



# Community Engagement Report

## SUMMER 2025



# Introduction

Dear community,

I'm thrilled to welcome you to the very first Earthrise Energy Community Engagement Mid-Year Report. This inaugural update is a chance to reflect on what we've built together and to celebrate the people and partnerships that make this work matter. We will continue providing updates on a biannual basis going forward.

The RISE Grant program was created to invest in the vision and vitality of our communities across our project areas. From fire districts to food pantries, libraries to local leaders, our grantees are doing the everyday work of resilience – and it's our privilege to support them. In this report, you'll find highlights from the year so far, key milestones, and glimpses into the powerful community efforts we're honored to uplift.

As Earthrise continues to grow our clean energy projects, we know that real progress is local. It's shaped by trust, by listening, and by the belief that communities deserve not just a seat at the table – but resources to lead. The RISE Grant is just one of the ways we're putting that belief into action.

Thank you for being part of this journey with us. I'm excited about what's ahead, and I hope you'll see in these pages a reflection of our shared values.

With gratitude,

**Talya Tavor**  
Director of Community Engagement  
Earthrise Energy



# EARTHRISE ENERGY: Who Are We and Why We Care

Earthrise Energy, PBLLC, is an independent power producer that owns and operates five natural gas peaker plants in Illinois, with five solar power plants under construction and development. Earthrise is working to advance a clean energy future, repurposing these legacy power plants to develop utility-scale solar plants. Our mission is to power our world more responsibly, sustainably, and equitably than ever before. We have brought together a team with decades of global leadership and expertise in the development, operations, and management of energy facilities and businesses to steward this mission forward.

At Earthrise Energy, our mission extends beyond operating a business and generating renewable energy—we aim to power progress in the communities we call home. It is for this reason that we have intentionally established ourselves as a Public Benefit Corporation to ensure alignment between our governance, our mission, and our values. We consider the interests of our broad set of stakeholders – from our customers and employees to our communities, investors, and the planet at large – and strive to generate enduring economic, social, and environmental benefits for decades to come.

Earthrise is deeply committed to being an active and engaged member of the communities where we operate. We actively participate in community life by joining local events, such as county fairs and other community-led gatherings. Earthrise values every opportunity to build meaningful relationships and contribute to the vitality of the communities we serve.

In 2022, Earthrise Energy established the RISE Grant program to invest in and partner with non-profit organizations that serve the local populations where we have operations. In seeking to have a long-lasting impact and improve the lives of local residents, our giving focuses on: supporting excellence in education, protecting our environment, and serving our local communities.

The RISE Grant Program has grown into a cornerstone of Earthrise's community engagement. As of this publication, Earthrise has awarded more than \$1.2 million in grants and scholarships and distributed an additional \$368,077 through sponsorships and community benefit agreements. From youth mentorship to workforce training to emergency relief, these funds have supported over 60 local organizations working on the ground to make a difference.

This mid-year report offers a snapshot of our progress, stories from our grantees, and a look ahead at what's next for the RISE Grant Program and Earthrise's community engagement efforts.



# Our Mission

We seek to power our world more responsibly, sustainably, and equitably than ever before.

## Earthrise Core Values: ICARE

At Earthrise, we are united and guided by our shared values that foster collaboration, debate and innovation. Through this shared culture, we hold ourselves to the highest standards in our work, how we treat one another, and how we operate in the communities we serve.



### Integrity

- Align actions with words
- Lead with the whole truth and full disclosure
- Treat others with respect, honesty, and transparency
- Seek opportunities to serve our communities and to leave a legacy

### Creativity & Innovation

- New ideas drive progress
- Ask questions and challenge the status quo
- Take calculated risks, fail fast and pivot quickly
- Exercise agility in thinking, approach, and action

### Accountability

- We are all owners of this company
- Take responsibility for your actions
- Honor commitments to others
- Identify gaps and proactively work to fill them
- Overcommunicate: See something, say something

### Results-Focused

- Work pragmatically and decisively
- Ensure results are measurable and manifest
- Value process along with outcome
- Quality matters and leads to market leadership
- Getting most of the way there is the same

### Empowerment

- Grow, train, and trust the next generation of diverse clean energy leaders
- Take initiative on the scope of your responsibility
- Act with autonomy and meaningful agency
- Embrace urgency and a bias to action

# Total Community Engagement Giving Across Our Hubs

Will County, IL

\$529,074

Coles, Cumberland, and Shelby County, IL

\$585,842

Vermillion County, IL

\$243,675

Total Giving

\$1,739,658

Ford & McLean County, IL

\$350,650

## Historic Milestones

Earthrise Energy’s community engagement work began in earnest in 2022 with the creation of several initiatives. Our goal was to identify the ways in which Earthrise could best support the communities we serve and operate in for the long term.

In 2022, Earthrise created the RISE Grant Program to invest in and partner with local schools, organizations, and non-profit organizations that serve our communities. In seeking to have a long-lasting impact and improve the lives of local residents, our giving focuses on the following areas:



### Support Excellence in Education

In keeping with our purpose to drive an equitable energy transition, Earthrise supports initiatives that teach entrepreneurship and prioritize STEM education.



### Protect Our Environment

Reflecting our commitment to sustainability, Earthrise supports initiatives that conserve our natural resources, improve our environment, and protect biodiversity.



### Serve Our Local Communities

As business owners invested for the long term, Earthrise supports initiatives that uplift our neighbors and encourage safe, healthy, and prosperous communities.





By the numbers: 2022-2024



Successful Permitting of Gibson City Solar

In May and August 2024, following months of community engagement work, Earthrise secured local approvals from McLean County and Ford County, respectively, to build its first solar power plant, Gibson City Solar, adjacent to the Gibson City Energy Center in Gibson City, Illinois. Earthrise received unanimous approval for its special use permit applications through five hearings with five different county decision-making bodies, including each County Board.

Creation of Community Engagement Team

In 2024, Earthrise created the Community Engagement department with the hiring of Talya Tavor, the inaugural Director of Community Engagement, who brings in over a decade of organizing, advocacy, communications, policy, and community engagement experience.

Milestones 2025

As we look ahead to the rest of the year and beyond, Earthrise is proud to be building on the momentum of the RISE Grant program with bold new goals and initiatives. Here are just a few of the major milestones we’ve already reached in 2025.



Massive Scaling of the Rise Program

We’re significantly increasing funding, outreach, and capacity – bringing the RISE Grant to more communities and more local leaders than ever before.



\$1 Million in Community Giving

In the first half of 2025, Earthrise surpassed \$1 million in direct community investments – a milestone that reflects our ongoing commitment to partnership, and local impact.



Launch of the Earthrise Scholarship Program

In 2025, we introduced our Scholarship initiative to support students in our project areas – investing in the next generation of changemakers and community leaders.

We’ve established two new endowments to ensure long-term, sustainable support for Lake Land College in Neoga, and Governors State University in University Park, IL.



Publication of Our New Community Engagement Website

Earthrise’s new website makes it easier than ever to learn about our work, explore project updates, and access grant and scholarship opportunities – all in one place!

We’re making it simpler than ever to apply for funding or lift up an organization doing incredible work. Community members can now submit applications and nominations online for both the RISE Grant and our Earthrise Scholarship programs.



