



Climate Solutions Accelerator

of the Genesee-Finger Lakes Region

July 26, 2022

ARPA - RFP Coordinator
Monroe County Purchasing and Central Services
39 West Main Street, Room 200
Rochester, NY 14614

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing in full support of Rochester ENergy Efficiency and Weatherization (RENEW)'s proposal for Monroe County American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Funding Opportunities.

Rochester ENergy Efficiency and Weatherization (RENEW) is a collective impact initiative housed at the Rochester Area Community Foundation. RENEW has developed an integrated, efficient approach to stabilize families' and neighborhoods' health, wealth, and wellbeing, while at the same time moving our community towards a sustainable, low-carbon future. To date, RENEW has leveraged \$1.5M in grant funding to help low-income homeowners address deferred maintenance, health hazards, and energy inefficiencies. This process is now ready to "scale-up."

RENEW's partners include: Action for a Better Community, City of Rochester, Climate Solutions Accelerator, Coalition to Prevent Lead Poisoning, Common Ground Health, Greater Rochester Housing Partnership, Heat Smart Monroe, Metro Justice, Monroe County Dept of Public Health, Monroe County Office on Aging, NeighborWorks Community Partners, PathStone Corporation, Rochester Housing Development Fund Corporation, Town of Greece, Town of Irondequoit, and University of Rochester.

Rochester has a high concentration of older, low market value homes with significant deferred maintenance. This makes them energy-inefficient, vulnerable to climate change, and is a problem that disproportionately affects low-income homeowners.

By braiding resources and working cooperatively, as of April 2022, RENEW and their community partners have invested over \$6.0M into the homes of hundreds of low-income Monroe County homeowners. The 900+ residents of these homes are experiencing an average savings of 20% on fuel costs and better physical and mental health outcomes (100% with pre-existing respiratory conditions report reduced symptoms). Some families, with clean heating & cooling technologies like air-source heat pumps and heat pump hot water

heaters installed, have seen energy costs reduced by 36% to 50%. Estimates show that so far, their work will keep over 5,600 tons of greenhouse gas emissions from entering the atmosphere.

Community wide efforts by multiple organizations, including RENEW and the Climate Solutions Accelerator, focused on reducing our community's carbon footprint and increasing energy-efficiency and electrification, align with established recommendations from the City of Rochester, New York State, and the President's Bipartisan Infrastructure Law. Recent reports from the UN on [climate change](#) says failing to curtail carbon emissions within a few years will lead to catastrophic storms, irreparable damage to crops, and loss of human life. One UN report stated, "...governments should use the fiscal recovery from the pandemic to prioritize interventions that achieve both economic growth and climate change resilience." By 2030, New York State's [Energy Program](#) has committed to reducing statewide greenhouse gas emissions by 40% from 1990 levels ("Energy efficiency results in lower energy bills and is the single most cost-effective tool in achieving energy objectives").

RENEW has a proven public private operations model and funding mechanism to combine federal, state, and local resources to facilitate comprehensive energy efficiency and weatherization improvements to reduce the energy burden on low-income homeowners and the environment and increase residential safety and comfort. However, RENEW can only assist about 60 homeowners a year and the need is tremendous. Monroe County American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding would allow them to help more low-income homeowners – homeowners disproportionately affected by the pandemic. Expanding RENEW would enhance equity, promote families' economic security, and advance climate justice.

The results of RENEW's work, through verified energy use data, provides tangible evidence that measurable energy cost savings and carbon emission reductions can be achieved by residential energy-efficiency work. We are grateful for the ongoing efforts to educate consumers on the benefits of clean heating and cooling as well as the efforts to install as many heat pumps as possible.

RENEW's collective impact design serves as an exemplar for the significance, and widespread economic and healthful impact, climate smart initiatives have the potential to achieve.

Sincerely,



Abigail Mchugh-Grifa

Mission: To create a healthier, more equitable, and environmentally sustainable community by catalyzing local efforts to eliminate greenhouse gas emissions and address the effects of climate change.