



# **Energy Efficiency and Conservation Strategies Grant Guidelines and Policies**

## **1. Program Summary**

Funded by the MN Department of Commerce, with dollars the State of Minnesota secured via the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act of 2021. Mid-Minnesota Development Commission's (MMDC) Energy Efficiency and Conservation Strategies Grant provides financial and technical assistance to cities and counties for long-term planning that is centered on energy efficiency practices, the incorporation of renewable energy technology, and other climate resilience measures. This grant also provides funding for preliminary services that support long-term energy planning and climate resilience measures.

## **2. Eligibility**

### **2.1 Applicants**

Per the MN Department of Commerce, eligible applicants include cities and counties with a population of less than 15,000 residents. These communities must be located within the four-county MMDC region (The MMDC region includes the counties of Kandiyohi, McLeod, Meeker, and Renville).

### **2.2 Projects**

Eligible projects include the development of energy and climate resilience plans, energy audits of city- or county-owned buildings and/or facilities, and related engineering and other technical assistance services related to improve energy efficiency, the incorporation of renewable energy, and climate resilience measures.

Eligible expenses are limited to those specific to planning and preliminary services identified above. Ineligible expenses include, but are not limited to, those related to project administration and/or staffing costs, food and beverages, mileage, facility expenses, upcharges, and office supplies.

## **3. Grant Award**

### **3.1 Grant Award Determination**

Grant awards will be determined by MMDC staff. Priority will be given to disadvantaged communities (see section 3.4).

### **3.2 Grant Award Minimum and Maximum**

Per the MN Department of Commerce, the minimum grant award will be \$2,000. The maximum grant award will be \$20,000. Eligible projects may be combined to meet grant award minimum/maximum amounts.

- Development of energy efficiency and climate resilience plans: Maximum grant award; \$15,000 for eligible cities and \$20,000 for eligible counties.
- All other eligible projects (e.g., engineering, energy audits): Maximum grant award; \$5,000.

Eligible applicants can apply to the grant program more than once if prior grant projects are completed, grant funding remains available, and projects can be completed within the grant timeline. However, the total of all dollars awarded through this opportunity, when combined, cannot exceed \$20,000 and priority will go to applicants who have not previously received an award from this grant program.

### **3.3 Cost-Share/Matching Funds**

There is no cost-share or matching fund requirement. One hundred percent of eligible expenses will be covered, up to the grant award amount. However, consideration will be given to those communities committing local dollars to the grant-supported effort.

### **3.4 Disadvantaged Communities**

MMDC staff will use the [Climate and Economic Justice Screening Tool \(CEJST\)](#) developed by the Council on Environmental Quality to determine disadvantaged communities that are overburdened and underserved in our region. As required by the MN Department of Commerce, MMDC will prioritize outreach, education, and technical assistance to these communities but encourages all eligible communities to apply.

## **4. Process**

### **4.1 Application Timeline**

Applications are accepted year-round and on a rolling basis through August 1, 2025, or until funding is exhausted. If funds remain at that time, MMDC reserves the right to extend this application deadline. Applications must be submitted directly to MMDC for review and approval, using the provided application form.

### **4.2 Application Submittal**

Applications will be accepted via email to MMDC Regional Development & Grant Specialist Carol Lundgren ([Carol.Lundgren@mmdc.org](mailto:Carol.Lundgren@mmdc.org)). All applications should also be Cc'd to MMDC Executive Director Eric Day ([Eric.Day@mmdc.org](mailto:Eric.Day@mmdc.org)) to ensure timely consideration during any unexpected period of absence.

### **4.3 Approval and Notification**

MMDC will approve applications and notify applicants of the grant award decision within 21 days of the application submittal date. Projects cannot begin until a grant agreement has been fully executed. Expenses incurred before an agreement has been fully executed will not be considered eligible.

#### **4.4 Payment/Reimbursement**

Energy Efficiency and Conservation Strategies Grant awards will be distributed on a reimbursement basis upon completion of the project. Reimbursements will be issued in the form of a check to the grantee and will be mailed to the address provided on the application. Itemized receipts and/or invoices must be submitted to MMDC prior to the reimbursement with a grant close-out form. MMDC has the right to review and deny expenses that do not meet program eligibility.

MMDC will consider direct payment to contracted service providers (e.g. energy auditing or engineering firms) upon request if the reimbursement process creates a barrier to program participation due to small community size or other reasons. However, the grantee will need to provide invoices for all grant eligible expenses.

#### **4.5 Grant Close-out**

The grantee must submit a grant close-out form to the Regional Development and Grant Specialist Carol Lundgren ([carol.lundgren@mmdc.org](mailto:carol.lundgren@mmdc.org)) that will be provided at the completion of the project. Itemized receipts and/or invoices must be submitted with the grant close-out form. Reimbursement may take up to 45 days after the grant close-out form is received by MMDC.

### **6. Grant Agreement**

#### **5.1 Fully Executed**

A grant agreement is not fully executed until the applicant's authorized administrator and the Mid-Minnesota Development Commission's executive director have signed the agreement. MMDC will provide an opportunity for the applicant to review and request changes to the grant agreement. These requests will be considered on an individual basis and the granting of such requests is not guaranteed.

#### **5.2 Amendment**

Any amendment to the grant agreement must be approved by MMDC's executive director and must be signed by both parties upon mutual agreement.

#### **5.3 Project Timeline**

All projects funded by this grant must be completed by August 1, 2026.

### **6. Contracted Services**

Grantees may select and procure a contractor(s) of their choice to perform any eligible project(s) identified in the executed grant agreement. The grantee is solely responsible for the service agreement made with the contractor.

Grantees may choose to work with MMDC to develop energy and climate resilience plans. MMDC will be happy to provide a planning proposal developed to meet your specific needs without any charge or fee. If MMDC is selected as the service provider, a service agreement will be executed between the grantee and MMDC that is separate from the Energy Efficiency and Conservation Strategies Grant agreement.

## 7. Project Management

It is the sole responsibility of the grantee to manage their project. All grant-funded projects must be completed by August 1, 2026.

## 8. Conformance to Policies

MMDC reserves the right to refuse disbursement of funds for projects not completed in accordance with these policies or the terms of the executed grant agreement.

## 9. Contact Information:

All questions and inquiries may be directed to the following:

Primary Grant Contact	Carol Lundgren MMDC Regional Development & Grant Specialist <a href="mailto:Carol.Lundgren@mmdc.org">Carol.Lundgren@mmdc.org</a> (320) 235-8504
Alternate Grant Contact	Eric Day MMDC Executive Director <a href="mailto:Eric.Day@mmdc.org">Eric.Day@mmdc.org</a> (320) 235-8504