

Buildings Upgrade Prize

Background

The **Buildings Upgrade Prize (Buildings UP)** provides more than \$22 million in cash prizes and technical assistance to support the transformation of existing U.S. buildings into more energy-efficient and clean energy-ready homes, commercial spaces and communities.

Building upgrades may include the following:

- transitioning to efficient electric equipment, including heat pumps and heat pump water heaters
- improving building efficiency through measures such as insulation and air sealing

Teams will submit innovative concepts to leverage the billions of dollars available through the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL), the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA), utility rebate programs, and many other funding sources capitalizing on this once-in-a-generation opportunity to equitably transform a wide variety of buildings across diverse geographies. As teams progress through the prize, they will receive cash prizes and technical assistance to help bring their ideas to life.

The initiative comprises four proposed phases over five years, beginning in January 2023 and projected to finish in the Winter of 2028. In September 2023, 45 teams were announced as Buildings UP Phase 1 Winners, advancing to Phase 2 with up to \$400,000 each in cash prizes and extensive technical assistance.

MEEA as a Regional Navigator

MEEA, in partnership with the five other Regional Energy Efficiency Organizations, created a national network of Regional Navigators to provide additional technical assistance and guidance to the prize winners through all phases of the initiative.

MEEA's role as Regional Navigator for the 12 prize teams in the Midwest region and Alaska* is to:

- Serve as the primary point of contact.
- Connect teams to the wealth of Buildings UP resources and technical assistance network.
- Guide the teams through the Buildings UP application process.
- Ensure teams have access to any resources needed to design their initiatives successfully and with equity intentionally at the forefront.
- Help teams identify additional funding and financing opportunities to support their initiatives.

**Alaska is included in the Midwest cohort due to its similar climate zones to some Midwestern states and other work that MEEA has conducted in the state, along with addressing issues related to hard-to-reach regions and communities.*

Connection to MEEA Members

Through this prize, teams are expected to seek additional sources of funding and financing to support their initiatives, to understand the landscape of building decarbonization in the region, to leverage resources from similar initiatives and build upon any lessons learned from previous, similar projects. The Regional Navigators are looking to leverage their relationships with members and important stakeholders to connect Buildings UP teams to resources provided by energy service companies, contractors, state and local governments, academic & research institutions, utility companies and community-based organizations, building upon regional and local decarbonization ecosystems.

Locations and descriptions of the teams are on the next page. **If you are interested in connecting with a team, please contact MEEA Director, Market Solutions & Education, [Molly Graham](#).**



Buildings Upgrade Prize

Midwest Teams, including Alaska

Climate + Energy Project

📍 Hutchinson, **Kansas**

Community-driven pathways to upgrading single and multifamily homes, improving home energy efficiency, reducing energy burden, and improving health.

Community Power/Cooperative Energy Futures

📍 Minneapolis, **Minnesota**

Upgrade 2,000+ Minnesota single family, multifamily, and multifamily commercial homes by creating access to upfront capital, data integration, and providing community-trusted support through a Navigator position.

Equilibrium3

📍 Duluth, **Minnesota**

Equitable electrification for single and multifamily homes via a holistic support-centric approach including enhanced audits, guided support systems, and expanded training.

Evanston Development Cooperative/Center for Neighborhood Technology

📍 Evanston, **Illinois**

Renovate affordable single and multifamily housing for climate resiliency, with focus on Black and Latin(x) neighborhoods.

Hope Village Revitalization

📍 Detroit, **Michigan**

Grassroots, community development organization-focused approach to retrofitting and building with heat pump technologies in single family, multifamily, and commercial spaces in the cities of Detroit and Highland Park.

Imani Works Inc./Affordable Community Energy Services Co.

📍 Chicago, **Illinois**

Leverage hybrid financing to address significant challenges related to energy efficiency, water conservation, and solar retrofit projects for single family, multifamily, commercial, church and school buildings in the South and West sides of Chicago.

IMPACT Community Action

📍 Columbus, **Ohio**

Create the first African American net zero neighborhood in American Addition, one of the oldest African American neighborhoods in Columbus, Ohio, and deliver deep energy savings (> 30%) to LMI single and multifamily homes and small commercial buildings in the area.

Metropolitan Energy Center

📍 Kansas City, **Missouri**

Energy-efficiency upgrades for library and commercial buildings while also creating an experiential learning curriculum for the public demonstrating the reach and cultural impacts libraries have on their communities.

Rosebud Sioux Tribe

📍 Rosebud, **South Dakota**

Deep energy retrofits in tribally owned single family, multifamily, and small commercial buildings by employing worker development, business creation, clean energy lending, and other economic activities supported by RESCo, the newly established tribal utility company.

Slipstream Group Inc.

📍 Milwaukee, **Wisconsin**

Design and launch the Cream City Climate Challenge to inspire weatherization and electrification in single family, multifamily, and church buildings and improve health and safety outcomes for Milwaukee's historically disadvantaged communities.

The Alaska Center

📍 Fairbanks, **Alaska**

Increase access to affordable energy upgrades for low-income single and multifamily housing and nonprofit commercial spaces in Alaska on the front line of climate change.

Native Village of Kotzebue

📍 Kotzebue, **Alaska**

Comprehensive outreach and strategy development for single family, multifamily, and commercial energy-efficiency/electrification projects and local workforce development in native Alaskan city 30 miles north of the Arctic Circle.