

NORTH DAKOTA CLIMATE INITIATIVE – SECTOR STORY 4

Spirit Lake Tribe Gets an Environmental Upgrade Thanks to the Climate Pollution Reduction Grant (CPRG)

In 2024 the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) awarded \$300 million in grants to Tribes and Territories seeking funding to implement community-driven solutions to reduce air pollution, advance environmental justice, accelerate the clean energy transition, and protect public health. Funding was provided through the Climate Pollution Reductions Grant (CPRG) Program created under the Inflation Reduction Act.

The Spirit Lake Tribe, a federally recognized tribe based on the Spirit Lake Reservation located in North Dakota on the southern shores of Devils Lake, was one of 34 Tribes and Territories selected out of 110 applicants to receive an implementation grant.

The reservation, where more than 3,000 members currently reside and nearly 8,000 members congregate, will receive nearly \$7.3 million in funding to:

- Install solar power infrastructure and geothermal heat pumps to lower energy costs
- Retrofit existing housing to improve weatherization and energy efficiency of appliances and lighting
- Build a Hazardous and Non-hazardous waste recycling collection facility and promote waste-prevention and recycling practices for households, commercial and Tribal offices
- Install EV infrastructure

Implementing these projects is expected to create economic and workforce opportunities that can be scaled up and replicated across the Spirit Lake Reservation, and other Tribal lands.

These upgrades, combined with the proposed projects from other Tribal and territory grant recipients, are expected to reduce greenhouse gas pollution by over 7 million metric tons of carbon dioxide by 2050. This is equivalent to the carbon dioxide emitted from nearly 1.7 million homes' electricity use for one year. It's one of the largest climate investments the EPA has ever made in Tribal and territorial communities.

“The Spirit Lake Tribe is very grateful for having the opportunity to be awarded the highly competitive Climate Pollution Reduction Planning and Implementation grant funding. This has given us an opportunity to sit down and analyze our major greenhouse gas emissions as well as come up with strategies to reduce these sources. With this newly awarded funding we will be able to put the plans and strategies into action. We hope this is only the beginning as we aim to continue to expand our initiatives in creating more energy efficient homes, clean affordable energy, while reducing pollution for future generations.” - Joshua Tweeton, Environmental Director of the Spirit Lake Tribe

When selecting recipients the CPRG program focused on applicants targeting greenhouse gas pollution from six sectors and divided the implementation grant funds amongst them.

1. Electric Power - \$139 million
2. Building - \$55 million
3. Transportation - \$45 million
4. Agriculture and Nature and Working Lands - \$35 million
5. Waste and Materials Management - \$21 million
6. Industry - \$5 million

North Dakota has also benefited from the planning grants awarded through the CPRG. The North Dakota Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) was awarded funding to create a first-of-its-kind Climate Action Plan to help identify ways North Dakota can simultaneously achieve environmental sustainability by reducing greenhouse gas emissions and supporting economic growth. This work has helped the state, local industry and Tribal Nations identify opportunities like the one awarded to the Spirit Lake Nation. Everyone benefits when we can find ways to further our economic growth and invest in the environmental stability of our state.

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