

## Memorandum

To: City of La Crosse Common Council  
From: Lewis Kuhlman, AICP, Environmental Planner  
Date: 7/10/2024  
Re: **Energy Innovation Grant Implementation**

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This memo responds to questions raised in the Finance & Personnel Committee meeting on July 5, 2024, regarding the acceptance of the Energy Innovation Grant. It addresses how funds will be distributed, workforce, target audience and outreach, and typical projects.

The proposed grant-funded program is a partnership with Green Homeowners United (GHU).

GHU will employ home energy auditors who will receive certification from the Building Performance Institute. They will do about \$2,000 in work per household: \$500 for the energy assessment, \$45 for LED bulbs, \$1,455 for onsite duct leak tester-assisted duct sealing and moderate air sealing guided by a blower door. GHU's economist will then help guide them on financial incentives available to dramatically lower the cost of energy efficiency projects. GHU will invoice the City of La Crosse for the cost of the home energy audits and projects on a quarterly basis.

Households within Justice40 and EPA IRA Disadvantaged Areas will be targeted, focusing on those at or below 80% Area Median Income (AMI) on a first-come, first-served basis. Income qualification will use the Focus on Energy Income Qualified application form—individuals at or below 80% AMI qualify for increased rebates.

Outreach efforts will include collaboration with Forward Together Wisconsin's canvassers and leveraging existing networks such as City Housing Staff, Habitat for Humanity, Couleecap, neighborhood associations, and other community groups. Marketing efforts in specific neighborhoods will be funded to support outreach, reducing the burden on the City.

GHU aims to leverage Home Electrification and Appliance Rebate (HEAR) program & HOME funds to perform work on assessed homes and develop a full team of insulators, ensuring sustainability beyond the grant's lifespan.

The Energy Innovation Grant will fund a program to conduct home energy audits for more than 300 low-income households in disadvantaged communities. Green Homeowners United will be hiring auditors and conducting audits. City staff will manage the distribution of funds and will reimburse GHU for their work quarterly.