



Partnering for Impact

A Case Study on Clean Energy and Lending

Minnesota CDFI Coalition Conference



Your Presenters

- **Matt Kazinka**, Lake Street Council & SBEEDi
- **Alex Christensen**, Energy Smart
- **Fu Hang**, Neighborhood Development Center
- Moderated by **Diana McKeown**, Clean Energy Resource Teams (CERTs)



SBEEEDi: The Small Business Equitable Energy Decarbonization Initiative



**GREAT PLAINS
INSTITUTE**

Better Energy.
Better World.

WILLIAM WEBER CONSULTING, LLC

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Development Center
Centro para el Desarrollo Económico Latino



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BUILDING NEIGHBORHOOD ECONOMIES FROM WITHIN



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ENVIRONMENTAL
SUSTAINABILITY
FOUNDATION



WEST BROADWAY
BUSINESS & AREA COALITION



Matt Kazinka

Lake Street Council



Small Businesses & Clean Energy: What We've Learned on Lake Street



Matt Kazinka
Lake Street Council
Senior Strategic Initiatives Manager

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Apologies -
I've got a
plane to catch!

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What You Need to Know

The opportunity

Nearly every small business can use energy more efficiently

The technical side

Experts are available to help – for free!

The money on the table

There are significant financial incentives for businesses to upgrade their equipment

The awareness gap

All of this (↑↑↑) is news to nearly every small business & org





Why we decided
to explore this

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Concept Development

Ideation (2012-2014)

Landscape analysis & partnership formation

Experimentation (2015-2020)

200+ energy assessments with small businesses

Integration (2021-2023)

Referrals to Energy Smart became standard practice

Replication (2024 – now)

Formation of SBEE Di & testing with other CBOs



Is this a unicorn?



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WE  LAKE STREET

What We've Learned

Timeliness is everything

Look and listen for businesses making changes & investments

Marginal but meaningful impacts

Transformation is great, but isn't necessarily the goal

You don't need a new program

Internal leadership matters, but the approach may actually work best when spread across an organization

Find the motivation & messaging that fits your mission

Your "why" doesn't have to be climate-focused at all





Thank you!

Matt Kazinka
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Alex Christensen

Energy Smart





Minnesota Chamber of Commerce

ENERGY SMART

Alex Christensen

Program Manager, CEA-IT, CSDP



Who we are

- Energy Smart is your **first resource** on business energy efficiency.
- We help businesses **save energy** and **reduce costs**.
- We provide **technical assistance** to improve energy efficiency in commercial operations.
- We connect businesses with **financial incentives** to make efficiency upgrades more affordable.



What is an energy efficiency project?



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- LED lighting
- HVAC equipment
- Refrigeration
- Foodservice
- Compressed air systems
- Motors & drives



How can we support you?

- Free energy efficiency assessments
- Fee-for-service assessments
 - Ex. PACE loan audits
- New/expanding businesses
- Equipment replacements (planned & unplanned)
- The earlier you bring us in, the better!
- “Windows of opportunity”



Case study: new business

SmartFresh Laundry

Minneapolis

- Energy efficient equipment
 - High-extraction washing machines
 - High-efficiency water heaters
- Annual energy savings
 - \$4,705
- Financial incentives = \$49,063
 - Utility rebates = \$4,063
 - Grants = \$45,000



Case study: business expansion

Asian Mart

South St. Paul

- Assisted in 2024, paving way for future NDC solar loan
- Energy efficient equipment
 - RTUs
 - LED lighting
 - Water heater
 - Merchandising cooler
 - Demand control ventilation
- Annual energy savings
 - \$8,023
- Financial incentives = \$16,400
 - Utility rebates = \$11,400
 - Grants = \$5,000



Fu Hang

Neighborhood
Development Center





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NDC Clean Energy Initiative and Clean Energy Loan Fund



Four Pillars - One Model

NDC has developed four integrated programs that have become the pillars to activating entrepreneurs and revitalizing low-income neighborhoods



