



October 2024

EPA Publication Number: 907F24001

GRANTING GREEN

Growing a Greener Tomorrow

U.S. ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY | REGION 7

Summary.

EPA Region 7's "Granting Green" publication highlights success stories and achievements of various projects funded by EPA grants. Region 7 includes Iowa, Kansas, Missouri, Nebraska, and nine tribal nations. The goal is to inspire and encourage ongoing and future efforts in environmental protection and community development, while demonstrating the impact of EPA funding on improving air and water quality, addressing brownfield sites, and promoting environmental justice.

www.epa.gov/aboutepa/region-7-community-information-guide



**“Nature is not a place to visit.
It’s home.”**
–Robert Brault

TABLE OF CONTENTS

A NOTE FROM THE TEAM	4
GETTING AROUND KC: BIKEWALK KC	5
KIMMEL ORCHARD	6
THE CENTER FOR RURAL AFFAIRS	8
TRAILNET IN THE VILLE	10
ENERGYCARE: INCLUSIVE SUSTAINABILITY FOR ST. LOUIS	11
HEARTLAND ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE CENTER	12



REGION 7 COMMUNITY INFORMATION GUIDE

The online Community Information Guide provides communities, nonprofits, stakeholder groups, community-based organizations, academia, tribes, state and local governments, and other partners with the latest news and information on funding and technical assistance opportunities, meetings, conferences, events, webinars, and other activities related to human health and the environment.

SIGN UP AND SEE WHAT'S NEW!

www.epa.gov/aboutepa/region-7-community-information-guide





A NOTE FROM THE

EPA REGION 7 COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT TEAM

We wanted to take a moment to express our sincere gratitude for the outstanding work Region 7 grantees have made in our communities. Your unwavering commitment to environmental protection and public health has made a profound difference in the lives of countless individuals. Your efforts, from ensuring clean air and water to addressing environmental challenges, have not only safeguarded our environment but also enhanced the quality of life for residents across our region.

Your dedication, expertise, and tireless work in fostering sustainability and resilience are truly commendable. We are fortunate to have such a dedicated region working diligently to protect our natural resources and promote a healthier, more sustainable future. Thank you for all that you do!

page

4



GETTING AROUND KC: BIKEWALK KC

Eric Rogers, Colletta Hummel, Amy Scrivner, Amanda Grimes

Award Years: 2023-2025

Environmental Education Award Amount: \$200,000

BikeWalkKC.org is a nonprofit organization dedicated to promoting active and sustainable transportation in Kansas City. They work tirelessly to create a more walkable and bike-friendly community by advocating for policies that prioritize pedestrians and cyclists, providing educational programs to enhance safety and skills, and organizing events that encourage people to get out of their cars and onto their bikes or on foot. Their mission is rooted in the belief that walking and biking are healthier options and also in infrastructure and urban design to identify areas in need of improvement to make walking safer and more accessible.

By engaging community members and experts in these assessments, they gather valuable insights to inform policy changes and infrastructure upgrades, ultimately working toward creating more inclusive and pedestrian-friendly neighborhoods across Kansas City. These “walk audits” play a crucial role in their overall mission to foster a culture of active transportation. With the award year running until 2025, Bikewalk KC hopes to develop a more active community with resources enabling healthy transportation for all.





KIMMEL ORCHARD

**The Kimmel Orchard and Vineyard Educational
Foundation and Schram Educational Center**
Dr. Bob Right, Dr. Judy Wu-Smart, and Dr. Doug Golick
Award Years: 2020-2022
Environmental Education Award Amount: \$133,333

Many insects play

essential roles in nature, like helping plants grow by pollinating them, controlling pests that harm crops, and recycling nutrients in the ecosystem.

It's crucial to protect these beneficial insects to maintain healthy ecosystems and ensure the well-being of the land and wildlife. A perfect reflection of this purpose-driven work can be seen through our former grantee, the Kimmel Orchard. In partnership with the University of Nebraska–Lincoln, Lincoln Parish Schools, Calvert Elementary Kindergarten, Girl Scouts of Nebraska, and Nebraska Game and Parks' Schramm Education Center; these regional leaders work in tandem to provide expansive pollination curricula.

