

RENEW Wisconsin: City of Madison awards grants for solar installations to seven community organizations

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Madison, WI – The City of Madison has awarded grants to seven community organizations to install onsite solar power projects. This year's MadiSUN Backyard Solar grant recipients were announced Tuesday, October 18, 2022, by the City of Madison and RENEW Wisconsin, a renewable energy advocacy organization.

The seven grants, which totaled over \$50,000, were awarded to nonprofit organizations around the community to construct solar energy installations at their facilities. The 2022 grant recipients are:

- Access Community Health Center (healthcare provider)
- Common Wealth Development (housing provider)
- Dane County Humane Society (animal shelter)
- Madison Area Cooperative Housing Association (housing provider)
- Madison Development Corporation (housing provider)
- ReJenerate Housing Cooperative (housing provider)
- Rooted (urban agriculture)

The Backyard Solar program incentivizes nonprofit organizations and affordable housing providers to install solar electric systems. Grants cover up to 20% of the cost of a new solar array, helping offset upfront expenses for mission-based

organizations installing solar energy.

“Congratulations to this year’s Backyard Solar Grant recipients,” said Mayor Satya Rhodes-Conway. “The City of Madison is pleased to support their transition to clean, renewable energy through our MadiSUN program. I’m particularly excited to support affordable housing projects with solar installations – this is yet another way we are building a better Madison.”

The 2022 Backyard Solar grant projects will spur over \$1.2 million in renewable energy investments in Madison. The seven solar installations will collectively save the grant recipients approximately \$43,000 per year in electricity bills.

“This grant will enable Troy Farms at Rooted to have a stable power source, drastically lowering our power bill, and ensuring that we have continuous power in case of a power outage,” stated Ginny Hughes of Rooted. “Access to a stable power supply will have a tremendous impact on our work, freeing up time, energy, and money for us to devote to growing more food for Madison families.”

Onsite solar installations, particularly among homeowners and community organizations, have continued to increase in popularity over recent years. Over 2,200 commercial and residential solar projects were installed across Wisconsin in 2021, the highest annual total to date. Those numbers are expected to increase further in 2022 and in the coming years thanks to advances in renewable energy technology and federal tax incentives passed through the Inflation Reduction Act.

“Solar installers have been extremely busy this year, because many customers expected the federal Investment Tax Credit to be reduced in 2023,” stated Sam Dunaiski, Distributed Resources Director for RENEW Wisconsin, a nonprofit organization that advocates for renewable energy. “The Inflation Reduction Act will allow not-for-profit organizations to take advantage of the same incentives that commercial and residential projects have utilized for years. It’s a real game changer in reducing the capital costs of these projects, which can yield huge dividends for nonprofit organizations.”

Since 2019, the program has awarded more than \$150,000 in grants to nonprofits and affordable housing organizations. Backyard grant recipients will add approximately 1,000 kilowatts of renewable electricity to Madison’s electric grid over the next few years. The output from these installations will equal the consumption of approximately 200 Madison-area households.

“These organizations are being fiscally responsible by switching to a clean, renewable energy source that isn’t dependent on rising fuel costs like oil and gas,” continued Dunaiski. “These installations will help lower Madison’s carbon footprint and reduce our community’s energy costs.”