



Join RMI’s Microgrids for Resilient Communities Workshop

Community leaders will learn the ins and outs of financing, designing, deploying, and maintaining solar + storage microgrids that can serve their communities in calm or crisis.

Context

Solar + storage microgrids can provide significant benefits, including financial savings, resilience in the face of increasingly extreme weather, workforce gains, carbon reductions, and energy independence – but creating and maintaining them can be challenging for community leaders. This series of workshops will give leaders representing nonprofits, tribes, and local governments the skills and tools they need to finance, design, deploy, and maintain microgrids.

Solar + storage microgrids generate electricity, store it, and use it at a specific site. The Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) changed the game for the clean energy funding available to nonprofits, making solar + storage microgrids more cost effective than ever before. Nonprofits, tribes, and local governments are now eligible to use the Investment Tax Credit (ITC) to cover 30-70% of the total cost to install a solar + storage microgrid – money that these entities can receive as a direct cash payment. This provides an incredible opportunity for community facilities, which may be able to see savings from day 1.

Cohort Objectives and Benefits

The goal of this cohort is to give participants the knowledge, tools, and connections to successfully complete a microgrid project. RMI has hands-on experience with the financing and practicalities of microgrid deployment. We will help prepare participants by providing:

- **Technical assistance:** RMI will provide direct, project-specific financial modeling support, including an estimate of cost savings over time and recommendations on a capital stack to finance the full project;
- **A community of practice:** Community leaders grappling with similar issues will have the opportunity to share and learn from one another; and
- **Key microgrid insights:** Community leaders will learn about the fundamental technical and financial elements of a microgrid project.

Workshop Overview

The workshops are expected to run from June – September 2024. Below is a list of anticipated topics, although the full curriculum will be driven by the cohort’s composition and participant needs:

| Date | Topic |
|----------------|---|
| March-May 2024 | The workshop application will open in early March, with applications due mid-April. Applicants will be notified of their acceptance by May 1. |

| | |
|----------------|---|
| June 2024 | Workshop #1: Cohort kick-off and direct pay overview Workshop #2: Working meeting to provide technical assistance |
| July 2024 | Workshop #3: Right-sizing a microgrid facility Workshop #4: Understanding and creating a capital stack |
| August 2024 | Workshop #5: Microgrid ownership vs. Power Purchase Agreements: pros and cons Workshop #6: The interconnection and procurement process |
| September 2024 | Workshop #7: Operations and Maintenance (O&M) Structures and workforce development Workshop #8: Final workshop on lessons learned and best practices |

Note: Final schedule will be modified based on participants' feedback

Who Can Participate?

RMI can support a limited number of participating communities and wants to ensure that applicants are well-positioned for success. Applicants must fit the following criteria:

- **Cost:** There is no cost to participate in the workshops
- **Entity type:** Community leaders must represent a nonprofit (including church, school, or NGO), tribe, or local government that owns the building or land where the microgrid will be installed
- **Project elements:** This workshop will include projects designed to power a community building such as a community center, tribal office, a church, a fire station, or a library. We can also support projects that include more than one community building with the same meter and interconnect. The roof must be in good condition.
- **Project stage:** Most projects will be at an early stage of development. A small handful may be at a more exploratory or more advanced stage.
- **Time commitment:** Applicants must be able to commit at least 8 hours per month to the workshops
- **Data analysis:** For the analysis on optimal microgrid design and recommended financing, participants must provide:
 - A copy of the full, itemized monthly utility bills for the last 12 months
 - Facility roof area available for solar panels and roof slope (flat or angle of tilt)
 - Information on the electrical load of the facility, including what would be needed if there were an extended outage

Note: Confidential information collected for the data analysis will not be shared without permission

Application Instructions

To apply for RMI’s Microgrids for Resilient Communities Workshop, please click here. For more information, please contact Meredith Cowart (mcowart@rmi.org).