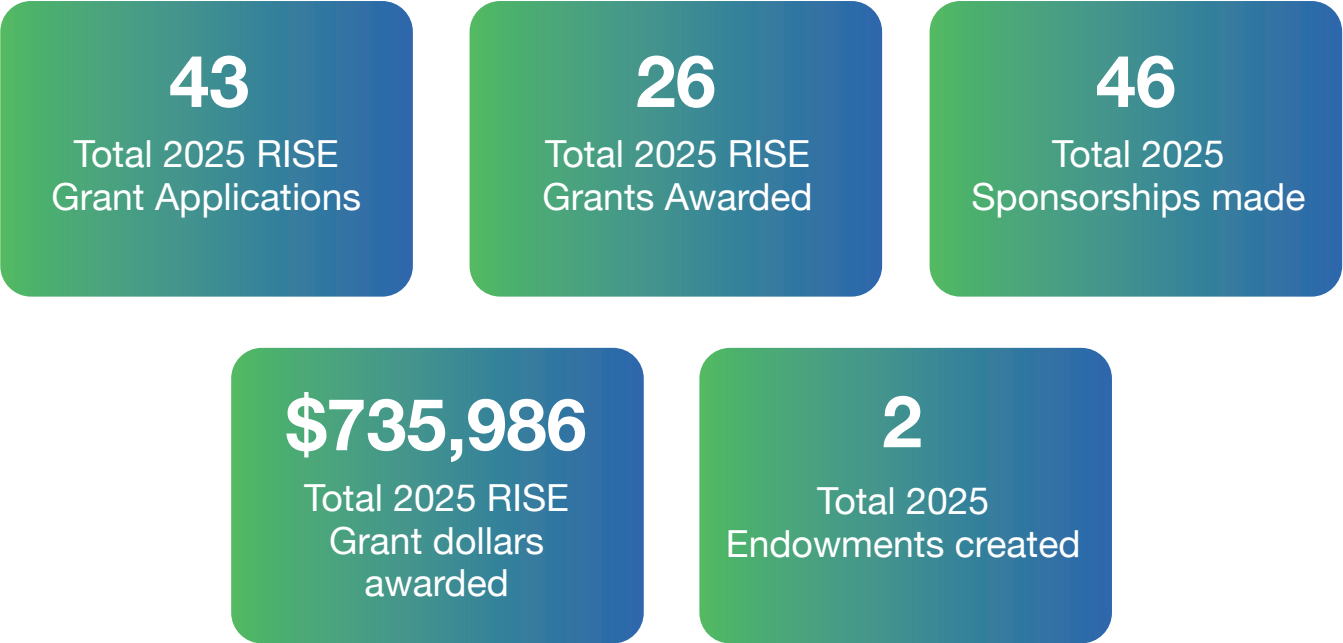
Growth of the Community Engagement Team

We’ve expanded our team to better serve our partners and the growing ambition of our community work, in order to deepen our relationships in every region where we operate. We brought in Cheryl Toohey, our Communications and Events Manager, with an extensive background in hyper-local community work. Most recently, Cheryl worked as the Community Outreach and Volunteer Coordinator at Will County Habitat For Humanity. Other previous experience includes volunteer coordination at a food pantry and environmental education at a local nature center.





By the numbers: 2025



Testimonials from RISE Grant Recipients

CRIS Healthy Aging, Skye Satz, Grants Compliance Coordinator

As a small non-profit organization, CRIS Healthy Aging relies on grant funding and donations from community organizations. As the cost of living and especially the cost of groceries continues to increase, CRIS is grateful for the opportunity to improve and expand our food security resources for older adults in Vermilion County, IL, using funds from the RISE Grant. Our clients have provided testimonials about food security resources from CRIS stating “It scares me to think what would happen if I couldn’t get [Home Delivered Meals] anymore” and “Before CRIS, I probably wouldn’t know where to get my next breakfast because a lot of people don’t have extra money, you know, to get the food.”

Standing Stone, Dawn Thomson, Executive Director

On my way home from Good Friday services, I was concerned for Standing Stone and the people we serve. Food costs have increased by 25% from our local Foodbank, our number of neighbors utilizing our Carpenters Table food pantry have increased, along with more first-time pantry visitors, pantries are cutting their hours or closing, and cuts seemed to be looming with the SNAP portion of the farm bill. I was literally crying out to God on how we were going to continue our choices type of pantry with these waves of obstacles. Once home, I decide to read my work e-mail, which is unusual for me on a Friday evening. It was a blessing as I saw that we had not only received a grant from Earthrise, but it was more than we had asked for! I re-read it again and was shocked at the blessings that we had received! Standing Stone can continue to serve our neighbors with a choices pantry! We have already distributed tomato and pepper plants with help from the Coles County Master Gardeners, along with growing tips, and continued our relationship with Partners in Produce through the U of I Extension service and the Arthur Produce Auction to receive fresh fruits and vegetables. Our neighbors are excited to receive help and information on how to grow their own produce. The last few weeks we have heard many positive comments and “likes” on our Facebook pages. People are saying, “I can’t wait to taste a fresh tomato that I grew myself,” “I can’t believe how stocked the pantry is now,” “I don’t know what we would do without you, as we have nothing in our pantry and the kids are getting out of school,” “You let me pick out what I want to eat! I love this setup,” and “Thank you for being here!” We have been honored and blessed by Earthrise for their generosity and allowing us to continue to serve our community nutritious food choices.