These varied topics cover soil quality, workshops, and training sessions for various educators about beneficial insects and pollinators, including beekeeping and ways to reduce pesticide use and the intricate importance of our pollinators.



Their aim focuses on two goals: To increase the knowledge of students, parents, and communities about the invaluable role insects play in agriculture. To provide students with the skills to evaluate insect populations in school or demonstration gardens.

Currently, the programs are focused on restoring habitats for pollinators in preparation to teach students in the region about the importance of conservation.

As a continued testament to their grant, the Kimmel Orchard hosted a full week in summer 2023 for the Girl Scouts of Nebraska in educational activities to help their scouts learn about all the many beneficial insects. From the making of their own beehives to full beekeeping suits, the Kimmel Orchard continues to grow – showing Nebraska the power of pollination!

THE CENTER FOR RURAL AFFAIRS

Lucia Schulz, Kirsten Bailey, Deborah Solie, and Sandra Renner

Award Years: 2020-2022

Environmental Justice Award Amount: \$30,000



The Center for Rural Affairs (CFRA) is helping Latino farmer families in rural Nebraska communities facing challenges because they do not have full access to important information about protecting the environment and support systems due to language barriers. In rural

Nebraska, the Latino population has grown significantly over the past 20 years, becoming an important part of many communities.

However, language barriers and trust issues make it hard for them to access information about safe farming practices. From documents to engagement opportunities relevant to local farms and farmers, this eliminates hurdles for those seeking opportunities within the region.

The Nebraska Department of Environmental Quality's report shows that many rural residents rely on groundwater for their water supply, but there is widespread agricultural contamination, particularly with nitrates and pesticides. While efforts have been made to monitor water quality, some private wells are not part of the monitoring program.



CFRA and its partners use this known gap as an opportunity to teach these families how to test their water and soil for pollution, all while removing the language barrier. To help, a project provides educational training to Latino farmers on testing their well water and garden soil for contaminants. By learning these skills to monitor their water supply, they can reduce the risk of drinking harmful water and protect their customers who consume crops grown with potentially contaminated water.

CFRA uses group learning and demonstrations to make the training fun, effective and informative, as they have already gained many outstanding community leaders. Through empowering their community, they have created a constant stream of translated tools and documents, as well as working as intermediaries in farm sharing.

Older rural homesites may have a history of various activities that could contaminate the soil, such as waste disposal or fuel spills. People living on these sites may be at risk of exposure to contaminants like lead from old house paint or other toxic substances. To stay safe, it's essential for rural residents, including the Latino population, to be aware of these dangers and take steps to protect themselves, their communities, and our earth.

TRAILNET IN THE VILLE



Bryce Monser and Cindy Mense of Trailnet
Aaron Williams, Northside Community Housing/The Ville
Award Year: 2022-2023
Environmental Justice Award Amount: \$30,000

Trailnet, based in St. Louis, Missouri, is a nonprofit organization with a profound commitment to promoting active transportation and creating healthier, more connected communities. Their mission revolves around advocating for safe and accessible walking and biking trails, fostering a culture of active mobility, and advancing sustainable transportation options.



Trailnet has been a key player in facilitating improved infrastructure for cyclists and pedestrians throughout the St. Louis region, making it a more bike- and pedestrian-friendly city. Notably, Trailnet has embarked on collaborative efforts with North Side Community Housing in The Ville neighborhood, which received an EPA grant.

Together, they are working on projects that aim to revitalize and enhance the built environment to be more inclusive and sustainable. This partnership not only addresses community development but also integrates environmental concerns, contributing to the broader goal of creating resilient and healthier neighborhoods. These collaborative efforts underline Trailnet's commitment to making St. Louis a more vibrant and sustainable place for all its residents, with a specific focus on underserved communities.

