

NEWS RELEASE

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Missoula County, Partners Receive National Award to Create Clean Energy Jobs for Low-Income Women, Women of Color

Missoula's Clean Energy Workforce Coalition is [one of 10 winners of Phase One](#) of the U.S. Department of Energy's Community Clean Energy Coalition Prize. The award will help create new, supportive apprenticeship and training programs for low-income women and women of color in the clean energy sector in Missoula County.

The [Community Clean Energy Coalition Prize](#) is one in a suite of American-Made challenges focused on issues of justice, equity, diversity and inclusion, and is intended to encourage and recognize coalitions helping underrepresented communities to address local energy challenges using clean, sustainable solutions.

As winners in this first phase of the prize, Missoula's new Clean Energy Workforce Coalition — comprised of Missoula County, Climate Smart Missoula, Mountain Home Montana and the Missoula Economic Partnership — received \$30,000 to strengthen and grow this coalition and its work with low-income women and women of color to create and scale up a workforce development pipeline in clean energy careers, increasing access to family-supporting opportunities. The funding will help the coalition set up supportive apprenticeship and training programs that connect young mothers at Mountain Home Montana with family-supporting jobs in the clean energy sector.

"We're leveraging incredible wraparound services for low-income women and women of color at Mountain Home Montana — from childcare to stable housing to this new apprenticeship program," said Steph Goble, executive director of Mountain Home Montana. "This new coalition will help us build a bridge for women to enter the clean energy economy, increasing access to economic prosperity and developing the workforce needed in our community."

The core team has built a robust coalition to prepare Missoula County for the rapidly changing clean energy transition and will build out the multi-organization coalition in the coming months during the second phase of the prize. Supporting partners will include Missoula College and the Montana Renewable Energy Association, as well as trade and labor representatives. The coalition also will work to clearly define community needs and ensure its plan aligns with at least one [DOE Justice40 policy priority](#).

"We know that a more robust workforce is one of the keys to Missoula County achieving [its clean energy and climate goals](#)," said Caroline Bean, Missoula County's climate action program

manager. “Our core team couldn’t be more excited to build this coalition and better understand the best ways to include women and others historically left out of these family-supporting careers.”

This prize comes at a welcome and crucial time, according to Amy Cilimburg, Climate Smart Missoula executive director.

“Through our collaborative [Electrify Missoula](#) initiative, we’ve been working to understand the barriers to a rapid clean energy transition in Missoula County,” she said. “We need a larger and more diverse workforce, and we need it fast!”

At the culmination of Phase Two in May, the Missoula team will be eligible for an additional \$115,000 when they submit their coalition implementation plan. The team will then have the opportunity to present at a Community Summit Event in December. The \$50,000 cash grand prize will be awarded to one winning coalition at that summit.

About the American-Made Community Clean Energy Coalition Prize

The goal of the three-phase Community Clean Energy Coalition Prize is to help community coalitions — made up of nonprofits, local governments, school systems and other community organizations — come together to develop a strategy to address a local clean energy opportunity or inequity. Strategies may include student education, workforce trainings or implementation of new technologies that align with the goals of the White House’s Justice40 Initiative.

The Community Clean Energy Coalition Prize is part of the American-Made program, which fast tracks innovation through prizes, training, teaming and mentoring. Teams competing in the Community Clean Energy Coalition Prize will have access to the American-Made Network, connecting the nation’s entrepreneurs and innovators to America’s national labs and the private sector. Mentoring, tools, resources and support through the American-Made Network help accelerate the transition of ideas into real-world solutions to achieve clean energy goals.

Follow the Community Clean Energy Coalition Prize on [HeroX.com](#) for all prize-related updates.

The Community Clean Energy Coalition Prize is directed and administered by the National Renewable Energy Laboratory and is funded through the DOE’s Office of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy.