



November 13, 2023

Dear partners and supporters,

When the Illinois Science and Energy Innovation Foundation (ISEIF) launched in 2013, we knew the success of our grantmaking would depend on centering our grantee community. Now, as we sunset the ISEIF Education fund, I'm proud to look back on a decade of grantmaking that was led by community solutions and extended beyond providing financial capital to our grantee partners.

Undoubtedly, our impact and results matter. But what also mattered was *how* we did our work: how we built relationships with grantee partners, how we defined our success and theirs, how accessible and approachable we were, and how we trusted, advocated for, and supported our grantee community.

In the early days of our grantmaking, the language to describe the majority of what we fund wasn't prevalent in energy circles – public education, outreach, and access for those facing energy burdens, energy insecurity, and energy inequity. According to the American Council for an Energy-Efficient Economy (ACEEE), the East North Central region (Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Ohio and Wisconsin) ranks second in the total number of households with high energy burdens. Those making less than 50% of the Federal Poverty Level have the highest burdens and are disproportionately low-income, renters, seniors, Black, Latin American and Native American. We set out to bring the community, human, and equity aspects to the energy conversation where we saw urgency and the need to address energy beyond technological challenges and solutions. And when I reflect on the last ten years, I see a community of organizations and people who became experts in this work along the way, found innovative ways to gain trust in communities after much trial and error, and now inform larger conversations around energy equity.

As we sunset and close the Education fund, I am proud to share this report about our funding model, the elements that define it and how we maintained strong relationships with our grantee community while following their lead in public engagement and education. The independent report is an evaluation of ISEIF by Outlier at the University of Chicago's Data Science Institute and partners at the American Council for an Energy Efficient Economy (ACEEE) and Loyola University Chicago's Center for Urban Research and Learning (CURL). Our hope is that funders, policymakers, program architects and those seeking to make emerging energy topics accessible to people (especially in low to moderate income communities) benefit from our funding model. We employed a myriad of community-driven strategies to reach residents from a multitude of backgrounds statewide. And, we supported our partners beyond grants through extending all forms of capital—financial, relational, and social.

We believe we built capacity in our grantee partners over the years so that they are ready for new opportunities on the horizon. While we're seeing unprecedented funding for climate and energy, we must remember energy burdens continue to increase for those who are most in need. There is much more to do, and we are proud to have supported a community of organizations who can lead people to cleaner energy in a trusted and accessible manner.

Uzma Noormohamed  
Program Director

# ILLINOIS SCIENCE AND ENERGY INNOVATION FOUNDATION:

# MODEL IMPLEMENTATION & IMPACT

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*Outlier Research &  
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Data Science  
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*October 1, 2023*

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## About us

**Outlier Research & Evaluation at UChicago's Data Science Institute** (Outlier) is a team with a focus on understanding implementation, spread and endurance of educational innovations in the service of increasing educational equity. Outlier is the lead author of this report and responsible for any errors.

**The American Council for an Energy-Efficient Economy** (ACEEE) is a nonprofit research organization that develops policies to reduce energy waste and combat climate change.

**The Center for Urban Research and Learning at Loyola University Chicago** (CURL), through research and partnerships, creates innovative solutions that promote equity and opportunity in communities.

Funding for this study was provided by the Illinois Science and Energy Innovation Foundation (ISEIF). We thank ISEIF staff and ISEIF grantees for their generous support and participation in the evaluation process.

# Executive Summary

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# Executive Summary

## **Report structure**

This document describes the work and impact of the Illinois Science and Energy Innovation Foundation (ISEIF), which was created in 2011 as an independent trust to support state-wide and local organizations to increase engagement in energy literacy. Over 10 years of operation, ISEIF provided 205 grants to 68 different organizations.

ISEIF's funding strategy was anchored in field-building, active collaboration with grantees, and prioritizing community-based organizations that could serve as trusted messengers.

We identify specific elements of ISEIF's model for working with grantees; grantees' experiences working with ISEIF; and lessons for current and prospective funders in the energy literacy field.

Findings are based upon a review of grantees' application and reporting documents as well as ISEIF ratings and feedback on grantee applications; interviews with ISEIF staff; as well as surveys, interviews and focus groups with grantees.

## **Report purpose and audience**

The purpose of this report is to describe and highlight key practices of a funding model that supports and coordinates community-based organizations implementing public education campaigns on environmental topics.

The intended audience for this report includes funding agencies, program architects, and policy circles.

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# Executive Summary

## Key takeaways

- The ISEIF priorities that ISEIF staff identified as essential in their funding model were validated by grantees as positively impacting program success.

ISEIF priorities that grantees identified as the most impactful were:

- \* Funding organizations trusted by communities
  - \* Allowing grantees to experiment
  - \* Assuming grantees knew best
  - \* Flexibility with grantees
- The ISEIF model serves as a complement to top-down utility-generated energy literacy efforts, providing important alternate grass-roots pathways for outreach and engagement.

- The ISEIF funding model generates innovation and adaptation in educational approaches by encouraging new combinations of program components, based upon resident needs and interests as well as the capabilities of grassroots organizations.
- The ISEIF model encourages cross-organization collaboration that builds capacity and energy expertise in locally trusted grass-roots organizations. These “trusted messenger” organizations are in a position to support energy messaging as well as a range of other important social causes.

# Introduction

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# Introduction

*"I've celebrated 40 years of doing this kind of work for government agencies, nonprofit independent research entities, and I will have to say: in that 40-year period I have not worked with a grantor quite like ISEIF..."*

*- ISEIF grantee*

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## Illinois Science and Energy Innovation Foundation

This document describes the work and impact of the Illinois Science and Energy Innovation Foundation (ISEIF). It identifies key elements of ISEIF's model for working with grantees; grantees' experiences working with ISEIF; and lessons for current and prospective funders in the energy literacy field.

