



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

March 22, 2024

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ASSOCIATED GOVERNMENTS OF NORTHWEST COLORADO (AGNC) SELECTED FOR COMMUNITIES LEAP (LOCAL ENERGY ACTION PROGRAM) COHORT 2

This is the second federal grant secured in less than six months by the partnership of AGNC and NCEI to support NW Colorado energy transition efforts.

RIFLE, COLORADO (March 22, 2024) – The Northwest Colorado Energy Initiative (NCEI), in partnership with the Associated Governments of Northwest Colorado (AGNC), and the U.S. Department of Energy’s (DOE’s) National Renewable Energy Laboratory (NREL) have publicized their acceptance for Northwest Colorado’s participation in Communities LEAP (Local Energy Action Program) cohort 2.

"We are ecstatic to join Communities LEAP Cohort 2," stated Tiffany Dickenson, Executive Director of AGNC. "This opportunity marks a pivotal step in reshaping our approach to clean energy and sustainability. With a network of like-minded partners, we're poised to ignite meaningful change toward a prosperous future for our communities. We are grateful for this opportunity and eager to make a difference!"

The U.S. Department of Energy’s Communities LEAP partners with low-income, energy-burdened communities that are disadvantaged and/or experience direct economic impacts from reducing their historical reliance on fossil fuels to build community-driven action plans for clean energy-related economic development. Under Communities LEAP, DOE matches selected communities with technical assistance providers who assist them with bringing their clean energy planning and economic development vision to life.

The Communities LEAP opportunity encompasses two components: technical support and funding. Considering the impending closure of the Craig Power Station by January 1, 2028, AGNC sought to secure another funding source to assist in the ongoing efforts to aid the City of Craig and Moffat County, Colorado communities.

Dr. Nathan Perry of Colorado Mesa University, produces the economic report for Moffat County which emphasizes the significant impact of the energy sector, with the top-10 taxpayers being energy-based, accounting for 60% of the county's assessed value and budget. The expected GDP loss from the coal industry alone is over 46% in Moffat County and 26% in Rio Blanco County, rising to 71% when including the oil and gas sector. With 2028 fast approaching, these communities risk an economic crisis, if a plan is not implemented prior to closure.

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ASSOCIATED GOVERNMENTS
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ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DISTRICT

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The coal industry's overall economic impact in Northwest Colorado, encompassing both coal mining and coal power, is substantial, comprising 2,862 jobs, \$228,392,532 in labor income, and \$621,433,561 in regional GDP per Dr. Perry.

[Link](#) will take you to the Communities LEAP Cohort 2 Announcement.

“Many thanks to the Communities LEAP Cohort 2 team, the Department of Energy, GAIN, and our community partners for working together as we prepare for our region’s futures,” stated Matt Solomon, Project Manager for NCEI. “Together, we are putting our region and community before politics, as we expand upon fact-based discussions and community engagement, so we can create a plan for our energy future.”

AGNC would like to extend gratitude to the Northwest Colorado communities for their continued support for our efforts. We are fortunate to have JOLT (Joint Organizations Leading Transition) as a community partner and would like to extend our appreciation for the letters of support received for this grant from the following elected officials: United States Senator Michael Bennet, United States Senator John Hickenlooper, United States Congresswoman Lauren Boebert, Colorado State Senator Dylan Roberts, Colorado State Senator Perry Will, and Colorado State Representative Meghan Lukens.

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About AGNC (www.agnc.org) Associated Governments of Northwest Colorado is a council of governments and designated Economic Development District, representing the counties of Garfield, Mesa, Moffat, and Rio Blanco and all the municipalities therein. Their mission is to advocate, inform, and reflect the needs of its members by promoting the values, industries, and economies of Northwest Colorado.

About NCEI (www.agnc.org/ncei) The Northwest Colorado Energy Initiative operates under the purview of AGNC and Executive Director, Tiffany Dickenson. The advisory board members are former state House Majority Leader and former CMU President Tim Foster, former state Senator Bob Rankin, Mesa County Commissioner Cody Davis, Garfield County Commissioner Mike Samson, Rio Blanco County Commissioner Doug Overton and former Moffat County Commissioner Ray Beck. Former Eagle Town Council member Matt Solomon is the project manager.

About Communities LEAP cohort 2 ([Communities LEAP Cohort 2 | Department of Energy](#)) is a Department of Energy program designed to provide technical assistance to communities that have experienced historic environmental inequity or the economic consequences of the declining fossil fuel industry and are now focused on developing clean energy projects to equitably improve environmental conditions and increase economic opportunity. NREL is one of the Department of Energy’s national laboratories and is focused solely on advancing science and engineering relating to energy efficiency, renewable energy, and sustainable transportation.