

September 2024

NDEE receives \$307 million EPA grant, introduces ONE RED program

On July 22, Governor Jim Pillen and the Nebraska Department of Environment and Energy (NDEE) announced the state received a \$307 million grant from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency that will help accelerate the state's realization of value-added agriculture and the bioeconomy initiative.. [Continue...](#)

Federal funding updates from NDEE

The Nebraska Department of Environment and Energy (NDEE) is pursuing several federal funding opportunities through the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) and the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA)..... [Continue...](#)

Registration open for 17th annual Nebraska Wind and Solar Conference

The 17th annual [Nebraska Wind and Solar Conference](#) is set to take place on Oct. 22-23, 2024, at the Marriott Cornhusker Hotel in Lincoln... [Continue...](#)

Energy Statistics

Nebraska by Numbers: Nebraska Dollar and Energy Saving Loans Program

NDEE's Dollar and Energy Saving Loans (DESL) program works with the state's lending institutions to provide low-interest loans to Nebraskans making energy efficiency improvements in their homes or buildings... [Continue...](#)

Energy Tips

Fall and winter energy-saving tips

The U.S. DOE provides these tips to save money and energy while staying comfortable during the cool fall and cold winter months. Many of these tips can be used on a daily basis to increase your savings; others are simple and inexpensive actions you can take to ensure maximum savings through the winter... [Continue...](#)



Photos by Amanda Woita, NDEE

Nebraska Department of Environment and Energy Deputy Director Kara Valentine (left) and Nebraska Gov. Jim Pillen speak separately at a press conference celebrating the state's \$307 million grant award from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. The grant will be used to implement select measures from Nebraska's Priority Climate Action Plan, which include voluntary, incentive-based ideas that bolster the economy while reducing emissions.

NDEE receives \$307 million EPA grant, introduces ONE RED program

On July 22, Governor Jim Pillen and the Nebraska Department of Environment and Energy (NDEE) announced the state received a \$307 million grant from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency that will help accelerate the state's realization of value-added agriculture and the bioeconomy initiative.

"Nebraska's farmers and ranchers are among the most innovative and sustainable in the world. These federal funds will help more farmers make more money by supporting the continued implementation of best management practices, establishing mechanisms to reward those practices, and expand investment in others that will protect our environment," said Governor Jim Pillen.

Funding comes from the EPA's Climate Pollution Reduction Implementation Grant and will be administered by Nebraska's ONE RED Program (Opportunity for Nebraska: Reducing Emissions and Decarbonization). In 2023, Governor Pillen endorsed the grant planning process, which enabled NDEE to develop a Priority Climate Action Plan (PCAP) for Nebraska. Nebraska's plan proposed high-impact, readily deployable, voluntary measures and incentives to reduce emissions and promote energy efficiency across the state. Selected measures from the PCAP formed the basis for Nebraska's successful application for the Implementation grant the state received today.

NDEE will use the new grant funds to implement voluntary programs to bolster all sectors of Nebraska's economy while reducing greenhouse gas emissions. Projects may include efficiency measures to reduce energy costs, incentives for sustainable agriculture practices, and advanced livestock waste management, among others.

"This award provides exciting opportunities for our state," said Thad Fineran, interim director for NDEE. "By implementing the measures outlined in Nebraska's priority action plan, we can reduce emissions, create high quality jobs, support rural and urban communities, and bolster our economy sustainably."

The success of Nebraska's application was made possible by the extensive public input from a broad range of



Photos by Amanda Woita, NDEE

U.S. EPA Deputy Administrator Janet McCabe speaks at the Aug. 7 press conference celebrating Nebraska’s implementation grant award. The conference was held at a family farm near Omaha and highlighted the agricultural ideas to help farmers implement new practices while protecting the environment.

partners and stakeholders across the state, including state and local government departments, public power districts, agricultural stakeholders, subject matter experts, and Nebraska’s citizens.

