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Clean Energy Group Announces \$1 Million in Grants to Advance Solar+Storage in Underserved Communities

The innovative technical assistance grant program has supported the evaluation of 93 solar+storage projects in low-income communities and communities of color across the country.

Montpelier, VT - Clean Energy Group (CEG), a national nonprofit focused on the equitable expansion of clean energy, announced that it has awarded more than \$1 million in grants to community-serving organizations advancing solar PV paired with battery storage (solar+storage) to benefit frontline communities. The grants have supported the work of 86 affordable housing and nonprofit community organizations, representing 93 solar+storage projects across 22 states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico. To date, the grant awards have resulted in the completion of 30 resilient solar+storage projects in low-income communities and communities of color, with more projects working toward implementation.

Clean Energy Group first launched its [Technical Assistance Fund](#) grant program in 2014 as part of the organization's Resilient Power Project (www.resilient-power.org). The Resilient Power Project was established in response to the devastating power outages resulting from Superstorm Sandy, with the goal of increasing access to the resilience, health, and economic benefits of solar+storage through the advancement of inclusive programs and policy, and by providing technical assistance support to facilitate community-based project development in underserved communities.

“It is extremely gratifying to have been able to work with so many diverse partners over the years,” said CEG Vice President **Seth Mullendore**. “The role of solar+storage in community energy resilience was still a novel concept when we first introduced the Technical Assistance Fund in 2014. With today’s realities of extreme weather and life-threatening power outages, we’re working hard to just to keep up with the growing demand for our services.”

The Technical Assistance Fund specializes in issuing small, targeted grants, averaging about \$10,000 each, to support solar+storage projects in the early stages of exploration. The grants fill a capacity gap among community-serving nonprofits and affordable housing providers that do not have the in-house expertise to evaluate solar+storage and lack the financial resources to engage experienced technical services providers. In addition to project-based technical assistance, a portion of the grant funding also supports knowledge-building for nonprofits new to solar+storage. As of 2021, more than 50 percent of grant dollars awarded have gone to support the work of Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) organizations, a goal that CEG is committed to continue going forward.

“Our technical assistance grant from Clean Energy Group supported our efforts to verify the feasibility of our Resilient Native Generations project,” said **Nicole Lim**, Executive Director of the California Indian Museum and Cultural Center. “In serving our local tribal community, it is critical that we implement strategies that provide environmental and cultural resource protection and emergency response during wildfires and power outages. The grant facilitated support from local government officials and partnership organizations for the museum to become a designated resilience hub and generated capital funding from multiple federal and private sources.”

"Virginia will benefit from its first-ever Solar Powered Community Resiliency Hub. The Hub, which will be located in an historic district in the city of Petersburg, would not be possible without the technical assistance provided by the Clean Energy Group,” said **Queen Zakia Shabazz**, Executive Director of United Parents Against Lead and Coordinator of the Virginia Environmental Justice Collaborative. “From our first meeting, the CEG team has been supportive and provided guidance and resources to see us through the completion of a feasibility study to where we are now, on the brink of the actual solar PV installation. In addition, CEG has given us the opportunity to learn from and share our experience with others embarking on the solar+storage journey. We are fortunate to be in partnership with Clean Energy Group."

The small grants have had an outsized impact, representing millions of dollars of clean energy investment in underserved communities. As an example, CEG awarded a \$9,000 grant to Jubilee Housing and New Partners Community Solar in 2018 for a techno-economic feasibility assessment of solar+storage for the [Maycroft Apartments](#), an affordable housing development in Washington, DC. The resulting analysis was used to secure a \$65,000 grant from the Pepco Foundation to support the battery storage portion of a \$327,000 solar+storage system. The completed project delivers monthly energy savings to the residents of Maycroft and supports a resilience center providing reliable access to lighting, cooling, food storage and preparation, and charging for phones and medical devices during outages.

“Jubilee Housing expresses its gratitude to Clean Energy Group for their grant,” said **Martin Mellett**, Jubilee Housing Vice President of External Affairs, “which not only allowed the organizations to create a first of its kind Resiliency Center at the Maycroft Apartments, but most importantly is channeling the benefits of solar+storage to low-income housing residents – who most severely feel the impact of energy outages.”

“Developing such resiliency solutions is at the forefront of the nation’s affordable housing and renewable energy dialogues, and should be a model for others,” added **Jeff Lesk**, President and Co-founder of New Partners Community Solar. “Clean Energy Group was a key partner in developing and implementing this important proof-of-concept project.”