**Restoration Farms, Rachel Short, President**

Restoration Farms would like to express our deepest gratitude to Earthrise Energy for the generous RISE grant. Our mission is to uplift women on the journey of recovery from substance abuse and to support their families along the way. With the funds provided by the RISE grant, we have been able to offer essential counseling services to our residents. One inspiring mother, who battled addiction for thirteen long years, arrived at our doorstep completely hopeless, ready for a fresh start. At that time, she had lost custody of her two children. Today, we are overjoyed to share that, one year later, her children are back living with her. While this remarkable progress is a testament to her resilience, it does not erase the profound trauma that she and her children have faced over the years. Thanks to the support of the RISE grant, we have been able to provide individual counseling for both the mother and her children, as well as family counseling sessions. We firmly believe that these resources are vital in equipping them for lasting success as they transition out of our care. As we look to our future, we are excited about our next major project: remodeling our lower level to create a “transitional living apartment.” This space will serve families who have successfully completed our program but are not yet ready to embrace full independence. The funds from the RISE grant will play a crucial role in bringing this vision to life. Thank you once again, Earthrise Energy, for empowering us to provide our residents with the tools they need not only to leave but also to thrive in their new beginnings. Your support makes all the difference!

**Eastern IL Food Bank, Amanda Borden, VP of Development**

RISE Grant funding from Earthrise Energy comes at a critical moment, helping Eastern Illinois Foodbank deliver much-needed food directly to our neighbors in Coles County through our Foodmobile program. This support ensures families facing historic levels of need can access nourishing food closer to home.



**Gibson City Melvin Sibley CUSD #5, Jeremy Darnell, Superintendent**

I want to thank you for providing GCMS with grant funds to help support our outdoor recreation space renovation. Community partners are a huge benefit to our school system and every dollar donated lessens the burdens on our local tax payers. I have attached a rendering of our project to help celebrate what we are able to do because of both local and donated financial resources. This playground will be state of the art and accessible to children of broad age ranges and abilities, it is fully ADA compliant. This is not just a school resource it is making our town better. Thank you again for the assistance!



**Village of Manhattan, Jeff Wold, Village Administrator**

The generous funding from the Earthrise Rise Grant Program has given the Manhattan Community the ability to turn the vision of a dog park into a reality. This project was planned for several years, but funding issues prevented us from moving forward with construction. Thanks to Earthrise, we have begun construction, and we will have our ribbon cutting on July 14th.

**The Nature Foundation of Will County, Tara Neff, Executive Director**

The Nature Foundation is so grateful for Earthrise Energy’s support to incorporate a shade structure at Monee Reservoir! This special preserve protects a 46-acre lake with wetland habitat, 1.66 miles of trail, and two picnic shelters. Thousands of visitors enjoy spending time at Monee Reservoir for special events, educational programs, fishing, and simply spending time outside or on the water. Your \$50,000 gift will help improve the visitor experience at Monee Reservoir by providing shade on the Visitor Center’s patio where people gather to chat, take a break, or grab a snack. Creating this space may extend the time visitors can enjoy the site by offering reprieve from the sun and heat. Earthrise Energy’s community investment in Monee Township in Will County will make a positive, lasting impact for the greater Will County region for years to come.

**Village of Crete, Ryan Allison, Director, Crete Emergency Management Agency**

The Rise Grant Program allowed us to replace a nearly 30 year old piece of equipment with a much safer, reliable and efficient machine allowing our set up time to be at least halved while allowing for safer operation, and also allowing for longer deployment times with the new technology of the unit.

