

News and Press Releases

Fort Smith Awarded \$14.5 Million as Part of Historic EPA Climate Pollution Reduction Grant

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Fort Smith, AR - The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has awarded the City of Fort Smith \$14.5 million as part of a groundbreaking Climate Pollution Reduction Grant (CPRG) totaling \$100,000,000 to the Tri-Region Arkansas CPRG Coalition. This prestigious grant, awarded under the "Energy and Environment Innovation for the Natural State" proposal, will drive a wide array of transformative projects throughout Central Arkansas, Northwest Arkansas, and the Arkansas River Valley.

The grant represents a historic investment in the Natural State, with funds allocated to projects aimed at reducing emissions, enhancing energy efficiency, and improving access to sustainable transportation. The City of Fort Smith, alongside regional partners, is poised to implement a range of innovative projects that align with the grant’s goals of environmental stewardship, community resilience, and the City of Fort Smith Energy & Environment Innovation Plan.

“This grant represents a monumental opportunity for Fort Smith to advance our sustainability initiatives and set a new standard for environmental responsibility. We are dedicated to leveraging these funds to create a healthier, more resilient community,” remarked Carl E. Geffken, City Administrator, City of Fort Smith. “By implementing projects that enhance energy efficiency, promote clean transportation, and support low-income residents, we are building a sustainable future for all citizens of Fort Smith.”

Key Projects Funded by the Grant:

- 1. Alleyway Rehabilitation:** The transformation of 11,510 linear feet of alleyways into multi-use paths will enhance community connectivity, combat blight, and provide safe, sustainable transportation options. This project will connect critical amenities and reduce greenhouse gas emissions by encouraging walking and cycling.
- 2. E-Bike Rebate Program:** This innovative program will offer point-of-sale vouchers for e-bike purchases, residents. The initiative aims to increase access to eco-friendly transportation vehicle trips.
- 3. EV Charging Stations:** The grant will fund the installation of 13 electric vehicle (EV) charging stations across the city, supporting the transition to clean transportation and reducing transportation sector.
- 4. Solar Array Installation:** An 850 kW solar array will be installed to power 288 units at Nelson Hall using Authority Administrative Offices. This project will significantly reduce carbon emissions for low-income residents.
- 5. Workforce Development:** Training workshops, internships, and apprenticeships will be organized to build a skilled workforce in conservation, renewable energy, and energy efficiency. The initiative will involve

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collaboration with local institutions and non-profits to provide hands-on training and career advancement opportunities.

Mayor George B. McGill of Fort Smith expressed enthusiasm for the grant, stating, “We are honored to be selected for this vital grant from the EPA. This recognition highlights our commitment to sustainability and environmental stewardship. The funds from this award will be instrumental in advancing key projects within our Energy & Environment Innovation Plan. These initiatives will improve the quality of life for our residents and positively impact our environment, ensuring a healthier future for the City of Fort Smith and the entire Natural State.”

The City of Fort Smith, along with its coalition partners, will work diligently to ensure that the projects funded by this grant are implemented efficiently and effectively. This award marks a significant step forward in the City’s ongoing efforts to create a more sustainable and resilient future.

- Link to EPA press release: <https://www.epa.gov/newsreleases/biden-harris-administration-announces-43-billion-grants-community-driven-solutions-cut>
- More information about CPRG can be found at <https://www.epa.gov/inflation-reduction-act/climate-pollution-reduction-grants>.
- The Arkansas Department of Energy and Environment’s planning effort is outlined on its website at <https://ee.arkansas.gov/environment/office-of-air-quality/eei/>.
- Information about each region’s EEI work can be found at:
 - <https://metroplan.org/eei/>
 - <https://www.nwarpc.org/energy-environment-innovation-plan/>
 - <https://www.fortsmithar.gov/eei>

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