

Advancing Electric Utility Energy Conservation Program Participation Rates and Barriers to Participation among Latinx-owned Businesses across Minnesota

Project Overview

The [Great Plains Institute](#), the [University of Minnesota Extension Regional Sustainable Development Partnership \(RSDP\)](#), [COPAL MN](#), and the Minnesota [Clean Energy Resource Teams \(CERTs\)](#) were awarded a [Conservation Applied Research and Development \(CARD\)](#) grant by the Minnesota Department of Commerce in January 2021.

The project aims to understand the implementation rates of commercial energy efficiency utility programs among Latinx-owned businesses in Minnesota, identify and document participation barriers, and assess the potential to improve implementation rates throughout these communities while also working with business owners to increase understanding of existing program offerings and opportunities.

Engagement and Outreach

Outreach and dialogue with Latinx-owned businesses will happen in three ways: individual interviews of business owners in study communities, interviews with organizations that support Latinx- and minority-owned businesses, and a state-wide survey of all Latinx business owners. All outreach and conversation will be conducted in English or Spanish (per business owner preference).

To reach Latinx-owned businesses, the team is developing an inventory of business owners across the state, with extra attention to the study communities.

The study communities were identified through a combination of demographic analysis, steering committee insights, as well as utility willingness to participate in the research.

Minnesota Study Communities and Business Inventory

Four study communities have been identified: Austin, Willmar, West St. Paul, and Worthington.

We are hoping to identify businesses across Minnesota, with an emphasis for businesses in study communities, to establish relationships, and start scheduling interviews by the end of May. We are looking for community insight into additional Latinx-owned businesses to add to our existing inventory.

There are two ways to provide contacts or businesses to help with outreach on the project.

1. Submit businesses or Latinx business owners directly to the inventory with this [form](#). The inventory we have draws largely from existing public business directories.
2. You can also email suggestions directly to our research staff, Kris Acuña (kacuna@gpsid.net) or Jessi Wyatt (jwyatt@gpsid.net).

We appreciate your time and support on this work and look forward to strengthening both relationships between Latinx business owners and opportunities to participate in utility energy efficiency programs, as well as help utilities improve programming for Latinx-owned businesses. **With any general questions on the project, please reach out to Kris Acuña at kacuna@gpsid.net or by phone at 612-400-6291.**

