

**NEW ENGLAND GRASSROOTS
ENVIRONMENT FUND**
Small Grants Program Application

Please email the application to your program officer or mail a hard copy to:
P.O. Box 1057 / Montpelier, VT 05601

We copy all applications for our grantmaking committee members. Please print the application single-sided, please don't staple materials together, and please don't use any folders or binders.

DATE: September 12, 2009

CONTACT PERSON:

Ellen Katz, Community Outreach Committee Chair

(please list one person who will be available to answer questions)

NAME OF APPLICANT ORGANIZATION:

Melrose Energy Commission

ADDRESS: c/o Ellen Katz, 70 Lynde Street, Melrose, MA 02176

PRIMARY PHONE #: 781-662-2616

ALTERNATIVE PHONE #: 781-854-1389

EMAIL: melroseenergy@yahoo.com

FAX #:

WEBSITE: <http://cityofmelrose.org/departments/mec.htm>

AMOUNT OF THIS REQUEST: \$1,500.00

TOTAL PROJECT BUDGET: \$1,500.00

TOTAL CURRENT ORGANIZATIONAL BUDGET: Approx. \$1,300.00 (see budget info below)

TOTAL AMOUNT YOUR ORGANIZATION SPENT LAST YEAR: \$2,400.00 (Utility sponsorship and state grant)

NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES, FULL AND/OR PART-TIME: 0

PROJECT PROPOSAL SUMMARY *(No more than 3 sentences – please start with, "To..."):*

To engage Melrose residents in climate protection activities and to ensure long-term viability of Melrose Energy Commission. Funding is requested to develop a Melrose Energy Commission website with templates for regular email bulletins. In addition, funding is requested for two activities focused on areas of special interest to Melrosians: (1) how to weatherize older/historic homes and, (2) a green open house/organic garden tour.

HOW DID YOU HEAR ABOUT NEGEF? Massachusetts Climate Action Network (MCAN)

CHECK ONE OF THE FOLLOWING THAT BEST APPLIES TO YOUR ORGANIZATION:

☐ **Ad Hoc group**

☒ **Ad Hoc group with fiscal agent** *(name of agent):* City of Melrose, Massachusetts

☐ **Incorporated as a nonprofit in your state**

☐ **501(c)(3) status with the IRS**

If you are an ad hoc group and do not have a checking account or fiscal agent, you will need to set up an account or agent upon receipt of a grant. You do NOT need to have an account or agent when you apply.

*work for Ellen
617-349-6956*

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PROJECT NARRATIVE & BUDGET *(no more than 2 pages please)*

1. Give a brief description of your proposed project. Be sure to include background of the issue.

Background. The Melrose Energy Commission is a small volunteer group founded in 2005 whose mission is to help the City of Melrose and its citizens save energy. In its four-year history the group has many impressive accomplishments. These include assisting the City in obtaining a \$340,000 state grant for photovoltaic panels for the renovated Middle School, energy audits of municipal buildings, high efficiency HVAC installation at Memorial Hall. Please see Attachment D for a list of accomplishments and projects. However, beyond a yearly Energy Fair and periodic articles in the local press the Commission has for the most part worked internally with City officials on projects related to municipal buildings.

Within the past year, as older members have cycled out and new members have joined, the Commission's interests have broadened in scope. Members are interested in expanding activities to the general public and expanding beyond energy conservation to the broader realm of climate protection. Last month the group voted to affiliate with the Massachusetts Climate Action Network in order to expand networking with climate activists across the state. We've been communicating with other Melrose organizations involved in sustainability issues to explore opportunities for collaboration. Some recent projects have included:

- Presentation of *An Inconvenient Truth* slide show by Al Gore-trained presenter
- A state grant to provide Kill A Watt meters at public library for loan to residents to measure electricity usage of home appliances and encourage conservation.
- Formation of three Low Carbon Diet groups comprising fifteen area households who reduced their households' carbon footprint by a minimum of 5000 pounds each.

The Challenge. The recent activities have been very well-received by residents, but the successes have brought new challenges. Our small volunteer group, currently comprising nine members, has been taking on more projects than ever. At each event attendees provide names and contact information for future activities, but we have not developed a system to communicate regularly with these interested parties in order to attract new members. We recognize that avoiding member burnout and recruiting new members are crucial to ensure the long-term viability of the organization.

The Melrose Energy Commission is applying for funding to NEGEF for assistance in carrying out these goals.