**Governor’s State University, Lauren Healy, Cultural Development Officer**

The RSIE grant will impact upwards of 600 students from economically disadvantaged schools and community groups in the South suburban area, providing our Outdoors@theNate STEAM program at no cost. Groups receive personalized sculpture park tour to meet age-appropriate educational outcomes, and arts and science integrated activities.



**Toledo American Legion Auxillary, Carrie Verdeyen, Monument Chairperson**

The Toledo American Legion Auxiliary received a grant for \$5,000 at the end of 2024 to go towards helping us raise funds for our bronze centerpiece “Freedom’s Fire” that will be going on our center stone reserved for Cumberland County Veterans that were K.I.A. and P.O.W. The centerpiece and bronze are part of a much larger project that we are still raising much needed funds to finish. The Cumberland County Veterans Monument is a county wide project that will allow us to honor all past, present and future residents by their name on the courthouse lawn in Toledo. We are proud to share that we have been able to find veterans from Cumberland County that span all wars and conflicts going as far back as the Revolutionary War that are going to be included. We also have a 68lb piece of steel from one of the Twin Towers that fell on 9/11 that was a gift from New York City’s fire department that will soon be included in this monument as well. Currently we have 5,500 names we have collected set to be etched on the stones in the upcoming months. Since the award of the grant from Earthrise, construction has begun and we are thrilled to update Earthrise that concrete has been poured. Electrical is nearly completed. We have been able to bring the pieces from the park monument to their new home for inclusion with this project after being cleaned and updated. The flagpoles have been installed as well as a new flag disposal box for community use. We were able to hold our first Memorial Day services on the courthouse lawn as well. The generosity of Earthrise’s grant for \$5,000 towards our center bronze fundraising project has been a welcomed gift. We are excited to say that we are now able to move into the final stages of fundraising and once we collect the rest of the funds that we need for the center bronze and the construction of the pavilion that will be covering the 9/11 steel and helping protect it from the elements, we will be able to have this project complete! Without Earthrise’s generosity and support we wouldn’t be able move into this final stage. I would also like to add that besides the generosity we have been shown from Earthrise, that the individuals working in this department at Earthrise that are responsible for receiving our information and helping with the grants have been absolutely wonderful to work with. Their patience and help through the entire process is deeply appreciated and will not be forgotten. For without them helping us get approved for this generous gift, we would not have been able to get to this final stage in construction and see our dream turn into reality. With deep gratitude and a heartfelt “Thank You!”



**Autism Acceptance in Cumberland County, Kathy Yocum, Founder**

Earthrise Grant is allowing Autism Acceptance in Cumberland County IL to fund Autism Training to 44 counties in IL. Training facilities are MTU 12, MTU 13 and MTU 15. Autism training is mandatory starting Jan 2026, these funds will ease a huge financial burden on these Mobile Units, and #Every1sSafe Program.

**Vermilion County CAC, Jonathan Munoz, ED**

The Vermilion County Child Advocacy Center expresses its deep gratitude to the Earthrise RISE Grant, highlighting the significant impact it has on the center’s crucial services. The grant not only strengthens the foundation of the center but also plays a vital role in ensuring the continuation of our essential forensic interviewing program for children who have experienced trauma. This valuable financial support enables us to provide a safe and supportive environment for these vulnerable children, allowing for the careful and sensitive collection of information that is crucial for their well-being and for pursuing justice on their behalf. The Earthrise RISE Grant stands as a beacon of hope for those we serve, representing a partnership that goes beyond just financial assistance - it is a symbol of solidarity with our mission to protect and advocate for children in need. Through this grant, we can further our commitment to empowering these children, giving them a voice and a platform to seek healing and justice. The impact of this grant reverberates throughout our entire organization, inspiring us to continue our unwavering dedication to protecting and serving the most vulnerable members of our community.



