Polar Bear Sustainable Energy) on the EBE (Equitable Beneficial Electrification) weatherization pilot. By securing partnerships with trade professionals and We Want Green Too, they plan to subsidize the cost incurred by program participants associated with the labor of home inspections for electrification and weatherization, providing these services to Grow Solar HP-DET (Highland Park-Detroit) participants free of charge.
- Increasing budgetary support for Grow Solar HP-DET digital marketing, event marketing, 3rd party consulting, project management, and other needs that could potentially arrive.
- Recruiting, hiring, and onboarding a Highland Park Organizer to support the AREA: Research-EBE Weatherization Pilot & Grow Solar Highland Park Buy Buy Program.
Zero Carbon InitiativeMN is working in the Twin Cities of St. Paul and Minneapolis to persuade companies to measure, manage, disclose, and ultimately reduce their greenhouse gas emissions. No other local organization is gathering this type of data and providing it to the marketplace. From building legislative coalitions, to supporting local groups and events, to representing hard-working organizations in court, they work to create sustainable, long-term change.

For the 2022-2023 year, Zero Carbon InitiativeMN’s goals include:

- Increasing partnership and participation of BIPOC organizations that receive funding from Minnesota Pollution Control, DEED, DHS, Education, Health, and Public Safety Agencies.
- Establish network-building activities between BIPOC communities, funding agencies, and funding recipients.
- Extend the time period to respond to RFPs and ensure that the criteria for awarding building contracts are clear, open, and transparent.
- Develop targeted zero carbon and electrification legislation that expands opportunities and improves outcomes for BIPOC communities and new business developments.
- Conduct quarterly listening sessions with community members.

With the funding provided by the Empowerment Grant, Zero Carbon InitiativeMN will be able to secure office space and hire an office assistant. They plan to establish a Green Team to begin gathering and analyzing emissions data.
In 2013, a lifelong passion for improving our environment, along with a substantial shortage of reputable demolition service providers, motivated Gary Ringer, to initiate a “green building” deconstruction business. His company, Eco-Environmental Solutions, specializes in deconstruction – the process of taking apart old buildings and salvaging parts of them for reuse, instead of sending all the scrap materials to landfills. The mission of Eco-Environmental Solutions is to educate communities and eradicate environmental inequities where our most vulnerable reside. Their work highlights the work necessary before any energy efficiency measures can be completed.

With the funding provided by the Empowerment Grant, Eco-Environmental Solutions plans to purchase air monitors, hire and train staff, conduct community outreach, and create 100 healthy home kits for distribution. They plan to conduct indoor air monitoring and combustion appliance safety and efficiency inspections, environmental remediation (asbestos, lead, mold, and radon), and assist homeowners with weatherization.

By building a person-centered, holistic health approach among homeowners, renters, and others who reside in low to moderate-income neighborhoods, EES works to reduce housing and health disparities for those who have historically been burdened by environmental injustices.
THANK YOU FOR YOUR INTEREST!

Applications are due August 1, 2023.

Please don't hesitate to reach out to MWBDC staff with any questions you may have!

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