Proposed projects

1. Develop a website with group mailing capability and easy-to-use templates for regular newsletters/bulletins.

The Energy Commission has a Yahoo group, melroseenergy@yahoo.com, and a page on the City of Melrose's website, www.cityofmelrose.org/departments/mec.htm. The Yahoo group is a bit "clunky," with individuals having to join the group in order to gain access. We have used it mainly to archive meeting minutes. The City website is a page with links to documents. Due to firewall restrictions, our Communications Coordinator must send new content to City IT staff to be uploaded to the page. The site has no email capabilities.

The Commission proposes hiring a web designer to develop a simple, easy-to-update website, and to develop a template for regular email bulletins. Our page on the City's website will link to the new site. We will publicize the new website in local media and invite all interested parties to sign on for regular (quarterly) updates on MEC projects and other issues of interest.

2. Sponsor two public events:

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a. Green open house/garden tour in spring 2010.

Melrosians are very proud of their homes and gardens. We will capitalize on this interest by showcasing local homes and commercial buildings with significant "green" features, such as photovoltaic systems, high use of energy efficiency measures, sustainable landscaping (organic gardening, composting, rain barrels), etc. We will also include the newly renovated Memorial Hall, the "green" Middle School and the City's two Big Belly solar trash compactors. Households who participated in the Low Carbon Diet programs will be invited to participate in order to showcase their accomplishments and maintain a connection with the Energy Commission. Observing firsthand that a neighbor is using organic landscaping products or has installed compact fluorescent bulbs in light fixtures, for example, has much more impact than reading a newspaper article about it. By taking the tour, Melrose residents will see that sustainable practices and upgrades are easy to accomplish.

b. Workshop on weatherizing older/historic homes.

The Commission will offer a workshop on how to make older/historic homes energy efficient. We will invite speaker(s) who have experience upgrading HVAC systems, installing weatherizing materials and with other measures that can be taken without damaging historic features. The workshop will offer hands-on demonstrations of practices and materials. We will invite local historic organizations such as the Historic Commission and the Victorian Society to co-sponsor the event.

2. If your project is successful, what changes will occur in your community and its environment? Please include a timeline/steps for its completion.

Website/bulletin

- Hire designer one month after grant award
- New website by December 31, 2009.
- Send first quarterly email bulletin March 2010. The bulletin will include updates on Commission projects, announcements of upcoming events, listing of other issues and events of interest around the region.

Green Open House/Garden Tour May 2010

Goal: Twelve host properties and fifty or more attendees.

- Begin recruiting properties and co-sponsorship opportunities in November 2009.
- Continue intensive recruiting of hosts and volunteers January – February 2010.
- Develop program materials March 2010
- Publicize March – May 2010

Weatherization workshop February 2010.

Goal: Fifty attendees

- Hire speaker November 2009.
- Publicize January 2010

Organizational Development

- Seventy-five names on email distribution list by May 2010.
- Active list of at least fifteen volunteers willing to assist at events.
- Five new members by May 2010. (By-laws allow for prospective members to be invited to join after they attend two meetings and provide input on projects and activities they would like to participate in.)

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3. Project Budget

- Itemize anticipated expenses and income for this Project Proposal. Also note in-kind services (donated materials and/or labor) you may receive for this proposal.
- Please specify what expenses will be covered with NEGEF's funds (underline, bold, italicize, or * those items).

EXPENSES	INCOME	IN-KIND SERVICES
*\$1200.00 Website designer and first year of hosting		50 hours (MEC volunteers)
*\$150.00 Signs, printed materials for green open house tour		100 hours (" ")
*\$150.00 Home weatherization workshop (speaker, refreshments, publicity) 50 volunteer hours		100 hours (" ")
<hr/> *\$1,500.00	<hr/>	<hr/> 400 volunteer hours

****Requested funding from NEGEF***

- Principal sources of support (E.g. Membership dues, individual donations, grants, special events, etc.) Please list any grants that your group has received.

The Melrose Energy Commission does not have a regular budget. Members volunteer their time. National Grid, the local electric and gas utility, has sponsored several events over the past several years by paying facility rental fees for the Commission's annual Energy Fair, rental of a booth at the annual Chamber of Commerce Victorian Fair and purchase of a banner to hang across Main Street to publicize the Energy Fair. National Grid's support for these items for the 2009-10 year is expected to total \$1300.

