

Neighborhoods 2020 2026-28 EEF/CNNF Funding Application				
Seward Neighborhood Group				
2026 Equitable Engagement Plan				
Neighborhood				
Seward				
Time frame				
2026				
Work summary				
Summary of activities cross all programs and demographic groups.				
Scope of work, outcomes and goals				
Overall scope of work, outcomes and goals across all activities and demographic groups. Show how your organization will engage historically under-engaged groups				
<i>Demographic group</i>	Renters	BIPOC Youth, Low Income families seeking equitable opportunities for environmental learning.	East African Families living in Seward Towers, Native American families living nearby and other Seward families who want to garden and have fresh garden produce.	BIPOC residents; unhoused residents
<i>Numbers or percentage</i>	Accord to Minnesota Compass, about two-thirds of residents in Seward (66%) are renters.	Aurora Charter School, which is located in Seward, serves about 200 middle school aged children, primarily from families of Hispanic/Latino heritage (99%) (auroracharterschool.org)	The Matthews Park garden has never kept track of the number of families and children they have as participants.	In 2023, RISE served 150 underserved/unhoused Seward community members. In both 2024 and 2025, the number served was 200.
<i>Initiative, activity, project or program</i>	Solar for Renters The Solar Power for Renters initiative aims to make clean, renewable energy accessible to renters through engagement with providers of Solar Gardens.	Environment Club for Youth	Matthews Park Garden The garden at Matthews park is one of the most culturally rich and diverse hubs of activity in the Seward neighborhood.	RISE Health Equity Event

<p><i>Barriers to engagement</i></p>	<p>Limited solar access for renters: Most existing programs require property ownership or landlord participation.</p> <p>Awareness and trust gap: Many renters, particularly low-income and immigrant families, are unaware of or unsure how to access community solar options.</p> <p>Upfront or long-term cost confusion: Misunderstanding of cost structures and savings potential can deter participation.</p> <p>Language and outreach challenges: Communication barriers limit engagement from Seward’s diverse communities.</p>	<p>Limited funding has prevented formation of an after-school Environmental Club or regular field experiences. for students at Aurora School in Seward.</p> <p>Language barriers limit communication and parent engagement when materials and outreach are not bilingual.</p> <p>Transportation costs restrict participation in environmental programs and field trips outside the school.</p> <p>Limited exposure to environmental learning at home or in the community makes the topic feel unfamiliar or less relevant.</p> <p>Cultural representation gaps: environmental topics and materials are not always framed in ways that reflect students’ backgrounds, values, or lived experiences.</p>	<p>This garden was started by Seward Montessori School as a “Garden Classroom”.</p> <p>Due to funding cuts the school can no longer be relied on for financial support. Bronwen Lu who was a volunteer for the school however has kept the garden going on a shoestring of small donations, donated tools, seeds and the love of everyone who goes there.</p> <p>Through the “Site Council” and other key volunteers the garden has been successful in growing culturally valued foods.</p> <p>Loss of sunny spaces, invasive worms and old fixtures that need removal have hampered the productivity and productive space in the garden.</p>	<p>This event provides a set of health services to underserved and unhoused Seward community residents that have limited or no access to healthcare.</p>
<p><i>Outreach and engagement strategies</i></p>	<p>The SNG Environment Committee will host a "Solar for Renters" information session with guest speakers from the community solar industry.</p> <p>The committee will promote the information session by flyering along Franklin Avenue and local businesses corridors and by including information in the SNG newsletter.</p>	<p>Leverage existing relationships with Aurora Charter School staff and teachers to reach families through newsletters, take-home flyers, and direct classroom communication.</p> <p>Use bilingual materials (English/Spanish) to make outreach accessible and culturally relevant for students and parents.</p>	<p>A large number of East African families from Seward Towers East and West already participate in the garden.</p> <p>The families introduce others to the garden because Matthews Park is the outdoor space that people from the nearby highrises go to for summer time enjoyment.</p> <p>Word of mouth, people seeing the garden and children’s involvement are the best way people become engaged.</p>	<p>Direct outreach to underserved and unhoused Seward community residents via partner organizations, plus flyers at bus shelters and other locations.</p>

<i>Resources needed</i>	Funds for Print Materials, Material Distribution, Translators, Childcare, Refreshments	Funds for Transportation for Youth, Tshirts, Education Materials	Funds to rejuvenate the soil, the bedding and the plant material. Some larger projects needing significant investment include moving the old compost bins and replacing them with standing beds free of jumping worms, rejuvenating the strawberry beds, fencing to reduce soil compaction and continuing the methods of transitioning the garden to permaculture. This is the method that is working well with the shade from trees adjacent to the garden.	Funds for contractors, equipment rental, materials for supply kits, etc.
<i>Partners in the work</i>	Organizations with Approved LMI-Accessible Community Solar Gardens https://mn.gov/commerce/energy/cons-umer/energy-programs/community-solar-gardens.jsp	Aurora Charter School North Mississippi Regional Park	Matthews Park Site Council, Volunteers and possibly a landscape company (yet to be determined)	Nonprofit, public health, and community service organizations including Fairview, Southside Harm Reduction, Avivo, Hennepin Co. Child & Teen Checkup, Willow Tree Healing Center, Rainbow Health Clinic, Restoration for All, U of M school of dentistry, Haircuts for Change, Homebase, Good In the Hood Feetcare
<i>Person(s) responsible</i>	SNG Environment Committee	SNG Environment Committee	SNG Environment Committee	SNG Rise Planning Team
<i>Timeline</i>	“Solar Power for Renters” workshop in 2025 was on April 26. In the future, SEC may have this workshop in March 2026 so it does not conflict with Earth Day projects	January 2025: form afterschool Environment Club at Aurora Charter School Feb through May 2025: Outings and Field Trips to North Mississippi Regional Park Earth Day 2026: Joint project by Aurora Environment Club and Seward Environment Committee	2026 Steering Committee and Lead Garden Volunteers determine plan and get bids for renovations 2027 Spring: improvements made	Summer 2026 (exact date TBD)