Training



Lending



Business
Services



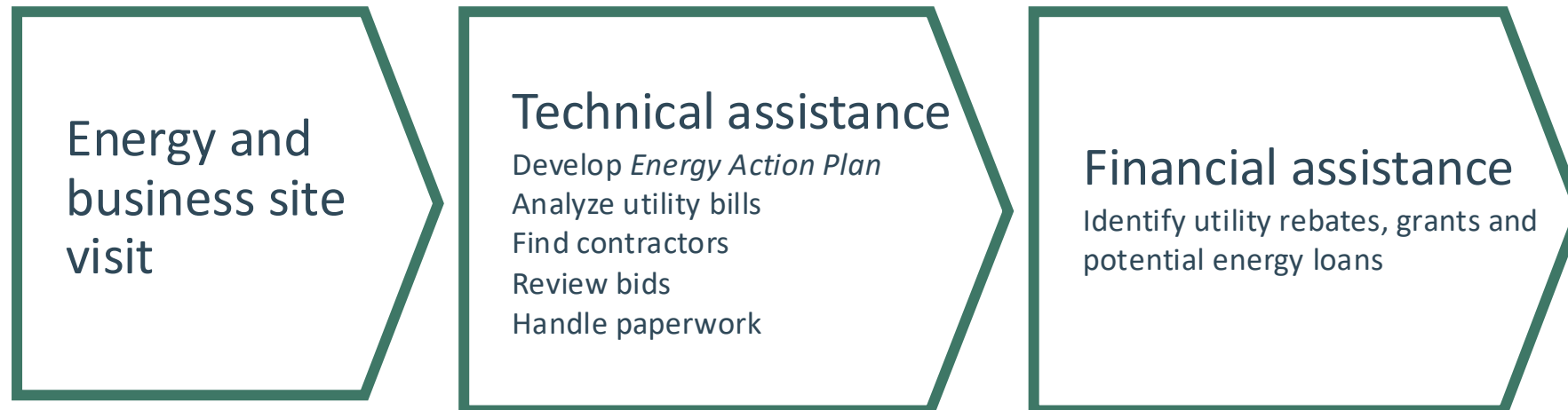
Incubator
Spaces





ENERGY ASSESSMENT

- NDC's partner, ENERGY SMART, conducts a free energy assessment following the steps below.





CLEAN ENERGY LOAN PROGRAM

"Working with the team was truly eye-opening--the assessment revealed cost-effective, energy-saving updates that gave me hope for easing our financial burden."
Lachelle Cunningham

Make Your Business More Energy Efficient

- 💡 **LED Lighting** – Cuts energy use, lasts longer, and brightens spaces
- ❄️ **HVAC Upgrades** – Provides greater comfort, lower bills, improved reliability.
- ☀️ **Solar Energy** – Reduce costs, tap into incentives.
- ⚡ **Efficient Equipment** – ENERGY STAR appliances = big savings.
- 🚗 **Electric Vehicles** – Lower fuel costs, eco-friendly operations.

Get Efficient. Save Money.

NDC is partnering with **Small Business Equitable Energy Decarbonization Initiative (SBEEI)** and **Energy Smart** to assist small businesses in identifying opportunities to become **leaders in clean energy**.

Interested? Contact us.

✉️ Email
lendingintake@ndc-mn.org



Lachelle Cunningham, Owner of Chelle's Kitchen

WHAT IS IT?

Big energy savings start with the right financing—and **NDC's new Clean Energy Loans are here to help you make it happen.** Whether you're upgrading lighting, improving insulation, or installing energy-efficient equipment, we can provide the capital you need to turn your plans into reality.

HOW CAN NDC SUPPORT YOU?

- ✓ **Loans for Energy Efficiency** – Get affordable financing tailored to help small businesses invest in upgrades that cut costs and save energy.
- ✓ **FREE Energy Assessment** – Identify where you can save the most.
- ✓ **1-on-1 Technical Assistance** – Build a custom efficiency plan with expert guidance.
- ✓ **Identify Rebates & Funding** – Stack your Green Loan with available incentives for even more savings.
- ✓ **Education** – Join an info session to explore energy-saving opportunities.

Clean Energy Loan Fund is part of the overall NDC loan program

To upgrade and improve equipment and infrastructure making them more energy efficient and cost effective =

- Potential increased cashflow through savings on utility bills
- Strategic, marketing and business resilience as a "green business"

Follows NDC existing loan process and procedures with a proposed flexible loan structure:

- Loan Amount: \$5,000 to a maximum of \$250,000, with an anticipated average loan size of \$50,000
- Interest Rate: 5% fixed for the term of the loan
- Term: 5 years (collateralized)



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Eligible Projects

Energy efficiency = de-carbonization

- Solar panel retrofitting and installations
- LED lighting & controls
- Energy-efficient HVAC systems: furnaces, boilers, rooftop units
- Water heaters
- Air source heat pumps
- Foodservice equipment: refrigeration
- Electric vehicles and charging infrastructure
- Qualified projects - retrofitting or leasehold improvements resulting in reducing carbon footprint





Timing



Reducing costs

- If you have high utility bills



Before a big change

- Moving
- Renewing
- Replacing
- Renovating



After a big change

- Renovation



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Case Study: New business

SmartFresh Laundry, LLC

Minneapolis

- **Total Project:** \$1,145,000
 - Bank financing: \$839,000
 - GAP financing - NDC: \$275,000
- **Use of Funds:**
 - Leasehold improvements, furniture, fixtures, equipment-related supplies, initial inventory
- **Clean Energy Loan:**
 - \$50,000: energy efficient-equipment
 - Utility rebates and grants : \$49,000





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Case Study: New business

Asian Mart

South Saint Paul, new construction

- **Follow-up energy assessment**
- TA: competing solar bid
- **Clean Energy Loan**
 - \$150,000
- **Use of Funds:**
 - Solar installation - cost savings
 - Energy efficient-equipment
- **Clean Energy Financial Benefits:**
 - Solar rebates - \$40,000
 - Covering approximately 50% of annual electricity needs





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Q&A

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