Grants:

Commonwealth of Massachusetts, Department of Environmental Protection FY08 Municipal Sustainability Grant: \$1,550 to purchase 20 Kill A Watt meters to circulate to residents at the Public Library and for use in public schools. (See press clipping, Attachment D, *'Kill A Watt' and save a penny here, a planet there.*)

Please include the following attachments with your application form:

- A list of key volunteers, board of directors and current staff with affiliations, brief biosketches, and email addresses
- Financial statement for most recent completed year and budget for current year, if available
- List of local media with contact names and emails to whom we can send a press release
- Selected copies of group's newsletter, brochure, and/or press clippings, if appropriate

See Attachments.

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APPLICANT PROFILE

1. What is the mission or the goals of your group?

The Melrose Energy Commission is a small volunteer group founded in 2005 whose mission is to help the City of Melrose and its citizens save energy. Our group has two major goals:

- Save taxpayers money by helping to reduce energy consumed by city facilities and functions; and
- Educate Melrose residents about energy savings and efficiency opportunities
- Contribute tangible and positive steps toward lessening the harmful effects of global warming and climate change

2. How long has your group been in existence?

The Energy Commission was formed just over four years ago, in 2005.

3. What issue/issues got your group going?

The Energy Commission was formed in 2005 at a time when heating oil and natural gas prices were rising dramatically and both residents and City officials were concerned about their ability to meet their heating requirements in the coming winter. The founders of this group saw this as an opportunity to assist the City and their neighbors by sharing their knowledge of energy savings and efficiency as well as to advocate for a long-term commitment to energy efficiency in the City.

4. How many people started the group?

The Energy Commission was started by about fifteen members who responded to the Mayor of Melrose's call for volunteers to assist the City with energy issues.

5. Is this the first time that the group's "founders" had been "activated"?

The Energy Commission's founders included a mix of previous and newly "activated" members. For many members, this was a new experience, motivated by a desire to share their expertise in and commitment to energy efficiency issues.

If not the first time, with what other issues had they been involved?

The founders of the Energy Commission included members active in city planning, historic preservation and wetlands conservation and open space issues.

6. How many people are currently involved as the core group of leaders/workers?

There are nine members currently involved as the core group of the Energy Commission; they are listed above.

7. Is this a membership organization? Yes. If so, how many members do you have? Nine.

8. Do you have any paid staff? No.

If yes, how many full-time equivalents?

9. Approximately how many people in your community can be "activated" to support your issue – i.e., go to a meeting, sign a petition, call a selectperson, etc.?

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100+/-

**10. Has the focus of your group broadened or changed at all since it first started?
If so, in what ways?**

Most of the Commission accomplishments in the first three years involved improvements to municipal buildings and infrastructure, i.e., PV panels on the Middle School, energy audits of municipal buildings, analyses which led to the City purchasing streetlights from the utility company, high efficiency HVAC installation at Memorial Hall. Over the past year the Commission has expanded to do more public outreach activities and events and to expand beyond energy consumption to climate protection, showing the connection between fossil fuel usage, waste management, landscaping, etc. In addition, the City's part-time Recycling Coordinator has become a member and is looking at ways we can collaborate with the volunteer Recycling Committee.

11. Have any members of your group run for or been appointed to public office since they started working on your issue/issues? If so, for what office? Elected or appointed?

Founding member and former Secretary Jose Rotger served a term on the Melrose Historic Commission (appointed). Founding member Susan Murphy concurrently serves as Chair of the Melrose Conservation Commission (appointed).

12. Describe the size and make-up of your community.

Melrose is a small city located approximately seven miles north of Boston with a geographic area of 4.76 square miles and a population of approximately 28,000 people. Based on the 2000 census Melrose's median income is \$65,811. Since its settlement in the middle of the 18th century, Melrose has offered its residents a desirable compromise between the crowded metropolis of Boston and the frontier of rural exurbia. Melrose is predominantly residential with exquisite Victorian homes dating from the late 1800s, but beyond being a city of homes, Melrose has a long-standing tradition of being self-sufficient, to support residents' housing, education, employment, health, shopping, entertainment, recreation and leisure needs.

Another vital component of the quality of life in Melrose is its varied open space and recreation facilities. Ell Pond is a large natural feature in Melrose's center, trees line Melrose streets and parks and open spaces are dispersed through and around the city. Melrose is the true implementation of the notion of a garden city with a commercial/institutional downtown surrounded by housing of varied densities. In addition, the city is ringed by a "green belt" which includes the Middlesex Fells Reservation to the west, and this belt buffers it from surrounding communities.

