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Building off past success, Solar for Good pledges to supply Wisconsin nonprofits with more solar energy

The **Solar for Good** program will award over \$125,000 in free solar panels to Wisconsin nonprofits seeking to install solar power. Thanks to the program, 33 nonprofits have already installed and are producing their own solar electricity. Solar arrays are also in the planning or construction phase at 26 additional organizations that intend to complete their installations this year.

RENEW Wisconsin, a statewide renewable energy advocacy organization, administers the Solar for Good program with funding from the Couillard Solar Foundation. Though generous donations from philanthropists Cal and Laurie Couillard of Deerfield, Solar for Good supplies nonprofits with free solar panels, significantly reducing the system's overall price.

In its first three rounds of funding, Solar for Good issued over \$600,000 in grant-funding for new solar projects. These grants could lead to over \$6 million in total solar investment. These projects will generate nearly 2,900 kilowatts of clean, renewable electricity, enough to power over 500 Wisconsin homes.

For 2019, the Couillard Solar Foundation will supply nonprofits with nearly \$10,000 in free panels for small (under 75 kilowatts) solar arrays, and nearly \$20,000 in free panels for larger (over 75 kilowatts) solar systems. Along with this year's program changes, Solar for Good has a new logo representing the sun, solar panels, and solar energy's embrace of nonprofit communities.

"The Couillard Solar Foundation is buying panels in bulk," reported Sam Dunaiski, program manager for RENEW Wisconsin. "Rather than paying 50 to 80 cents per watt, we can supply the nonprofit with panels at the cost of roughly 35 cents per watt. We are passing on 100% of the savings to the nonprofit."

The program, now in its 4th award cycle, has helped fund projects of all sizes and types from across the state. In 2018, the grantees ranged from low-income housing units in rural, northwest Wisconsin to charter schools in Milwaukee. Solar projects planned for this year already include several houses of worship, a Native-American educational facility, and primate preserve near Westfield.

By accepting a solar panel grant, winning nonprofits agree to spread the word to their communities about the benefits of solar power. “These organizations are typically helping some of the most vulnerable members of our community,” stated Dunaiski. “By helping nonprofits go solar and reducing their electric bills, we’re freeing up more funding for these organizations. That money can then go right back into the nonprofit’s own missions on programs, allowing them to help their communities in the ways they do best.”

How to Apply

Organizations can learn more and apply at <http://renewwisconsin.org/solarforgood>.

In order to be eligible, the organization must be a registered nonprofit organization located in Wisconsin, be in good financial standing, be ready to install solar, and agree to participate in educating community members about the benefits of solar energy. If approved for a grant, all fundraising, design and installation for the solar project must be completed within 12 months.

Applications for this round of funding must be received by Monday, April 22nd 2019. Approvals and grant announcements will be made by **Wednesday, May 1st.**

For organizations looking at solar for the first time, technical assistance grants are available to fund a solar site assessment (up to \$250) or engineering review (up to \$500) for their solar array. These applications will be reviewed separately from the applications for grants for solar installation and will be awarded on a first-come, first-served basis.

About RENEW Wisconsin

RENEW Wisconsin is a nonprofit organization which promotes renewable energy in Wisconsin. We work on policies and programs that support solar power, wind power, biogas, local hydropower, and geothermal energy. More information is available on RENEW’s website: www.renewwisconsin.org.