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Walnut Way.jpg

The Midwest Renewable Energy Association (MREA) held in-person solar trainings April 2021 in Milwaukee, Wisconsin with students selected in partnership with Walnut Way Conservation Corp. The training was one of four held over the past year as part of the MREA's Rise Up Scholarship program.

Scholarship Program Supports Solar Training in Underserved Midwest Communities

Midwest – August 31, 2021 — The Midwest Renewable Energy Association (MREA) and its partners have continued their commitment to solar technical training and workforce development opportunities for underserved communities in the Midwest into a second year.

Started in 2020, the Rise Up Scholarship Program supports solar workforce development efforts and expands employment access by providing solar design and installation training scholarships to students. Scholarship recipients receive free entry-level training with the ability to attain the North American Board of Certified Energy Practitioners (NABCEP) PV Associate credential. Recipients are encouraged to apply for paid solar internships following the training.

“Having this scholarship available for future students is important because it really opens the door for students of color like me to learn to implement and advance MREA’s mission of using clean energy solutions in our families, communities and neighborhoods,” said Joshua Otusafo, a 2020 Rise Up Scholarship recipient.



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From its beginning in 1990, MREA has fought for market rules and investments that expand ratepayer access to energy efficiency and clean energy. Over the last five years, MREA has increasingly focused on ensuring that investment and opportunities are brought to communities that need them most.

“A Just Energy Transition should be a priority for economic development in Midwestern states,” said Nick Hylla, MREA’s Executive Director. “The Rise Up Scholarships are a small step toward making sure clean energy investments create jobs where they are needed, and that the benefits of local clean energy investments do not skip over areas with persistent underemployment and historically low participation in energy efficiency and clean energy programs.”

MREA’s Rise Up partner organizations in Indiana, Minnesota, Michigan, and Wisconsin are: the NAACP Environmental and Climate Justice Program of Evansville, Ind.; Renewable Energy Partners of Minneapolis, Minn.; Souldarity of Highland Park, Mich.; and Walnut Way Conservation Corps of Milwaukee, Wis. MREA coordinates with each partner to provide introductory information about the training program and career opportunities in the solar industry. The partners recruit training participants and work with MREA to support their success.

The MREA raised over \$30,000 in private donations for the program in 2020. MREA used the funds to host four trainings in three cities across the Midwest reaching 37 students. MREA is currently over halfway to this year’s \$30,000 fundraising goal.

With a focus on job training and career placement in solar energy, the MREA and its partners are advancing efforts to support local jobs and local investment in Midwest communities. To learn more about the program, or make a donation, visit midwestrenew.org/riseupgiving.

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The Midwest Renewable Energy Association (MREA) is a non-profit 501(c)(3) educational organization. Founded in 1990, the MREA promotes renewable energy, energy efficiency, and sustainable living through education and demonstration. www.midwestrenew.org.

Led by the Midwest Renewable Energy Association (MREA), Rise Up Midwest is a coalition of businesses, individuals, organizations, jurisdictions, and workforce development partners working in coordination to create a groundswell of support for commonsense, strategic, and swift policy action and market development.

The North American Board of Certified Energy Practitioners (NABCEP) is a well-respected certification organization for professionals in the field of renewable energy. NABCEP offers certifications and credentials for skilled professionals, specialists and those new to working in the areas of photovoltaics, solar heating, and small wind technologies. The first NABCEP Solar PV Installer certification exam (now

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called PV Installation Professional) was administered in 2003. Since then, NABCEP has launched and maintained 8 Board Certification Programs and 3 Associate credentials.

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