13. Have you networked or shared information/resources with other groups? If so, with whom and how did you find out about them?

- Affiliated with Mass. Climate Action Network (MCAN) in August 2009 after individual members brought idea of affiliation to the full membership.
- Four members of the Recycling Committee attended our August meeting to learn more about what we do and discuss ways to collaborate/join forces on sustainability issues.
- We have been contacted by the Wakefield Climate Action Committee, a neighboring town, to look into opportunities to collaborate.

14. How have you gained knowledge about your issue?

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Several members work in the field of energy efficiency; others learn about it through individual study. We have developed and made good use of strong state government agency involvement and other advocacy organizations with the state.

15. If your organization is more than a year old, can you quantify any of your “successes”? Examples might be number of acres preserved, miles of trails, increase in recycling rates in town, toxic sites cleaned up, greenspaces/community gardens created, amount of money raised, legislation passed, etc.

The Energy Commission has achieved a number of successes, described above. In quantitative terms these have included:

- MEC has held **4** annual Energy Fairs that have attracted a total of over **800** residents.
- MEC recruited **100** Melrose households to join the Clean Energy Choice program, to contribute monthly payments (through their utility bills) in support of renewable energy. These enrollments combined with matching state grant funds, have raised close to \$30,000 in bonus funds for the City. The City has used the funds to send four science teachers from elementary through high school levels to National Energy Education Development (NEED) conferences and plans to use the remaining \$26,000 to install a photovoltaic system on the roof of the Lincoln Elementary School.
- MEC assisted the City in obtaining a **\$340,000** grant from the Massachusetts Technology Collaborative for solar panels at the new Melrose Middle School.
- More than seventy residents have borrowed Kill A Watt meters from the Melrose Public Library to measure the energy usage of home appliances and identify ways to reduce electricity costs.

16. What are the biggest challenges your community faces?

From an energy perspective, the greatest challenges our community faces include the age and historic nature of many of our homes and buildings, so that existing structures are not energy efficient and can be difficult to retrofit for energy efficiency.

17. What skills do you feel you and/or members of your group could use to help move your issue forward?

Better ways to communicate with the public and to expand membership. The group is fairly small; core members put a lot of time into Commission activities. The organization needs to develop new members to share the workload and develop new leadership in order to accomplish its objectives.

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Attachments

A. List of key volunteers, board of directors and current staff with affiliations, brief biosketches, and email addresses

MEMBERS

MEC members represent a wide array of backgrounds, including engineering, policy, environmental protection, communications, sales and installation, utility regulation, evaluation and analysis, and law.

David Shakespeare, MEC Chair, works for the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection and has more than 20 years of experience in environmental policy and analysis. A member of the State Leading By Example Council, he recently presented papers on renewable energy and energy efficiency at the 8th World Renewable Energy Congress and at Building Energy 2008.
dshaky@lycos.com

Douglas Dick, Vice-Chair, a LEED accredited architect and partner in the Cambridge firm, LDa Architecture and Interiors, specializes in sustainable design and construction for new and renovated homes, affordable housing and adaptive re-use projects throughout New England.
ddick@LDa-architects.com

Susan Gitelle Baron, MEC Secretary, is a compliance analyst in the health care industry. On behalf of local organizations in Waltham, she organized educational forums to disseminate environmental information. Baron was also instrumental in placing a non-binding carbon reduction resolution on the November 2008 Melrose ballot.
sgbaron@comcast.net

Gregg Aloï, whose educational background is in electrical and mechanical engineering, has more than 30 years of commercial property management experience with Prudential Insurance Company, BankBoston, StorageNetworks and Comcast. He developed the first energy-use database for all municipal buildings in Melrose.
aloigreg@yahoo.com

Mary Beth Calnan works for the City of Melrose as the Melrose Recycling Coordinator. She will act as the City's liaison to the Melrose Energy Commission.
mcalnan@cityofmelrose.org

Ellen Katz, Fiscal Director for the Cambridge Dept. of Public Works, has been actively involved with energy-efficiency projects for the City of Cambridge. Katz has more than 20 years of experience in environmental programs and policies.
efkatz@verizon.net

Susan Murphy, an attorney for the past 13 years, is chair of the Melrose Conservation Commission.
susanmurphy2@hotmail.com

Howie Newman, a communications specialist, worked for the Consortium for Energy Efficiency for nine years and has 28 years of experience in journalism and public relations.
hjnewman@verizon.net

