

Policy Briefing Summary

City Council



Regarding:	Resolution to Grant \$400,000 for Climate Program Support for Residential Energy Improvement Services (1 of 2 readings)
Staff Contact(s):	Emily Irvine, Climate Program Manager, Kristel Riddervold, Director of the Office of Sustainability, Taylor Harvey-Ryan, Grants Program Manager
Presenter:	Emily Irvine, Climate Program Manager
Date of Proposed Action:	August 17, 2026

Issue

The Office of Sustainability (OS) recommends awarding \$400,000 in grant funds to the Local Energy Alliance Program (LEAP) to deliver a suite of services designed to support Charlottesville residents to reduce energy use in their homes. Services include operation of the Energy Resource Hub, provision of home energy audits for low- and moderate-income community members, and delivery of the Residential Retrofit Mini-Grant Program. The award also includes education and marketing support to drive uptake of the programs.

Background / Rule

Approximately 95% of Charlottesville's greenhouse gas emissions are attributable to non-municipal, community-based activities. Of this share, approximately 30% come from the residential sector. The City's Climate Program recognizes that it can be difficult for homeowners and renters to identify and understand improvements that could be made to their homes to save money and energy and to navigate programs and incentives available to them to support making those improvements. We seek to support community members in making energy upgrades to their homes through energy navigation services, technical assistance and financial support.

In July 2026, OS issued a Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA) seeking a non-profit partner to deliver energy efficiency programs that help Charlottesville homeowners and renters access and navigate various home energy improvement programs. The goals of such a program are to:

- Reduce energy usage and utility costs for Charlottesville residents.
- Provide energy audits and technical assistance as well as financial support to residents to make energy improvements in their homes, whether they are owners or renters.
- Support community members in reducing their greenhouse gas emissions.
- Leverage additional funds available to residents from other local, state, federal, or utility-funded incentive programs.
- Centralize energy improvement programs and incentives available to Charlottesville households through the Energy Resource Hub, including the anticipated Home Efficiency Rebate Program and the High Efficiency and Appliance Rebate Program that will be offered through the Commonwealth of Virginia.

Analysis

In response to the NOFA, OS received a proposal from LEAP to deliver the requested set of services that will support community members in making home energy improvements. They will operate the Energy Resource Hub, provide home energy audits and follow-up technical assistance, and provide limited financial incentives for energy upgrades. They will also deliver a comprehensive educational

and marketing program that includes virtual and in-person community outreach events and a multi-media advertising campaign.

These programs support ongoing implementation of the City's Climate Action Plan. They also contribute to the Climate Action and Partnerships Strategic Outcome Areas of City Council's 2023 Strategic Plan Framework.

Financial Impact

There is no budgetary impact to the City. The proposed grant funds will be funded through FY27 Office of Sustainability operating budget and the Climate Action Initiative Fund, previously appropriated as part of the FY27 Capital Improvement Program.

Recommendation

Staff recommends adoption of the Resolution.

Staff requests waiving the second reading of this Resolution to minimize program delivery gaps, including operations of the Energy Resource Hub.

Recommended Motion (if Applicable)

Motion to approve the resolution granting \$400,000 to the Local Energy Alliance Program (LEAP) for delivery of residential energy improvement support services and waiver of the second reading.

Attachments

1. RESOLUTION - FY27 Funds for Residential Energy Improvement Services