“The widespread input we received across Nebraska was instrumental to the success in this highly competitive grant application process,” said Gov. Pillen. “We are grateful for the investment in our state’s agricultural and energy projects that will make an incredible impact now and for future generations.”

Over the next few weeks, NDEE will negotiate a final grant agreement and workplan with the EPA. The Department will then begin work to implement the funded incentive programs. Work will also continue under the original planning grant to develop a Comprehensive Action Plan to address emission reductions through 2050. That plan is due in December 2025.

Measures included in NDEE’s Implementation Funds application

Measure
Promote Energy Efficiency and Electrification Upgrades for Non-Residential Facilities: Projects for industrial, commercial, agricultural, public, and nonprofit buildings and facilities.
Residential Pre-Weatherization Program: Provide funding to address critical home repairs for low-income residents to allow eligibility for the Weatherization Assistance Program.
Incentives for Irrigation Well Conversion from Diesel to Electric
Incentives for Micro-Solar Arrays for Critical Infrastructure in Low-Income Rural Communities: Solar arrays to provide partial power to water and waste-water facilities, reducing energy cost.
Funding for Solar Projects on Unused/Contaminated Land, Ag & Industrial Facilities and Parking Lot/Feedlot Solar Canopies
Measures to Reduce Emissions in Agricultural Production: Three interdependent strategies: 1) Develop a Carbon Intensity (CI) Score Registry with incentives for participation; 2) Incentives for adoption of Regenerative Agriculture Practices to improve soil health and reduce N fertilizer use; 3) Incentives for Precision Agriculture equipment for more efficient production.
Establish Hub-and-Spoke Anaerobic Digester/Biogas Hubs for Agricultural Waste: Establish three regional biogas cleaning facilities near existing natural gas pipelines, with biogas supplied by digesters at nearby animal feeding operations to benefit multiple producers.
Incentives for Production and Use of Biochar to Reduce Organic Waste and Sequester Carbon in Soil

Federal funding updates from NDEE

The Nebraska Department of Environment and Energy (NDEE) is pursuing several federal funding opportunities through the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) and the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA). In all, NDEE has applied for roughly 30 grant programs, both competitive and non-competitive, and has been awarded more than \$439 million as of July 31, 2024.



Photo by Chad Peltola on Unsplash

The Nebraska Department of Environment and Energy continues to make progress on federal funding opportunities through the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act and the Inflation Reduction Act.

To help the public keep track of these grant programs and their deadlines, NDEE regularly updates a PDF on the [front page of its website](#) titled “NDEE IIJA/IRA Grant Funding Status.” It encompasses NDEE’s IIJA /IRA applications to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE).

Below are updates on NDEE’s energy-based programs funded through IIJA/IRA grants since the last Nebraska Energy Quarterly was published in June:

[Climate Pollution Reduction Grant programs — ONE RED \(Opportunity for Nebraska: Reducing Emissions and Decarbonization\)](#)

The EPA’s Climate Pollution Reduction Grant Provided \$3 million to develop Nebraska’s Priority Climate Action Plan (PCAP), and a Comprehensive Action Plan (CAP). NDEE completed the state’s PCAP on March 1, 2024, and is beginning work to draft the state’s CAP, which is due to the EPA in December 2025. CAP development will include extensive stakeholder and public outreach.

With completion of the PCAP, Nebraska was eligible to apply for implementation funds to carry out select measures in the plan. On July 22, the EPA announced Nebraska received a \$307 million grant to develop and fund ideas that bolster Nebraska’s economy and reduce greenhouse gas emissions. These funds will be administered by NDEE’s ONE RED program (Opportunity for Nebraska: Reducing Emissions and Decarbonization). More information on this grant can be read on [page two](#) of this newsletter.

[Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grant](#)

NDEE awarded more than \$958,000 in Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grant funding to 12 Nebraska communities. Funding for this program came from the U.S. Department of Energy through the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law.

2024 grant awards can be viewed on the next page. Read more in our [press release](#).

