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Biden-Harris Administration Announces \$366 Million to Lower Energy Costs and Enhance Energy Security in Rural and Remote Communities Across the Nation

President Biden's Investing in America Agenda Supports 17 Projects Across 20 States and 30 Tribal Nations and Communities, Bringing Clean Energy, High-Quality Jobs, and Energy Justice to Every Pocket of America

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TEMECULA, CA — As part of President Biden's Investing in America [agenda](#)¹, the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) today announced more than \$366 million for 17 projects across 20 states and 30 Tribal Nations and communities to accelerate clean energy deployment in rural and remote areas across the country. This funding—made possible by the President's Bipartisan Infrastructure Law—will support a variety of community-driven energy projects in rural and remote regions, such as building microgrids for community health centers to ensure electricity for critical life-saving equipment or constructing a new hydroelectric facility on Tribal lands to improve access to reliable, affordable energy. Today's announcement underscores the Biden-Harris Administration's deep commitment to building an inclusive and equitable clean energy future that creates safer, more resilient communities, enhances Tribal energy sovereignty, strengthens energy security, and delivers new economic opportunities in every pocket of the nation.

"President Biden firmly believes that every community should benefit from the nation's historic transition to a clean energy future, especially those in rural and remote areas," said **U.S. Secretary of Energy Jennifer M. Granholm**. "Thanks to the President's Investing in America agenda, DOE is helping revitalize communities across America—ensuring thriving businesses, reliable access to clean energy, and exciting new economic opportunities, now and for generations to come."

In line with President Biden's [Justice40 Initiative](#) to advance energy and environmental justice, all 17 selected projects are located in or adjacent to disadvantaged communities that are disproportionately overburdened by pollution and historically underserved. Rural and remote communities face a unique set of energy challenges due to their smaller populations and isolation from larger electrical systems, including higher electric bills, unreliable energy supplies, and/or no access to electricity at all. For example, 21% of Navajo Nation homes and 35% of Hopi Indian Tribe homes remain unelectrified, according to a [2023 report](#) by DOE's [Office of Indian Energy](#). Of the electrified homes within Tribal communities, 31% reported monthly outages. Of the nation's 350 persistently poor counties, 300 are rural. Low-income residents

consistently face an “energy burden”, or percentage of household income spent on energy bills, that is three times higher than other households.

Accelerating Clean Energy Deployment in Rural and Remote Communities

The projects announced today are part of DOE’s Energy Improvements in Rural or Remote Areas (ERA) [program](#), which is managed by the DOE [Office of Clean Energy Demonstrations \(OCED\)](#). The ERA program leverages DOE’s expertise in resilient energy solutions while recognizing the unique environmental, cultural, and economic landscapes of rural and remote communities. The selected projects cover a range of clean energy technologies, from solar, battery storage systems and microgrids to hydropower, heat pumps, biomass, and electric vehicle charging infrastructure.

At least 12 projects will support Tribal communities, such as the Navajo and Hopi Nations, who plan to install solar and battery energy storage systems to provide electricity for 300 homes. Another project expects its proposed Tribal clean energy projects to save each Taos Pueblo household in its service area \$700 per year, highlighting the cost-savings benefits that come with the transition to a clean energy future.

Examples of projects selected for award negotiation include:

- **Solar + Storage Microgrids for Rural Community Health Centers Project:** *(Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee):* The CHARGE Partnership, made up of the mission-aligned organizations the National Association of Community Health Centers, Capital Link, Collective Energy, and Clean Energy Group, plans to build energy resilience in Community Health Centers to improve access to reliable health care in low-income, rural communities across eight states in the southeast. The initial site for this project is in Tunica, Mississippi in partnership with Aaron E. Henry Community Health Center, which will incorporate additional community and workforce initiatives. The clean, resilient energy systems developed through this project will benefit up to 175 health center sites, ensuring energy reliability for critical medical equipment, refrigeration of insulin and vaccines, and continuity of care during emergencies and power outages. Participating health centers could save up to \$45 million in energy costs, avoid millions in losses due to closures, decrease greenhouse gas emissions, and create a scalable, replicable model for remote health care providers,

strengthening the resilience of vulnerable communities across the country.

- **Chignik Hydroelectric Dam and Water Source Project** (*Chignik Bay, Alaska*): This project aims to renovate a 70+ year-old leaking dam and add a 2.1 MWh hydroelectric facility on the same site. In addition to restoring the dam, the project team has secured over \$6 million to rehabilitate the community's water supply and anticipates creating construction jobs with a Tribal preference. The new hydroelectric facility will replace 100% of the community's diesel consumption and provide power for homes, businesses, and economic activities like tourism and fish processing. The project will also provide a new revenue stream for its owners, the Chignik Bay Tribal Council, and could then sell excess power to utilities, reducing residents' total electricity rates.
- **Resilience and Prosperity in Rural Northern Wisconsin** (*24 sites across Red Cliff Band Tribal Lands and Bayfield County, Wisconsin*): This project seeks to increase regional energy reliability with the deployment of 23 microgrid systems. Wisconsin's Office of Sustainability and Clean Energy (OSCE) will promote local workforce development—particularly for construction and permanent project jobs, create avenues for meaningful public engagement, and provide clean energy education to residents. OSCE also aims to deploy solar power, battery storage, smart controls to enable islanding, and electric vehicle charging stations.
- **Energizing Rural Hopi and Navajo with Solar Powered Battery-Based Systems** (*Navajo and Hopi communities in Arizona, New Mexico, and Utah*): This project plans to install 2.5 kW off-grid solar and battery storage systems to electrify 300 Tribal homes, enhancing energy resilience and increasing electrification rates within the community. The project lead, Native Renewables Inc., is committed to an Indigenous-led workforce and has developed a program to increase the number of Tribal solar-installation professionals. They will also host training and education for participating households on solar electric energy systems and best practices to ensure the longevity of battery storage systems. This electrification project will fulfill essential household power needs, including lighting, and refrigeration for food and medicine.

Learn more about the 17 projects selected for award negotiation [here](#).

As part of President Biden's commitment to investing in America's rural and remote communities, advance environmental and energy justice, and

strengthen Tribal energy sovereignty, each ERA selectee is required to develop and ultimately implement a comprehensive [Community Benefits Plan](#) (CBP)—which will be informed by early and meaningful community engagements in each region. As part of the Department’s commitment to transparency, OCED will hold a series of national and regional virtual briefings to provide information on the selected projects, OCED’s approach to clean energy demonstrations, and opportunities for community engagement. Learn about ERA engagement opportunities and register to attend [here](#).

Selection for award negotiations is not a commitment by DOE to issue an award or provide funding. Before funding is issued, DOE and the selectees will undergo a negotiation process, and DOE may cancel negotiations and rescind the selection for any reason during that time. Lead applicants also may change during the award negotiations process. If awarded, OCED will evaluate these projects through a phased approach to project management that includes “go/no-go” decision points between each project phase where DOE reviews and evaluates implementation progress, including community benefits.

OCED manages the ERA program and will provide project management oversight for the projects announced today. The ERA program has also included additional rural and remote opportunities such as the [Energizing Rural Communities Prize](#) and [ERA Fixed Grant Award Program](#). OCED is collecting feedback and data from previous applicants, rural communities, and stakeholders to inform the development of future funding opportunities under the ERA program.

Learn more about how [OCED](#) is supporting the Biden-Harris Administration’s whole-of-government approach in addressing the climate crisis and delivering a clean and equitable energy future for every American.

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