

Farm Energy Fellow Justification and Details

EERMC Communications Subgroup

1/2/2018

Farmer Education \$2,000

This funding will leverage an additional \$6,530 in funding from National Grid to support an Energy Fellow (University of Rhode Island student) for January – December 2018. The Energy Fellow will assist with outreach to the farm community regarding energy management.

This is a professional development opportunity for the Energy Fellow, who will be guided by University of Rhode Island, OER, and National Grid staff. The outreach campaign will build on a similar campaign conducted by the University of Connecticut Extension Outreach Center and the Connecticut Farm Energy Program, and will integrate with National Grid's emphasis on "Design Thinking" outlined in the 2018 Annual Energy Efficiency Plan.

Alignment with Mission and Justification of Need

This funding directly advances the Communications Subgroup's mission to educate businesses about energy efficiency as well as the EERMC's mission to promote cost-effective energy efficiency for Rhode Islanders.

The 1,200 farms in Rhode Island represent an economically and culturally important business segment.ⁱ The vast majority of these farms are small in both acreage (average size is 56 acres) and value of sales (64% of farms have value of sales less than \$10,000). Because of the volatile nature of the farm business, keeping costs low is vital to their success.

However, participation in the half-dozen available farm energy programs has remained low as has attendance at workshops on these programs. Conversations with farmers, energy program administrators, and National Grid suggest low participation is due to farmers' lack of knowledge of available programs. The Energy Fellow will help connect farmers to energy management resources and programs through online videos, social media, and attending professional farmer organization meetings, and will leverage the University of Rhode Island Cooperative Extension's pre-existing network of farmers.

Benefits

Benefits to Farmers: Increasing outreach to farmers through additional channels will increase understanding of energy management resources, and ultimately lead to reduced energy use and lower energy bills for this business segment. Outreach to farmers is also a good opportunity to cross-market energy efficiency resources for homes and businesses.

Professional Development Benefits: The Energy Fellow will gain unique professional experience that bridges communications, business, and management skillsets.

Overview of Workplan

The Energy Fellow will work closely with Kaylyn Keane (URI), Carrie Gill (OER), and Mona Chandra (National Grid) to ensure all following deliverables are completely successfully. The Energy Fellow will also interface with other staff at OER, National Grid, Northern Region Conservation District Farm Energy Program, RI Department of Environmental Management, USDA, RI Infrastructure Bank, and others as appropriate.

Deliverables:

1. Conduct focus group style interviews with farmers to develop an outreach strategy by using a “design thinking” approach
2. Execute the outreach strategy, likely including (1) video testimonials, (2) social media presence, (3) attendance at professional farmer organization meetings, (4) other outreach channels discovered through interviews
3. Develop an educational “resource manual” of farm energy management resources, programs, and key contacts appropriate for farmers and other stakeholders
4. Develop and maintain an up-to-date contact list for farmers and stakeholders interested in farm energy management
5. Provide quarterly updates to the EERMC Communications Subgroup and a year-end report of activities, recommendations, and next steps

ⁱ Figures are from the 2012 USDA Census of Agriculture, Rhode Island Report. The Full Report is: https://www.agcensus.usda.gov/Publications/2012/Full_Report/Volume_1,_Chapter_1_State_Level/Rhode_Island/ and figures referenced are from Table 1: https://www.agcensus.usda.gov/Publications/2012/Full_Report/Volume_1,_Chapter_1_State_Level/Rhode_Island/st44_1_001_001.pdf.

Appraisal Education Funding Justification and Details

EERMC Communications Subgroup

1/10/2018

Appraisal Education

\$2,113 of budgeted \$5,000

This opportunity will leverage funding from the Appraisal Institute (a professional association for residential and commercial appraisers), Elevate Energy (an organization that promotes energy efficiency in buildings), and hopeful donation of venue space from National Grid to provide a 7-hour continuing education course on sustainable buildings for RI appraisers, builders, and realtors.

The Zero-Energy Buildings Working Group identified education for appraisers and the financial community as a need for increasing demand for and adoption of zero-energy buildings. This funding would support education for this community to understand how to value energy efficiency.

Opportunity

Lack of knowledge and expertise among stakeholders at the real estate transactional level remains one of the most consequential barriers standing in the way of comprehensive market transformation of residential real estate towards zero energy ready homes. Market participants and analysts report low levels of awareness of the benefits of high performance real estate, insufficient data and tools, and a lack of financing for the upfront costs of renovation or construction. Real estate agents, appraisers, and lending institutions need to improve their understanding of the contributory value of energy efficient improvements and renewable energy technologies so that full market potential for high performance zero energy ready homes can be achieved.

The upper levels of the real estate trade organizations have identified this obstacle and have begun working to address it. The Appraisal Institute, a global professional association of real estate appraisers, has rolled out a number of green building resources and initiatives, including a professional development program for the valuation of sustainable buildings. For meaningful market transformation to occur, real estate appraisers must gain expertise both in understanding new building technologies, as well as measuring the market reaction to building features and attributes.

Efforts at addressing appraiser competency have been slow to penetrate local real estate markets. While state licensing requires appraisers to obtain 28 hours of continuing education in a two-year cycle, appraisers have many choices when it comes to education. There has been a lack of live classroom education on the topic of sustainable buildings available for appraisers in Rhode Island. To date, only three appraisers in Rhode Island have completed the AI's sustainable buildings professional development program, which entails out-of-state or online coursework. Until more practicing appraisers gain expertise in appraisal techniques to measure the contributory value of energy efficient and renewable energy building attributes, market barriers to finance early adopter projects will remain.

The Massachusetts and Rhode Island Chapter of the Appraisal Institute, which represents over 425 valuation professionals committed to a higher level of competence and ethics, is pursuing an opportunity to host 7-hours of sustainable building education in Rhode Island. The program, made up of two half-day courses, was developed by Sandy Adomatis, SRA, the preeminent leader in the valuation of

sustainable real estate. One course will be focused on new residential building technologies including energy efficient and high-performance improvements, while the other will focus on the valuation of solar PV installations. There will be a topical presentation on energy efficiency during lunch. The event is scheduled for April 5, 2018 and will be taught by Ms. Adomatis herself. The course will be further used to cross-market other energy-related continuing education courses as well as the Valuation of Sustainable Building Professional Development Program.

Alignment with Mission and Justification of Need

This funding directly advances the Communications Subgroup’s mission to educate businesses about energy efficiency and is an indirect but essential step in achieving the EERMC’s mission to promote cost-effective energy efficiency for Rhode Islanders.

Buildings are becoming more energy efficient and using new clean energy technologies nationwide. For example, Rhode Island will release a voluntary stretch code for energy efficiency in buildings in early 2018. National Grid’s energy efficiency programs are moving toward incentives for buildings that produce as much electricity as they consume (called net-zero energy). In 2016, National Grid authored a whitepaper on net-zero energy buildings with extensive input from stakeholders including the RI Office of Energy Resources. This whitepaper set forth the goal of 100% new building stock and 10% existing building stock producing as much energy as consumed by 2035.

Education on how to value energy efficient and zero-energy buildings is an essential step in workforce development both to achieve Rhode Island’s energy goals and to ensure the appraisal community stays current with changing building technologies and standards. Enabling this education for a larger target audience will help remove market barriers for adoption of energy efficient buildings.

Funding Details

EERMC funding will cover costs for one half of the day. This will result in reduced attendee cost and is anticipated to increase the number of attendees from 15 to 50, and incentivize attendees from other professions including realtors and builders.

Expense Breakdown	
Full-Day Expenses	
<i>Instructor (leverages \$600 Elevate Energy contribution)</i>	\$1,600
<i>Materials (printing costs for 50 students)</i>	\$600
<i>Facility (hotel/conference)</i>	\$450
<i>CE Approvals (RI & MA)</i>	\$276
<i>Food (coffee/luncheon for 50 students)</i>	\$1,300
Total	\$4,226
<i>Proposed EERMC contribution to cover half of the expenses</i>	\$2,113