



‘Solar for Good’ offers grants to 16 Wisconsin nonprofit organizations to install solar energy

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For More Information

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RENEW Wisconsin’s Solar for Good program, funded by Deerfield-based philanthropists **Cal and Laurie Couillard**, will issue grants to 16 Wisconsin nonprofit organizations that seek to install solar electric systems on their buildings. The 16 grants would support a total of 573 kilowatts (kW) of new solar electric projects, planned for installation in 2018. The total value of all of the solar projects would exceed \$1.2 million.

A diverse group of nonprofit organizations expects to receive the solar grants, including a food pantry in Verona, an organization that serves homeless veterans in Racine, and several houses of worship including a mosque, a synagogue, and a church. Each organization seeks to use its grant to install its own solar electric system, based on the energy needs of each facility.

“We know that the solar energy boom is having a positive impact on our Wisconsin communities” said **Katherine Klausing, engagement manager at RENEW Wisconsin**, a state-based renewable energy advocacy organization that administers Solar for Good. “That’s why we designed the program to help local nonprofit organizations and houses of worship, who are working every day to improve our communities, join the solar movement. Investing in solar panels means they can lower their operating costs, save money to reinvest in their missions, and align their energy dollars with their values.”

Solar for Good grants are designed to fund between 10 and 20 percent of the cost of each organization’s solar project. Organizations that have been offered the grants will have 12 months to raise the remaining funds needed and complete their solar installations. “We are thrilled that this grant program has the potential to leverage nearly 10 times its original value in solar installations,” Klausing added.

“The idea is that if we can install solar panels on churches and other nonprofits, then all the people that are going there will also see this happening. I want to spread the message that solar is not just green for the environment, it’s green monetarily. You can actually save money doing it. It pays for itself. And I want to get that word out because I don’t think a lot of people know it,” said program founder Cal Couillard.

Demand for solar energy grants far surpassed expectations. Solar for Good announced in October that it would award a total of \$125,000 in grants. But when the application period closed on November 13, 23 organizations across Wisconsin had applied for over \$220,000 in funding. Additional fundraising enabled the program to fund these 16 projects with over \$142,000 in grants.

Solar for Good plans to issue another round of grant funding in spring 2018. Any individuals who wish to donate to the program can contribute at <http://renewwisconsin.org/action/SolarforGood.htm>

The following organizations have been offered Solar for Good grants and are now exploring fundraising and installation of solar electric systems:

Badger Prairie Needs Network, food pantry, Verona
Beth Israel Center, house of worship, Madison
Catholic Youth Expeditions, religious organization and retreat center, Baileys Harbor
Escuela Verde, public charter school, Milwaukee
First Congregational Church, house of worship, Oshkosh
Friends of Camp Anokijig, outdoor education program, Plymouth
Liberation Park, retreat center, Norwalk
Midwest Renewable Energy Association, education and training organization, Custer
North Pointe United Methodist Church, formerly known as Trinity United Methodist Church, house of worship, Racine
Pilgrim United Church of Christ, house of worship, Fond du Lac
Sinsinawa Dominicans, religious order and nursing care facility, Sinsinawa
United Unitarian Universalist Congregation, house of worship, Waukesha
Veterans Outreach of Wisconsin, transitional living facility for veterans, Racine

In addition, three of the recipients wish to remain anonymous at this time, including an affordable housing organization in Milwaukee, an organization serving low-income families in Madison, and a house of worship in Milwaukee.

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.

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