The Technical Assistance Fund grant program leverages philanthropic dollars that might otherwise not reach the dozens of organizations and community resilience efforts that CEG works with every year. Through the Resilient Power Project, CEG has developed the expertise to assist organizations in the early stages of project development and work with partners to identify promising opportunities where targeted technical assistance grant support could mean the

difference between success and failure. To-date, nearly 25 percent of Technical Assistance Fund grant awards have resulted in one or more completed resilient solar+storage installations.

Examples of a few additional completed projects that received Technical Assistance Fund grant awards include a [nonprofit mobility services provider](#) in Colorado, [affordable housing for farmworkers](#) in California, [fire stations](#) in Puerto Rico, and a [remote forestry office](#) in New Mexico.

"With our Technical Assistance Fund grant, our small grassroots nonprofit was able to hire a local consultant to work with us on finding a low-budget solar+storage system for our small food hub in a rural community highly impacted by Hurricane María," said **Tara Rodríguez Besosa**, Co-founder of El Departamento de la Comida. "This feasibility study took into account our specific needs for a commercial kitchen space that works most when the rest of our community is without power, something that occurs frequently because of the dire electric problems that Puerto Rico faces due to utility privatization and yearly hurricane seasons. Our food hub space is also tasked with the mission of educating others of what off-grid solutions look like, and our team now has the hands-on experience of working with a low-cost system that other groups can easily replicate."

"Clean Energy Group helped complete feasibility studies for two solar-plus-battery storage projects and continues to be a key partner as we move towards implementation," said **Leah Bamberger**, Director of Sustainability for Providence, RI. "These projects will bring resilient power solutions to critical facilities in the Providence communities that need them most and we are grateful to have CEG's support and expertise."

"Each year, interest in the Technical Assistance Fund program is expanding to new parts of the country," said CEG Project Director **Marriele Mango**. "This increasing geographic diversity is indicative of the climate crisis, with more places impacted by severe weather and power outages than ever before. We look forward to continuing to support innovative resilient power solutions for every community."

Over the years, the Resilient Power Project and Technical Assistance Fund have received generous financial support from The JPB Foundation, The Kresge Foundation, Surdna Foundation, Barr Foundation, New York Community Trust, Nathan Cummings Foundation, Merck Family Fund, 11th Hour Project, and The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation.

"Increasing the installation of solar+storage systems for low-to-moderate-income communities is an important goal for Kresge," said **Jessica Boehland**, Environment Senior Program Officer with The Kresge Foundation. "Widespread power outages pose significant risks to these communities. Buildings can become dangerously hot or cold, elevators and lighting can cease to function, insulin and other perishable medications can be lost, and medical devices can become inoperable. Resilient power systems that rely on solar panels and batteries protect against these risks. Ultimately, solar+storage systems will reduce carbon emissions while enhancing the resilience, health, and safety of all communities."

Clean Energy Group is actively raising funds to achieve its goal of awarding another \$1 million in Technical Assistance Funds to advance solar+storage projects in low-communities and communities of color over the next three years. To support this ongoing campaign, please visit www.cleanegroup.org/donate.

More information about CEG's Technical Assistance Fund and how to apply for funding is available at www.cleanegroup.org/ceg-projects/resilient-power-project/technical-assistance-fund.

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About Clean Energy Group (CEG)

Clean Energy Group (CEG), a leading national nonprofit advocacy organization, works to provide technical assistance, independent analysis, and policy support to address climate mitigation, adaptation, and energy justice. CEG collaborates with partners across private, governmental and nonprofit sectors to accelerate the equitable deployment of innovative clean energy technologies and the implementation of inclusive clean energy programs, policies, and financial tools. CEG's emphasis on enabling greater access to distributed clean energy technologies, primarily solar and battery storage, compliments its work with frontline communities, environmental justice advocates, technical experts, and transformative leaders to advance a just energy transition to a resilient, clean energy future. Founded in 1998, CEG has been a thought leader on effective strategies to address the climate crisis by expanding clean energy for more than 20 years. CEG staffs and manages the Clean Energy States Alliance (CESA). CEG is headquartered in Montpelier, VT, with CEG and CESA staff located in Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, South Carolina, Vermont, and Virginia. www.cleanegroup.org

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