ENERGYCARE INCLUSIVE SUSTAINABILITY FOR ST. LOUIS

Melanie Tobin, Development Director, and
Jana Ngugi, Services Supervisor

Award Year: 2022-2023

Environmental Justice Award Amount: \$75,000

EnergyCare St. Louis is a nonprofit organization dedicated to helping low-income and elderly individuals in the St. Louis area maintain safe and affordable energy in their homes. Their primary mission is to alleviate the burden of energy costs for vulnerable communities, while ensuring that homes are energy-efficient and safe. EnergyCare's services range from providing financial assistance for energy bills to offering weatherization and energy efficiency programs.

Their commitment to addressing energy poverty has a significant positive impact on the lives of those struggling to make ends meet while keeping their homes comfortable. EnergyCare St. Louis received a grant from EPA, highlighting their commitment to environmentally sustainable initiatives. This grant underscores their efforts to reduce the carbon footprint and enhance the energy efficiency of the homes they serve. As part of this initiative, EnergyCare focuses on weatherization, which includes sealing drafts, insulating homes, and upgrading heating and cooling systems to be more energy-efficient.

By making these improvements, they not only help reduce energy bills for their clients, but also contribute to the broader goal of environmental conservation, reducing greenhouse gas emissions and mitigating climate change in the St. Louis region. Through their partnership with EPA, EnergyCare St. Louis aims to make a significant impact in addressing energy poverty and promoting environmental sustainability. Their work not only ensures that individuals have access to essential energy services, but also aligns with broader efforts to create a greener and more energy-efficient community.



page
12



HEARTLAND **ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE CENTER**

The Heartland Environmental Justice Center (HEJC) was created after the Environmental Justice Thriving Communities Technical Assistance Centers (EJ TCTAC) program awarded \$10 million to Wichita State University. These funds are to provide direct technical assistance, training, and capacity-building support to communities and organizations to advance environmental and energy justice priorities.

Subscribe to stay up to date with [HEJC's projects and community work](#).



heartlandej.org

October 2024



and public health issues by building partnerships. Stay tuned for future grant updates.

The HEJC offers no-cost, customized support to strengthen communities' ability to identify challenges, plan and implement solutions, secure funding, and work toward achieving their community goals.

The formation of the EJ TCTACs, in partnership with the Department of Energy, is in direct response to feedback from communities and environmental justice leaders who have asked for readily accessible technical assistance to help with their long-term EJ goals and to help build their capacity to access federal and other resources.

There are 16 regionally and nationally based EJ TCTACs, featuring over 140 partners to provide assistance benefiting communities throughout the U.S.

The HEJC is a first-stop resource for communities seeking help with pressing environmental justice and energy equity challenges. The center was created to give communities extra capacity to plan for and find the funding sources that are desperately required to make transformative changes toward their environmental and energy justice goals. There are other EJ and Environmental Education grantees in the region who are also contributing to helping communities address environmental





EPA REGION 7 GRANTING GREEN

CONTACT US

U.S. EPA REGION 7
11201 Renner Blvd
Lenexa, KS 66219

www.epa.gov/region7
[Facebook.com/eparegion7](https://facebook.com/eparegion7)
x.com/eparegion7
[Instagram.com/epa_heartland](https://instagram.com/epa_heartland)



Subscribe

r7_communities_digest.epa.gov



Environmental Education (EE) Grants

<https://www.epa.gov/education/grants>



Environmental Justice Grants, Funding and Technical Assistance

[https://www.epa.gov/
environmentaljustice/environmental-
justice-grants-funding-and-technical-
assistance](https://www.epa.gov/environmentaljustice/environmental-justice-grants-funding-and-technical-assistance)

Mention of or referral to commercial products or services, and/or links to non-EPA sites does not imply official EPA endorsement of or responsibility for the opinions, ideas, data, or products presented at those locations, or guarantee the validity of the information provided. Mention of commercial products/services on non-EPA websites is provided solely as a pointer to information on topics related to environmental protection that may be useful to EPA staff and the public.

October 2024