



Green Neighbor Challenge Press Kit

The Green Neighbor Challenge is a non-profit project building a free online toolset to empower US residents to take energy action and advance energy democracy. Our flagship tool, a green energy finder, was released for beta testing in January 2022, with a nationwide launch and social media campaign planned for Earth Day 2022. The tool uses a comprehensive database of utility green pricing programs, state energy marketplace websites, and independent Renewable Energy Certificate suppliers to help anyone in the U.S. with a utility bill (including renters) find and sign up for green energy.

Beginning as a Master’s Professional Paper at the University of Minnesota Humphrey School in 2019, we became a fiscally sponsored project of the Power Shift Network (501c3) in January 2020. Over the past 3 years, we have been powered by the work of over 50 volunteers, interns, and advisors, with a dedicated team of eight active volunteers as of April 2022.

For detailed project information:

- [April 2022 press release](#)
- [Prospectus document](#)
- [Benefits Document](#)
- [Overview Document](#)
- [Organization website](#)
- [Web Tool](#)

“The tenacity of this all-volunteer team to work to unstick a big challenge in the U.S. residential ESCO/REC market is super impressive.”

-U.S. Department of Energy Feedback, December 2021

Established in

2019

Founder

Andrew Butts

Launch Date

4/22/22

Utility Programs
Researched

473

Grant and Grassroot
Funds Raised

\$9326

US Households with
Green Energy Programs

73%

Organization contacts

- **Andrew Butts** (he/him), Founder & Lead Neighbor
andrew@greenneighborchallenge.org
- **Lilly Richard** (she/her), Research, Design & Communications
lilly@greenneighborchallenge.org
- **Hannah Burns** (she/her), Communications & Outreach
hannah@greenneighborchallenge.org
- **Ali Renk** (she/her), Fundraising & Strategy
ali@greenneighborchallenge.org

 [Logos,
Branding, and
Team Photos](#)

Social Media

[Facebook](#) | [Twitter](#) | [Instagram](#) | [LinkedIn](#) | [LinkTree](#)

Additional Subject Matter Experts

- **Matt Grimley** - Energy Transition of Electric Utilities and Residential Programs
Researcher, Chan Energy Lab, University of Minnesota - griml011@umn.edu
- **James Critchfield** - Voluntary Green Power Purchasing for Businesses and Governments
Director, Green Power Partnership Program, US EPA - critchfield.james@epa.gov
- **Nancy Seidman** - Health Benefits of Air Quality, Climate Policy, and Energy Efficiency
Senior Advisor, Regulatory Assistance Project - nseidman@raponline.org
- **Dany Sigwalt** - Youth Climate and Racial Justice Organizing & Movement Building
Executive Director, Power Shift Network - dany@powershift.org

Media Coverage & Appearances

[Webinar: The Next Big Thing: Our Behavior, Our Communities - Enlisting Citizens](#)

DCEN: "NEXT BIG THING" CLIMATE CRISIS CONFERENCE, November 11th, 2021

[Webinar: Energy Democracy - What is it and Radical Steps Moving Forward](#)

Power Shift Network: Educational Webinar Series, October 25th, 2021

[Commentary: "Wanna know where you can get clean energy? We're tryin' to build an app for that."](#)

Minnesota Reformer, Dec 2nd, 2020

[Episode: The Green Neighbor Challenge with Andrew Butts, Founder & Director](#)

ReVolt Podcast, August 21, 2020

[Announcing the 2019 Acara Challenge Winners](#)

Institute on the Environment, March 8, 2019

Potential Framings

Public health: The air pollution generated by burning fossil fuels leads to 100,000 avoidable premature deaths per year in the US ([Duke University, 2020](#)). If just 2% of households switched to green energy, we could save \$983 million annually in avoided public health costs ([EPA, 2019](#)). Breathe easy, a new web tool is helping residents choose freedom from pollution.

Public awareness: “Customer education is a ‘consistent predictor of participation’ in residential energy efficiency programs, more so than income, race or ethnicity,” according to researchers at Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory ([UtilityDive, 2021](#)). Despite widespread availability of voluntary green energy programs, few residential consumers - less than 14%, according to the National Renewable Energy Lab ([NREL, 2011](#)) - are aware of their options. A new nonprofit has launched a web tool and social media campaign to change that.

Energy Transition: A new nonprofit project is working to accelerate the renewable transition using an under-utilized leverage point in the energy economy: residential consumer demand. By connecting residents, the largest sector of energy consumers, to utility green pricing programs using public data and an easy-to-use search tool, the Green Neighbor Challenge hopes to increase green energy demand and drive energy sector decarbonization.

Climate Action: With climate action stalled out in Congress despite a growing youth climate justice movement, a new nonprofit project is facilitating bottom-up change by making personal climate action more inclusive. While rooftop solar and electric vehicles remain out of reach for most households, utility “green pricing programs” are accessible even to renters and cost the typical home less than \$10 extra per month ([NREL, 2017](#)) to reduce or eliminate the largest source of household emissions ([PBS, 2019](#)). By helping residents explore their options and enroll in these programs, the Green Neighbor Challenge hopes to empower residents to go green, and send a message to Washington: Climate Action Now.

Energy Independence: Amid global instability and rising gasoline prices, the cost of wind and solar energy continues to fall to new lows ([Lazard, 2021](#)) and are expected to reduce consumer energy costs ([White House, 2021](#)). A new web tool is giving US residents a timely opportunity to support energy independence by accelerating clean energy development. The Green Neighbor Challenge helps homeowners and renters find and enroll in their local utility green pricing programs to power their homes using renewable energy and help build-out affordable domestic energy production.

Founder story: Growing up down the road from a coal plant in Pleasant Prairie, WI, Andrew Butts suffered from asthma at a young age. As he recounts it, “some of my earliest memories in life are waking up, being unable to breathe.” A first generation college student, it wasn’t until a graduate energy policy course that he started appreciating how deeply his health and family had been shaped by choices about our energy system. Learning also that he could sign up for green energy through his electric utility for a fraction of his inhaler’s copay each month, he dedicated his master’s degree in Science, Technology, and Environmental Policy to exploring how ordinary people could transform our energy system. In the years since, he and a growing team of volunteers have been on a mission to help residents enroll in these widely-available but vastly under-utilized “utility green pricing programs” so that we can all breathe easier.