

## Northfield Climate Champions Program (For Businesses)

- Climate Champions is Northfield's new energy efficiency assistance, cost share and recognition program for businesses. The city is collaborating with Xcel Energy and the Minnesota Chamber of Commerce's [Energy Smart program](#) to help local businesses understand their energy use, navigate energy efficiency upgrades, pursue financing and rebates, and get recognized for their efforts.
- Provides financial incentive to businesses for energy efficiency and renewable energy expenses. 50% match of rebates from Xcel Energy up to \$2500.
- Funded through the Carbon Reduction Fund.
- Program will begin January 1, 2022 and suggested budget is \$30,000 for 2022. This will be reviewed each year and possibly modified.
- The program is open to any businesses in Northfield city limits but will focus marketing to the smaller businesses that don't have corporate support.
- Each year the EDA will be asked to review the program and an annual amount based on recommendation from Environmental Quality Commission. The EDA will be provided with an annual update of how the program is going and the budget for the upcoming year at their October meeting. EDA does not need to approve each rebate; that will be done by staff provided the applicants meet the program requirements.
- Businesses will be paid through the EDA funds (similar to Façade Improvement) and then the same amount will be transferred by City Finance Department from the Carbon Reduction Fund to EDA. Funds will be paid out quarterly. City Program Coordinator will provide updates to EDA Coordinator.
- City Program Coordinator will work with businesses on Energy Smart audit scheduling and process applications.
- Modeled on program from St. Louis Park:  
<https://www.stlouispark.org/government/departments-divisions/sustainability/climate-champions>

### How the program works

#### 1. Sign up for a free, personalized energy assessment

- With this free, personalized assessment from the Minnesota Chamber of Commerce's Energy Smart program, experienced staff will come to your business, review your energy use and identify ways to reduce consumption and save money.
- City staff can set you up with an appointment at a time that's convenient for you. Contact Beth Kallestad, Program Coordinator, at (507) 645-3074 or email [beth.kallestad@ci.northfield.mn.us](mailto:beth.kallestad@ci.northfield.mn.us)

#### 2. Identify opportunities for improvement and explore financing options

- After the assessment, Energy Smart staff will share potential no/low-interest loans, grants and rebate opportunities to help you complete energy efficiency projects.

- Funding may also be available through the city's Climate Champions program, which will match 50% of eligible Xcel Energy rebates.

**Cost share example:** a restaurant undergoes a free assessment from Energy Smart, and one of the projects identified is to replace all fluorescent lighting with LEDs.

- Total cost before rebates: \$9,000
- -\$4,050 estimated utility rebate
- -\$2,025 Climate Champions cost share

Final cost = \$2,925

These LED upgrades were projected to save about \$2800 in electricity costs per year, resulting in a simple payback period of about a year.

### **3. Complete energy-saving projects and get recognized**

If your business completes an assessment and one or more of the recommended energy saving projects, you'll be recognized as a City of Northfield Climate Champion for helping the city achieve our [Climate Action Plan](#) goal of being a carbon-free community by 2040! As a Climate Champion, you'll receive a Climate Champions window cling, your business will be listed on the city's website as a Climate Champion and recognized in the quarterly Utility Insert.