Jack Welch, with nearly four decades of experience in the HVAC industry, is the sales manager for Burnell Controls, Inc. His expertise includes service, installation and system design of HVAC systems, as well as temperature control and energy management systems.
cartoys@comcast.net

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B. Financial statement for most recent completed year and budget for current year, if available

N/A

C. List of local media with contact names and emails

Boston Globe, Globe North section - Katheleen Conti, Reporter: globenorth@globe.com,
noweek@globe.com and kconti@globe.com

Melrose Free Press – Carol Ball, Editor: melrose@cnc.com

Melrose Weekly News - melroseweeklynews@rcn.com

Boston.com – Travis Anderson, Melrose correspondent: travis.m.andersen@gmail.com

D. Selected copies of group's newsletter, brochure, and/or press clippings

1. Melrose Energy Commission – List of Projects – see next page
2. Kill A Watt project materials - [How much energy are you using?](#)
3. 01-22-09 [‘Kill A Watt’ and save a penny here, a planet there](#)
4. 11-15-08 [Energy Fair provides diverse approaches](#)
5. 11-06-08 [Solar panels installed at Middle School](#)
6. 06-17-08 [Seventh-graders embrace Energy Commission](#)
7. 04-10-08 [Melrose residents can opt for clean energy](#)

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D.1 Melrose Energy Commission – List of Projects

Solar panels at Melrose Middle School

The Melrose Energy Commission worked with city officials to obtain a \$340,000 Massachusetts Technology Collaborative grant for a 30-kilowatt photovoltaic panel at the school. Click [here](#) to find out how much electricity is being generated by these panels.

Purchase of city streetlights

After conducting an extensive economic analysis of Melrose's streetlights, the MEC recommended to city officials that the streetlights be purchased directly from National Grid. The purchase is expected to be closed in early 2008. By purchasing – rather than leasing – these lights, Melrose stands to realize an annual net savings of about \$100,000.

Accruing close to \$25,000 in state funds for renewable energy projects

By promoting the state's Clean Energy Choice program, the Commission enlisted more than 100 Melrose households to contribute monthly payments (through their utility bills) in support of renewable energy. These contributions have earned Melrose close to \$25,000 in matching state funds that will further promote renewable energy through equipment such as photovoltaic panels for school buildings.

Energy education in Melrose schools

Using funds from the Clean Energy Choice matching grant, two Melrose Middle School teachers – Nancy Naslas and Eric DiAntonio – were able to attend July's National Energy Education Development (NEED) curriculum training seminar in Washington, D.C. The teachers reported back to the MEC to explain how they are incorporating the lessons from the training into their existing curricula. In addition, the Melrose Energy Commission helped secure \$500 from KeySpan Energy to fund the cost of NEED curriculum materials for the public schools.

Melrose enlists in EPA's Community Energy Challenge and U.S. Mayors Climate Agreement

Identifying these initiatives as excellent opportunities for energy savings in city buildings, the MEC worked with Mayor Dolan to enlist Melrose in these EPA and state-sponsored programs. Through these programs, Melrose and other New England cities are benchmarking the energy usage of city and school buildings, and then committing to an energy reduction of at least 10 percent.

Melrose Energy Fair

The MEC organizes and manages the annual Melrose Energy Fair. The most recent event was held Nov. 8, 2008, at Memorial Hall. This event is designed to create public awareness about opportunities for energy efficiency, renewable energy, energy audits and financial assistance for low-income families. Click [here](#) for a wrap-up of the 2008 Energy Fair.

First held in December 2005, the fair provides hands-on demonstrations and information for consumers. Exhibitors include local retailers, contractors and utility representatives.

Consumer education

The MEC regularly contributes stories to the *Melrose Free Press* and *Melrose Weekly News* about energy-saving opportunities for consumers. Through these media outlets, the Commission also keeps Melrose residents informed about energy-efficiency projects undertaken by the city. The MEC has also created a reading and video list about climate change and energy efficiency available at the Melrose Public Library.

Energy audit of city buildings

In coordination with the School Department and Department of Public Works, the MEC has initiated an inventory of energy consumption in city buildings. The objective of this project is to establish baseline levels which can be used in developing energy-efficiency opportunities. In conjunction with this effort, the MEC has arranged for an accelerated scheduling of energy audits for city buildings by National Grid. The Commission is also investigating other energy audit opportunities, including grants from the state and energy performance contracting.