<p><i>Quantitative goals</i></p>	<p>Host a renter-friendly workshop with multi-lingual support to include all Seward residents.</p> <p>Support 10+households in enrolling in a community solar subscription or exploring shared solar options.</p>	<p>Engage 10-20 students in the Aurora Charter School Youth Environment Club during the pilot semester in Spring 2026, to refine for Fall 2026.</p> <p>Conduct at least 4 environmental learning excursions to North Mississippi Regional Park, focusing on Seward Environment Committee priorities: clean energy, waste reduction, and nature/greening during 2026.</p> <p>Provide transportation support for all field trips to ensure equitable access for students who would otherwise face participation barriers.</p> <p>Facilitate two collaborative events: one school-based showcase and one community-facing Earth Day 2026 project.</p> <p>Provide each participant with club t-shirts and educational materials to foster belonging and visibility.</p>	<p>Rebuild or replace 3+ raised beds using standing structures to mitigate soil contamination from jumping worms.</p> <p>Engage at least 20 families (including 10+ from Seward Towers) in planting or maintenance activities each season.</p> <p>Rejuvenate 10'x10' strawberry beds and 30'x20' permaculture zone for shade adaptation.</p>	<p>150 supply kits distributed 200 meals served 50 diagnostics provided 30 haircuts 20 foot care appointments</p>
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<p><i>Qualitative goals</i></p>	<p>Increase environmental equity and energy literacy among Seward renters who may not receive this information through conventional homeowner channels.</p> <p>Build trust and accessibility through community-led outreach that is culturally relevant and language-inclusive.</p> <p>Empower renters to see themselves as active participants in the clean energy transition, not passive consumers.</p> <p>Strengthen relationships between renters, property owners, and environmental organizations, paving the way for shared investment in sustainable infrastructure.</p> <p>Develop a replicable framework for “Solar for Renters” engagement that can serve as a model for other Minneapolis neighborhoods.</p>	<p>Provide equitable access to environmental education for students who may not receive these lessons at home, ensuring ALL youth have opportunities to engage directly with sustainability and environmental stewardship.</p> <p>Create a safe, engaging after-school environment where youth can develop confidence, leadership, and curiosity about their local ecosystem.</p> <p>Strengthen connections between students, families, and neighborhood initiatives, fostering a shared commitment to community care and environmental responsibility.</p> <p>Build a replicable model for inclusive environmental programming that can expand to Seward Montessori and other Seward schools.</p>	<p>Provide equitable and accessible environmental education for youth and families who may not otherwise have opportunities to learn about gardening, food systems, or ecological care at home.</p> <p>Preserve the garden’s identity as a multicultural community space, celebrating the foods, traditions, and gardening knowledge of Seward’s diverse residents.</p> <p>Strengthen intergenerational and cross-cultural connections through shared stewardship of a beloved neighborhood asset.</p> <p>Foster a sense of ownership, belonging, and pride among participants, ensuring long-term community-led sustainability.</p> <p>Support the continued transition to permaculture methods, demonstrating regenerative practices that can serve as a local learning model.</p>	<p>Awareness of and access to community healthcare and housing services; increased awareness of SNG</p>
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<p><i>Outcome of engagement</i></p>	<p>Establishes a scalable, renter-inclusive model for accessing clean energy in the Seward neighborhood.</p> <p>Expands participation in solar programs to historically underrepresented residents, aligning with City of Minneapolis climate and equity goals.</p> <p>Strengthens Seward’s leadership as a community innovator in environmental inclusion—proving that renewable energy education and access can extend beyond homeownership.</p> <p>Leads to a pathway for a neighborhood-wide solar equity campaign.</p>	<p>Builds a bridge between schools and the SNG Environment Committee, embedding environmental action into everyday youth learning.</p> <p>Cultivates future environmental leaders who understand local sustainability issues and feel connected to neighborhood decision-making.</p> <p>Strengthens Seward’s neighborhood identity around climate resilience and environmental equity, setting a foundation for continued city collaboration and future funding.</p>	<p>Revitalizes one of Seward’s most inclusive and community-centered green spaces,</p> <p>Builds vital life skills for sustainable living among youth and families through hands-on gardening and cultural exchange.</p> <p>Ensures equitable access to environmental learning and healthy outdoor activity.</p>	<p>Underserved members of our community are aware of SNG as a conduit for services and resources for equity and wellness.</p>
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