2024 Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grant recipients

Grant Recipient	Funding Amount	Project
Beatrice	\$58,041	Energy efficient lighting in the city's auditorium and police station
Bloomfield	\$71,682	Energy efficient lighting and windows in the city library
Curtis	\$87,871	Energy efficient streetlights on Highways 18 and 23
Hickman	\$100,000	Energy efficient streetlights and street signs
Mitchell	\$24,324	Energy efficient lighting at city hall, the police department, the senior center, and the library
Nebraska City Utilities	\$100,000	Energy efficient streetlights along the main streets or entrances to Bennet, Douglas, Palmyra, Unadilla, Otoe, Lorton, Julian and Brock
North Platte	\$100,000	Energy efficient lighting at city hall, fire stations #2 and #3, the rec center, the senior center, and the ball field
Peru	\$81,731	Energy efficient streetlights along the downtown/business district
Shickley	\$83,148	Energy efficient streetlights
South Sioux City	\$100,000	Energy efficient lighting at the ball field
Wahoo	\$100,000	Energy efficient streetlights
Walthill	\$51,696	Solar streetlights

Keep up with NDEE's energy IJJA/BIL & IRA Formula Funding grant applications on our [update page](#).

Registration open for 17th annual Nebraska Wind and Solar Conference

The 17th annual [Nebraska Wind and Solar Conference](#) is set to take place on Oct. 22-23, 2024, at the Marriott Cornhusker Hotel in Lincoln.

[Registration](#) closes on Oct. 15, 2024, or until the event is sold out.

The conference presents information about all aspects of wind and solar development. NDEE State Energy Program and Dollar and Energy Saving Loan Program Supervisor Aaron Miller serves on the conference's planning committee.

"Energy and its technologies and policies rapidly change," Miller said. "The conference is a way for stakeholders to learn what's happening right now with wind and solar energy."

This year, the conference will include the following presentations:

- A Taste of Things to Come in Nebraska's Solar Output — Chris Caswell, director of growth and execution, AES Clean Energy; and Carol Waszak, manager, renewable resources, Omaha Public Power District.
- Using Battery Storage to Meet the Energy Demand — Molly Brown, vice president of energy production, GenPro Energy Solutions; and Jon Sunneberg, utility scale alternative energy manager, Nebraska Public Power District.
- Challenges and Solutions in Renewable Energy Project County Permitting Approval — Christopher Ollson, Ph.d, Ollson Environmental Health Management; and Alan Claus Anderson, J.D., Polsinelli Law Firm, Professor, University of Kansas School of Law.
- Advancements in PV Solar Module Technology — TBA
- Policy and Legislative Update: State Senators Panel — Sen. John Cavanaugh, District 9; and Sen. Tom Brandt, District 32.
- USDA's Rural Utilities Service Inflation Reduction Act Update — Chris McLean, assistant administrator, Rural Utilities Service Electric Programs.
- Nebraska BioEconomy is America's Secret Weapon for Food Security and Energy Independence — Julie Bushell, CEO, Ethos Connected and Global Sustainability Developers.
- SPP: A Look at the Queue and Congestion Issues — Casey Cathey, director, system planning, Southwest Power Pool.

In addition, JC Sandberg, chief advocacy officer with the American Clean Power Association, will give the keynote address on Oct. 22. The Oct. 23 keynote luncheon includes presentations from the CEOs of three Nebraska public power utilities: Tom Kent, CEO of Nebraska Public Power District; Javier Fernandez, CEO of Omaha Public Power District; and Emeka Anyanwu, CEO of Lincoln Electric System.



Photo by Josh McCausland on Unsplash

The 17th annual Wind and Solar Conference will take place Oct. 22-23 at the Marriot Cornhusker Hotel in Lincoln and will provide information about wind and solar development in the state.

Energy Tips

Fall and winter energy-saving tips

*Information from the
[U.S. Department of Energy](#)*

The following tips will save money and energy while staying comfortable during the cool fall and cold winter months. Many of these tips can be used on a daily basis to increase your savings; others are simple and inexpensive actions you can take to ensure maximum savings through the winter.

