



# Board of Commissioners of Cook County

118 North Clark Street  
Chicago, IL

## Legislation Text

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### REPORT

**Department:** Environment and Sustainability

**Report Title:** Solar Schools Annual Report

**Report Period:** FY 2022

**Summary:** As required by Resolution Number 20-2567 establishing the Cook County K-12 Solar Schools Initiative that was approved by the Board of Commissioners on May 21, 2020, the following is the 2022 Annual Report for the Cook County Solar Schools Grant program. We are happy to report that the available funding has been allocated to schools and the program is nearing completion.

#### Program Information

The Cook County Solar Schools Grant provides supplemental funding to grantees of the Illinois Clean Energy Community Foundation's (ICECF) K-12 Solar Schools Program, a program that supports the installation of 1kW photovoltaic (PV) systems throughout Illinois institutions serving grades K-12. To receive supplemental funding through the Cook County Solar Schools program, applicants must serve the K-12 population in Cook County, Illinois; be a recognized public school by the IL State Board of Education (ISBE); and be a grantee of the ICECF's K-12 Solar Schools Program. If more applications are received than funding available, preference is given to Title-1 school-wide funded and Title-1 school-wide eligible schools, in which children from low-income families make up at least 40% of the enrollment.

The Cook County Solar Schools program may award up to \$4,999 per school including:

- Up to 10% of the remaining costs of the 1kw PV system, not covered by ICECF, including supplies, installation and labor, not to exceed \$2,000.
- An award of up to \$1,500 to the school for the purposes of setting up an operations and maintenance fund for the PV system to ensure its long-term operation for the school community.
- Up to \$1,500 towards the costs of the Solarbration event and educational resources related to renewable energy, and/or signage for the installation.

#### Program Promotion

Since the last annual report, the program was promoted for the ICECF's Summer 2021 and Winter 2022 grant cycles. The following methods were used, among others.

- Listed as a resource link on the ICECF's K-12 Solar Schools grant website as well as on the Department of Environment and Sustainability's (DES) website.
- Emailed all Cook County Commissioners requesting assistance with outreach.
- Sent seven emails to school principals, school districts and regional offices to advertise the program and promote the previously recorded info session webinar.
- Reached out to Metropolitan Mayor's Caucus, Illinois State Board of Education Regional Offices among others and asked for assistance with marketing the program.
- Promoted through Twitter in August 2021 and December - February 2022.

#### Completed Applications Status

For the summer 2021 grant cycle, the application deadline was August 24, 2021. There was a total of one application received.

The qualified applicants were sent grant agreements for signature, in the amount of \$3,000.

For winter 2022 grant cycle, the application deadline was February 24, 2022. There was a total of nine applications received.

There was one applicant that was found to be not qualified because they already installed a solar system through the ICECF program.

Therefore, this left eight qualified applicants. The qualified applicants were sent grant agreements for signature, in the amount of \$4,000.

### **Awarded Grants**

This leaves nine schools that were eligible for Cook County Solar Schools Grants during the summer 2021 and winter 2022 grant cycles. The list of awardees is attached. The total dollar amount awarded for these cycles was \$39,000.

### **Previous Grant Awardee Status**

There have been delays to many of the installations due to a variety of reasons (increased demand for installs in the region, not enough installers, increased prices, etc.) but the installations are occurring. Cook County has given extensions to grant agreements when necessary, following ICECF's lead.

- One school is finished, and reimbursement has been issued
- Three schools have submitted the final report and the reimbursement is in process
- Ten schools are in process of completing installs, finishing paperwork and their Solarbrations
- One school decided not to move forward

### **Solar Repair Funds**

Additionally, the Cook County Solar Schools Grant program allowed funding of necessary repairs of current ICECF grantee schools' solar installations that are no longer working as they should. These repairs are only funded by the County and there is no ICECF funding.

DES has signed grant agreements with two of these schools thus far and is looking to sign agreements with six to eight more schools. Total cost of repairs will be around \$10-15,000 for all of the schools awarded the repairs grants, using up the remainder of the funding available for this program.

These repairs will ensure that the solar panels are again functional and can be used as a learning instrument.

### **Next Steps**

- When schools have proof of installation, curriculum in use, photos and the system online that is acceptable to ICECF, ICECF pays the schools, and schools can then submit appropriate documentation to Cook County for payment of supplemental funds. DES will be working with the schools to ensure that their items are received, and grant funds are disbursed.
- DES is working on supporting the remaining six to eight schools that need repairs and will award those grants.
- There will be no more open calls for applications. DES is now in process of disbursing the allotted funds via issuing the reimbursement grants once the installs and Solarbrations are complete and the final report and invoices have been submitted.

### **Reappropriation of Funds**

DES reappropriated \$116,000 in funds in the Department's FY2023 budget. The funding request has been made to the Department of Budget and Management Services, as some amount of the funds will not be spent during FY2022 and the

schools have at least one year to complete their projects.

**Summer 2021 Cook County Solar School Grant Awardees**

| <b>School Name</b>                                | <b>Street Address</b>         | <b>City</b> | <b>Commissioner District</b> |
|---|-------------------------------|-------------|------------------------------|
| Burr Ridge Community Consolidated School District | 15W451 91 <sup>st</sup> . St. | Burr Ridge  | 17                           |

**Winter 2022 Cook County Solar School Grant Awardees**

| <b>School Name</b>              | <b>Street Address</b>         | <b>City</b>   | <b>Commissioner District</b> |
|---------------------------------|-------------------------------|---------------|------------------------------|
| Proviso East High School        | 800 S. 1st Ave.               | Maywood       | 1                            |
| Central Elementary School       | 910 Central Ave.              | Wilmette      | 13                           |
| Harper Elementary School        | 1101 Dartmouth St.            | Wilmette      | 13                           |
| McKenzie Elementary School      | 649 Prairie Ave               | Wilmette      | 13                           |
| Romona Elementary School        | 600 Romona Rd                 | Wilmette      | 13                           |
| Wilmette Junior High School     | 620 Locust Rd                 | Wilmette      | 13                           |
| Ridge Lawn Elementary School    | 5757 W. 105 <sup>th</sup> St. | Chicago Ridge | 6                            |
| Ridge Central Elementary School | 10800 S. Lyman Ave            | Chicago Ridge | 6                            |