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**Colorado Energy Office Awards GRID Alternatives \$1.2 Million to Develop
Low-Income Community Solar**

1 MW installed capacity will lower electricity costs for at least 300 families

Denver, CO – The Colorado Energy Office is awarding \$1.2 million in grant funding to GRID Alternatives, America's largest non-profit solar installer, to implement a solar demonstration project for low-income communities in Colorado.

GRID Alternatives Colorado will develop up to 12 community solar systems, ranging in size from 50 to 500 kilowatts, throughout the state. Cumulatively, the demonstration project will provide over one megawatt (MW) of installed solar capacity. Each system will be developed in coordination with utilities focused predominantly in rural areas. The projects will serve at least 300 low-income families and are expected to offset at least 50 percent of subscribing families' electricity costs over each four-year subscription term.

"This project will give us the opportunity to demonstrate how solar generation can be a sustainable solution to reduce electric bills for Coloradans who carry the greatest energy burden," said Jeffrey Ackermann, Colorado Energy Office director. "And it will assist Colorado's electric utilities in diversifying their electricity portfolios."

Approximately 30 percent of Colorado's households are considered energy burdened (paying over four percent of annual income on utility bills) and 11 percent considered energy impoverished (paying over 10 percent of annual income on utility bills), with many located in rural parts of the state.

The community solar installations will also provide an estimated 2,000 hours of hands-on solar job training to local workers during the installation process.

"Underserved communities must be part of the conversation as we work to meet Colorado's renewable energy goals," said Chuck Watkins, GRID Alternatives Colorado executive director. "This innovative demonstration project will extend clean energy benefits to low-income families and begin to address energy burden in a comprehensive manner."

Community solar is one of America's fastest-growing renewable energy markets with 66 MW cumulative installed capacity through the end of 2014, 115 MW new installed capacity expected in 2015, and an estimated 59 percent compound annual growth rate through 2020, according to GTM Research.

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ABOUT GRID ALTERNATIVES

GRID Alternatives is America's largest non-profit solar installer bringing clean energy technology and job training to low-income families and underserved communities through a network of community partners, volunteers, and philanthropic supporters. GRID has installed 5,600 rooftop solar systems with a combined installed capacity of 19.4MW, saving \$142 million in lifetime electricity costs, preventing 444,000 tons of greenhouse gas emissions, and providing over 21,000 people with solar training. GRID has ten regional offices and affiliates serving California, Colorado, the Mid-Atlantic and New York tri-state regions, and Tribal communities nationwide. For more information, visit www.gridalternatives.org

ABOUT COLORADO ENERGY OFFICE

The Colorado Energy Office works to improve the effective use of all of Colorado's energy resources and the efficient consumption of energy in all economic sectors that benefit the economic and environmental health of the state. www.colorado.gov/energy.

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