



**COLORADO**  
Energy Office

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Office of Gov. John Hickenlooper

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## **Colorado Energy Office awards \$1.2 million grant funding to GRID Alternatives for low-income solar project**

DENVER - Aug. 17, 2015 - The Colorado Energy Office is awarding \$1.2 million in grant funding to GRID Alternatives, a nonprofit organization, to implement a solar demonstration project for low-income communities in Colorado. Building on Colorado's national leadership in community solar, the project will focus on the state's low-income electric energy burden, making solar more accessible and affordable.

"This project will give us the opportunity to demonstrate how solar generation can be a sustainable solution to reduce electric bills for Coloradans who carry the greatest energy burden," said Jeffrey Ackermann, director of the Colorado Energy Office. "And it will assist Colorado's electric utilities in diversifying their electricity portfolios."

The demonstration project will involve the development of 5 to 12 community solar systems, ranging in size from 50 kW to 500 kW, solely for low-income shareholders. Cumulatively, the demonstration project will provide more than 1 MW of solar generation. Each system will be developed in partnership with utilities focused predominantly in the rural areas. Once complete, a minimum of 300 low-income households throughout the state will have access to community solar priced at an affordable rate.

Approximately 30 percent of Colorado's households are considered energy burdened, many of which are located in rural parts of the state. Of that 30 percent, 11 percent are considered energy impoverished, paying more than 10 percent of their income on utility bills. Energy burdened households are those that pay more than 4 percent of their annual income on utility bills.

"Colorado has been effective in helping to reduce heating costs for low-income households through utility bill assistance and the state's weatherization assistance program," said Joseph Pereira, director of the Colorado Energy Office's weatherization assistance program. "To address Colorado's low-income energy burden more comprehensively, we have to continue to find ways to reduce electric costs."

The demonstration project aligns with a new initiative launched by the White House, which is designed to increase solar access for all Americans. The initiative includes actions to scale up solar access and cut energy bills in communities across America.

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