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CASSOPOLIS, Mich. — Midwest Energy & Communications (MEC) is lifting up communities in its service territory with the Building Vibrant Communities (BVC) grant program. The program, made possible by partnership dollars from MEC's power supplier Wolverine Power Cooperative, awards grant money to nonprofit organizations serving individuals in MEC's service territory.

In February, MEC awarded dollars to eight local nonprofits:

- Care Pregnancy Center of Lenawee (Phase I Pathway to Parenting program for new parents)
- Cass County Council on Aging (Handy Helpers program to provide seniors and families with wheelchair ramps)
- Community Learning Connections (Getting Ahead financial literacy program)
- Diamond Lake Youth Sailing Fund (2022 Youth Sailing Program)
- Glen Oaks Community College Foundation (Campus Cupboard upgrades to help feed students in need)
- Patriots Garage (auto projects to help veterans struggling with civilian life)
- Redemption Church of Eau Claire (Community outreach projects)
- Vicksburg Historical Society (Vicksburg Harvest Festival)

MEC is making changes to the BVC grant program that will make it easier to apply for and receive funding.

First, applications are now accepted on a rolling timeline. MEC will review submissions three times per calendar year:

- April 30
- Aug. 30
- Dec. 31

MEC will notify applicants of the status of their application within two weeks following these dates. Projects not funded are eligible to reapply. Funded projects must be completed within six months of receiving a grant.

Eligibility requirements are also changing. In addition to 501(c)(3) nonprofits, the following organizations can now apply for a grant:

- A recognized government entity at the state, county, or city level, including law enforcement or fire departments, requesting funds exclusively for public purposes
- Nonprofits holding a tax-exempt status as a public charity benefitting veterans, as specified under Section 501(c)(19) of the Internal Revenue Code
- Some nonprofits holding other IRS designations, such as 501(c)(4) or 501(c)(7), if they benefit the public at large

Grant funds are to be used for projects that support the organization's mission and the community at large, rather than for general operating budgets or payroll expenses.

The deadline for consideration in the first cycle of awards in 2022 is April 30. To apply, nonprofit representatives can visit <https://midwestenergy.wufoo.com/forms/building-vibrant-communities-grants/> to fill out a form certifying eligibility and explaining the project or initiative for which grant funds will be used. Incomplete applications will not be considered, and an application is not a guarantee of funding.

MEC service territories include portions of Berrien, Cass, St. Joseph, Kalamazoo, and Van Buren Counties in southwest Michigan, as well as Lenawee County in southeast Michigan. MEC also serves portions of St. Joseph, Elkhart, and LaGrange Counties in northern Indiana, and Williams and Fulton Counties in northern Ohio. Visit <https://www.teammidwest.com/electric/electric-resources/townships-inspectors/> for a full list of townships served by MEC.

For more information about BVC grants, visit us online at <https://www.teammidwest.com/about-us/community/vibrant-communities/>.

About Midwest Energy & Communications

Midwest Energy & Communications provides electricity, propane, and fiber internet to over 40,000 consumers in 15 counties across southern Michigan, northern Indiana, and Ohio.