If you haven't already, conduct an [energy assessment](#) to determine where to save the most, and consider making a larger investment for long-term energy savings.

Take advantage of heat from the sun

- Open curtains on the south-facing windows during the day to allow sunlight to naturally heat the home, and close them at night to reduce the chill from cold windows.
- Be certain to plant deciduous trees on the south facing side of the home, especially in proximity to windows. They will let the light and warmth in the windows during the winter and will shade the windows in the summer.

Cover drafty windows

- Use a heavy-duty, clear plastic sheet on a frame or tape clear plastic film to the inside of window frames during the cold winter months. Make sure the plastic is sealed tightly to the frame to help reduce infiltration.
- Install tight-fitting, insulating drapes or shades on windows that feel drafty after weatherizing.
- Find out about other [window treatments](#) and coverings that can improve energy efficiency.

Adjust the temperature

- When you are home and awake, set the thermostat as low as is comfortable.
- When you are asleep or out of the house, turn the thermostat back to save as much as 10% a year on your heating and cooling bills. A smart or programmable [thermostat](#) can make it easy to set back your temperature. But make sure the temperature is comfortable for pets!
- If you have a heat pump, maintain a moderate setting or use a programmable thermostat specially designed for use with heat pumps.

Find and seal leaks

- Seal air leaks around utility cut-throughs for pipes ("plumbing penetrations"), gaps around chimneys and recessed lights in insulated ceilings, and unfinished spaces behind cupboards and closets.



Photo by Lucas Leonel Suarez on Unsplash

The U.S. Department of Energy offers several tips on saving energy while staying warm during the fall and winter months. When it comes to using a fireplace, keep the damper closed unless a fire is burning to block warm air from exiting through the chimney. Be sure to open the damper before using the fireplace.

Find out how to [detect air leaks](#).

Learn more about air sealing [new](#) and [existing homes](#).

- Add caulk or weatherstripping to seal air leaks around leaky doors and windows. Find out how to select and apply the appropriate [caulk](#) and [weatherstripping](#).

Maintain your heating systems

- Schedule routine service for home [heating systems](#).
- Replace furnace and heat pump filters once a month or as needed. Find out more about maintaining [furnaces or boilers](#) and [heat pumps](#).
- Regularly clean the flue vent of wood and pellet burning heaters and clean the inside of the appliance with a wire brush periodically to ensure that it is heating efficiently. Find other maintenance recommendations for [wood- and pellet-burning appliances](#).

Reduce heat loss from the fireplace

- Keep the fireplace damper closed unless a fire is burning. Keeping the damper open is like keeping a window wide open during the winter; it allows warm air to go right up the chimney.
- When using the fireplace, reduce heat loss by opening dampers in the bottom of the firebox (if provided) or open the nearest window slightly--approximately 1 inch--and close doors leading into the room. Lower the thermostat setting to between 50° and 55°F.
- If the fireplace is never used, plug and seal the chimney flue.
- Install tempered glass doors and a heat-air exchange system that blows warmed air back into the room.
- Check the seal on the fireplace flue damper and make it as snug as possible.
- Purchase grates made of C-shaped metal tubes to draw cool room air into the fireplace and circulate warm air back into the room.
- Add caulking around the fireplace hearth. Find out more techniques to improve your [fireplace or wood-burning appliance's](#) efficiency. Learn tips for safe and efficient fireplace [installation and wood burning](#).

Lower water heating costs

- Keep the temperature of the water heater to the warm setting (120°F). This will not only save energy, it will also help avoid scalding.
- Find other ideas for [energy-efficient water heating](#).

Lower holiday lighting costs

- Use light-emitting diode (LED) holiday light strings to reduce the cost of decorating the home for the winter holidays.
- Learn about the advantages and potential cost savings of [LED holiday light strings](#).
- Find manufacturers and brands of [ENERGY STAR® certified](#) decorative light strings.

The Nebraska Energy Quarterly is funded, in part, by the [U.S. Department of Energy through the State Energy Program](#).