**It Takes A Village, Jennifer & LeStan Hoskins, ED and Program Director**

Earthrise Energy has come along at a time when grants and donations are continuing to become less and less available. Because of Earthrise Energy’s generosity and genuine desire to impact the communities they serve, our agency, “It Takes a Village Mentorship” will be able to continue to stay in operation for the foreseeable future. We cannot express the blessing Earthrise Energy has been to our mentorship and the over 100 students we mentor weekly over the entirety of the school year.



**BluePrint Agency, Shayla Powell, ED**

One of our clients came to us looking for connection and direction. She joined our peer support group and began engaging in conversations that gave her a sense of hope. Over time, she made real progress—but like many in recovery, she hit a rough patch and relapsed. For a while, we lost contact with her. Still, our team continued to reach out, offering support without judgment. When she was ready, we helped her take the next step by entering a 28-day residential rehab program with one of our partners. That choice marked a turning point for her. She’s now back on track, and we’re proud to continue supporting her. Another client reached out to us during a really tough time in her life. She was dealing with emotional and practical challenges that left her feeling stuck. Through therapy, she had a safe place to process everything, and we were able to connect her with resources that helped meet her immediate needs. Over time, we saw her begin to heal, rebuild her confidence, and start planning for a more stable future. These are just two examples, but they reflect the heart of what we do at BluePrint Agency. We don’t just offer services—we show up, consistently, with care and commitment. The RISE Grant has helped make that possible. Thank you for your support, and we look forward to our continued partnership to better serve the community.

**Toledo Area Emergency Ambulance**

The \$50,000 grant helped us tremendously. It has helped us stay open until we get the taxes. I cannot express how much the \$50,000 helped us and how much the ambulance appreciates the donation.

**Manhattan Park District, Jay Kelly, Executive Director**

Earthrise has been a tremendous supporter of the community of Manhattan and the Manhattan Park District. The Rise Grant program has supported numerous initiatives within the district, including the Dr. Scott Dog Park and the National Fitness Campaign Court and Studio. Both projects will be tremendous positive impacts for the residents of the Manhattan Park District and would not be possible without the support of the Rise Grant program.



**What’s Next?**

The next chapter of Earthrise Energy’s community engagement work is about scale, depth, and long-term partnerships. Here’s a look at what’s ahead as we continue to expand our vision and impact:



**Investing in Fire District and First Responder Training**

Building on our early support for rural fire districts, we’re deepening our investment in safety and emergency response through new training initiatives, equipment support, and regional partnerships.



**Becoming the Largest Philanthropic Effort**

Our goal is bold and simple: to become the largest source of philanthropic giving in every county where we operate. We aim to be a consistent, trusted partner in funding the priorities that matter most to our communities.



**Growing the Scholarship & Endowment Program**

Following the launch of our new scholarship program, we’re focused on growing these resources – ensuring long-term, flexible support for students, universities, colleges, schools, and non-profits for years to come.



**Lifting Up Local Champions**

From the very beginning of Earthrise’s work, community champions have helped shape and guide this work. In the months ahead, we’ll be working on deepening our relationships with these local leaders – ensuring they have the visibility and support they need to keep making change.



**Scaling with Project Pipeline**

As our clean energy project pipeline grows, so does our commitment to community impact. We’re scaling our grantmaking and engagement efforts in tandem – ensuring no community is left behind.



**Workforce Development & Higher Education Partnerships**

We’re forging new partnerships with universities, community colleges, and technical schools to connect students with careers in clean energy, trades, and beyond – laying the groundwork for inclusive economic opportunity.



**Bold Letters of Support Goals**

Our goal is to bring the best applications forward for permitting approval, and that includes letters of support from local champions. We’re setting ambitious goals for building this local support across our project hubs. We aim to secure these letters to reflect the deep and broad-based trust Earthrise Energy has earned.





# Thank You

As we close out this inaugural Community Engagement Report, we want to extend our deepest thanks – to the organizations doing vital, often underrecognized work; to the neighbors and local leaders who trust us in partnership, and to everyone who believes that clean energy and strong communities go hand in hand.

This report is a snapshot of what's possible when we center local voices, invest in people, and commit for the long haul. We know there's still much to do – and we're honored to keep showing up alongside you.

**Thank you for being part of the Earthrise story!**

