

NEWS

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Nonprofits, community organizations receive more than \$55 million to bring solar to Portland communities of color and households experiencing low incomes

New grants from Portland Clean Energy Community Benefits Fund to lower energy bills, bring benefits for thousands of families

PORTLAND, Ore. – In a historic investment, the [Portland Clean Energy Community Benefits Fund](#) (PCEF) is awarding more than \$55 million to local organizations to connect communities of color and households experiencing lower incomes to solar energy through the installation of rooftop solar and large community solar projects. On Wednesday, the Portland City Council approved \$300 million in new grants to significantly lower carbon emissions and create direct economic opportunity for communities most affected by climate change.

[Energy Trust of Oregon](#), a nonprofit that helps people, businesses and organizations save energy and connect to renewable power, in partnership with community organizations [Community Energy Project](#), [APANO](#), and [Self-Enhancement Inc.](#) (SEI), will receive \$25 million to install solar on approximately 725 Portland homes and at 25 multifamily buildings across the city. The Bonneville Environmental Foundation, working with [Verde](#), [Black Man Green Plan](#), [Central City Concern](#), [Unite Oregon](#) and other partners, will receive \$31.6 million to build community solar projects. Together, these grants will lower energy costs for more than 3,000 Portland households.

“This is an investment in the homes and livelihoods of people across Portland,” said Michael Colgrove, executive director of Energy Trust. “With this work, we’re addressing the historic inequity in solar energy, adding more renewable energy to our community, and lowering costs for people for decades to come.”

Energy Trust will leverage PCEF funding along with an [\\$87 million federal Solar for All grant](#) and existing Energy Trust programs to create a never-before-seen investment in rooftop solar for communities of color and families experiencing lower incomes. The work could save the households that participate an estimated \$25,000 on energy over the next 20 years.

For many homes, the Portland Solar for All program will also pay for batteries that store energy, strengthen the utility grid and keep the lights on during outages. Funding may also cover roof repairs or electrical upgrades, which are often needed before installing solar on older homes. Portland Solar for All will be designed in collaboration with partners CEP, APANO, and SEI; these community-based organizations will apply their expertise and relationships to identify people and families in most need and support them through the installation process.

“This funding provides critical, direct support for communities facing significant challenges, including rising energy costs, displacement due to gentrification, and the escalating impacts of climate change,” said Cameo Konfrst, Development Director at Community Energy Project. “By

adding solar, we're not only advancing clean energy but also fostering greater stability and resilience for hundreds of Portland families."

BEF will build community solar projects on property owned by the Port of Portland and Metro. Community solar projects are larger solar systems built on rooftops of large buildings or in an undeveloped area. Each can bring the benefits of solar to hundreds of people including renters and anyone unable to install solar at home. Energy Trust supports developers of community solar by lowering costs and providing technical guidance.

"Building more community solar is one of the fastest ways to lower costs for Portlanders," said Todd Reeve, CEO of Bonneville Environmental Foundation. "In the midst of a housing crisis, this funding allows us to use clean energy to create real, meaningful change in our communities."

With the PCEF grants, both BEF and Energy Trust will help grow and diversify the solar workforce in Portland, driving millions of dollars to Portland small businesses including BIPOC-owned contractors and working with partners including the Oregon Solar Energy Education Fund, Energy Assurance and Portland Community College.

"With this funding, we're helping our community adapt to climate change while also creating opportunity and jobs," said Sam Baraso, program manager of the Portland Clean Energy Benefits Fund. "These projects will grow businesses now and help build a training pipeline, with hands-on opportunities for people who have been left out of the clean energy workforce."

Under PCEF's grant guidelines, Energy Trust and other recipients will develop the solar programs through 2025 with the goal of beginning installations in early 2026.

Energy Trust of Oregon is an independent nonprofit organization dedicated to helping utility customers benefit from saving energy and generating renewable power. Our services, cash incentives, and energy solutions have helped participating customers of Portland General Electric, Pacific Power, NW Natural, Cascade Natural Gas and Avista save \$4.6 billion on energy bills. Our work helps keep energy costs as low as possible, create jobs, and build a sustainable energy future. Learn more at www.energytrust.org or call 1-866-368-7878.

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