Putting the Clean Power Plan to Work for Low-Income Americans
Championing the Clean Power Plan’s Low-Income Energy Efficiency Opportunities
Program: U.S. Climate Legal and Regulatory Program/ Clean Power Plan State Affairs
Location: Washington, DC or Boulder, CO

EDF seeks a Fellow to work with a diverse set of stakeholders to help ensure the success of a major nationwide opportunity to support investment in low-income energy efficiency.

EPA’s new policy to reduce carbon pollution from the power sector, the Clean Power Plan (CPP), creates maximum flexibility for states and power companies to invest in cost-effective clean energy solutions to reduce emissions from electric generating units. State implementation of the CPP is an incredible opportunity for large-scale deployment of energy efficiency programs to help maximize emission reductions while creating jobs and saving money. However, energy efficiency programs have not always been accessible by all communities. Traditional rebate programs have often failed to provide appropriately targeted incentives necessary to motivate needed energy efficiency improvements in low-income households and by multi-family low-income housing providers. Utilities can be reluctant to support low-income efficiency efforts because of real or imagined difficulty in meeting the cost-effectiveness requirements of their state utility commissions, and state-level public policy solutions have been slow to catch up.

Yet this challenge has been mitigated where energy efficiency initiatives are implemented not only across all classes of utility customers but with a separate and robust focus on targeting development of the programs to reach low-income households. Recognizing that the program needs of these communities is different, specifically tailored programming helps ensure that benefits are shared with those communities that need them the most—and states such as Colorado that have utilities and nonprofit organizations focused on development and deployment of these programs have seen dramatic results.

Recognizing the critical opportunity for large-scale deployment of efficiency resources being created by the Clean Power Plan, EDF included in its federal advocacy a push to ensure that EPA
helped underscore to states that they had a role to play in ensuring that the benefits of energy efficiency programs were available to all customer classes. In the final standards, EPA has explicitly recognized the importance of low-income energy efficiency in its Clean Energy Incentive Program, which will reward early action taken to achieve emission reductions through deployment of programs specifically targeted to low-income communities. The work of this Fellow will help ensure that the Clean Energy Incentive Program achieves its potential for helping to change the economic incentives around low-income energy efficiency investments—and that the cost- and energy-saving investments envisioned in the Clean Power Plan are fully accessible by all. Specifically, this Fellow will:

(1) Work with allies to develop a best practices manual that identifies which projects could qualify for inclusion in the Clean Energy Incentives Program. This effort will require outreach, coordination, and information gathering with the broad community of low-income groups that engaged in the Clean Power Plan, such as the National Energy and Utility Affordability Coalition. The Fellow will be expected to collaborate with allies to identify existing successful models and prepare a detailed compilation, and the analysis would include an assessment of complementary policies that could be deployed by states that could, in conjunction with the CEIP, lay the foundation for enhanced investment in low-income communities.

(2) Help guide conversations at the state level by communicating with state officials and key stakeholders about best practices in low-income energy efficiency. Negotiations on the practical details of implementing the Clean Energy Incentive Program are beginning now and will continue until its start date of 2020. The summer of 2016 will provide an apt time to disseminate specific details and descriptions of solutions that state officials can adopt in their state-level programs.

(3) Work to develop broad-based coalition support for states opting in to the Clean Energy Incentive Program in their 2016 initial or final plan submissions, especially among diverse communities that are not often engaged in clean air regulatory processes.

The Fellow would be an integral part of EDF’s Clean Power Plan team, and would support these advocacy efforts through outreach to coalition partners and key decision-makers, research, written advocacy, oral advocacy, analysis of regulation/legislation, and by attending workshops and hearings on relevant topics.