### History, charge and current status

ISEIF was created with a \$50 million trust funded by two Illinois electric utilities as part of Illinois' Energy Infrastructure Modernization Act of 2011, which authorized the utilities to build an advanced metering infrastructure (AMI).

In parallel with the AMI's build-out, ISEIF's charge was to increase energy literacy and consumer engagement to make effective use of the new opportunities provided by a smart grid. ISEIF adopted a peer-reviewed process to fund and evaluate organizations' efforts to engage and educate consumers.

ISEIF was granted discretion in choosing (non-lobbying) partner organizations, including independent not-for-profit community groups, state-wide organizations, and government bodies. They also had statutory flexibility in how to support and encourage activities for public benefit during this period of grid modernization. This broad framework created space for ISEIF to work creatively with individual grantees, as well as create field-building cross-organizational connections over time.

ISEIF provided 205 grants to 68 organizations in the utility service areas of ComEd and Ameren. Thirty percent of ISEIF funding was required to be directed to low-income (including senior) populations; ISEIF reported that more than double (66%) was ultimately directed to this priority population.

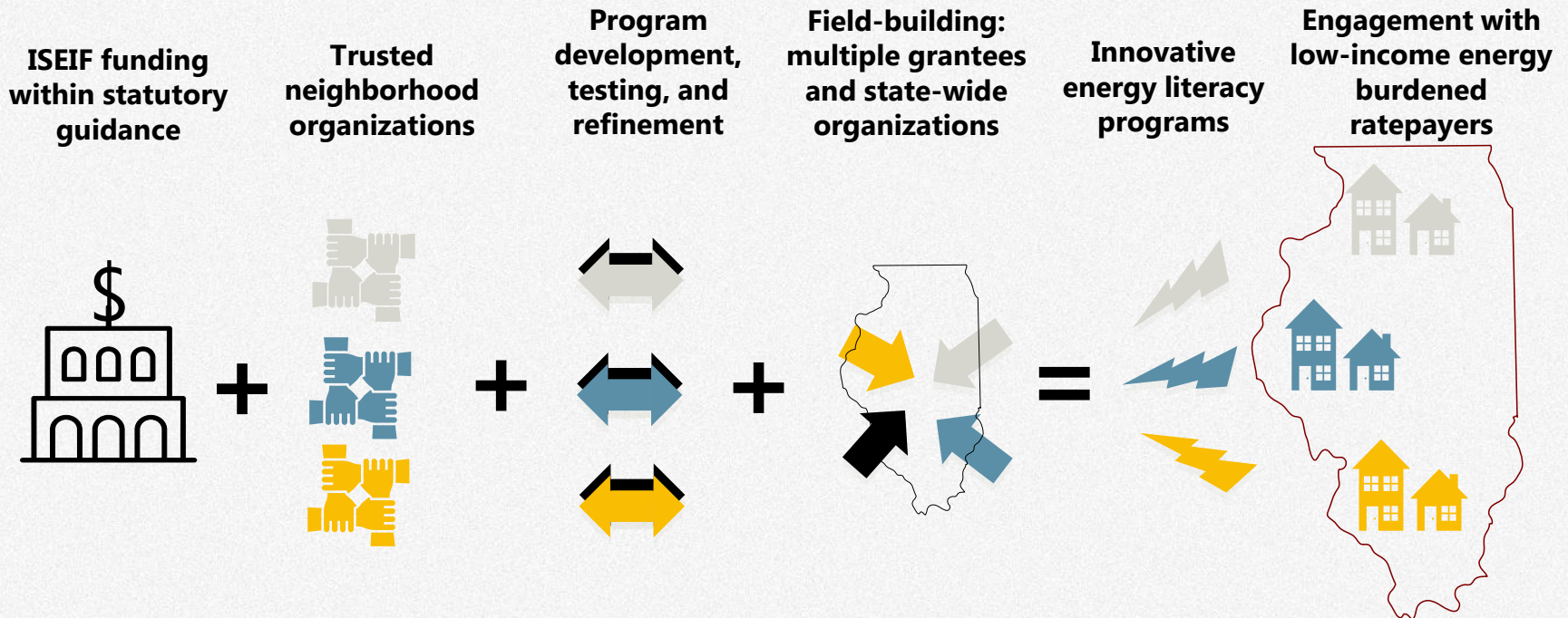
Overall, ISEIF reports grantees directly educated more than 900,000 individuals, and media campaigns reached tens of millions in Illinois.

As intended in initial authorization, ISEIF will sunset at the end of 2023.



# The ISEIF funding model

The core ISEIF funding model directs **ISEIF funding within statutory guidance** to **trusted neighborhood organizations**. Together, these partnerships **develop, refine and test individual programs**. In parallel, ISEIF facilitates links across neighborhood organizations as well as with state-wide organizations to create partnerships that **develop the energy literacy field** in Illinois. The result are **innovative energy literacy programs** that **engage low-income energy burdened ratepayers**.



**Energy literacy** is understood here as the awareness of the many things that can increase electricity costs as well as options for reducing them. ISEIF seeks to fund and develop **innovative energy literacy programs** with multiple approaches for **engaging communities** to increase consumer knowledge and changing electricity use behavior. The primary audience for these programs are **energy burdened ratepayers** who spend a relatively high share of income on energy because of both limited income and high energy consumption.

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# Evaluation questions guiding this study

**Five evaluation questions explore the ISEIF funding model, implementation, and impact.**

- What is the “ISEIF model” for working with grantees, and how has it evolved?
- What factors influenced the implementation of ISEIF’s model?
- Which components of the ISEIF model had the greatest impact on grantee organizations?
- Which grantee programs were most successful?
- Why were grantee programs successful, and for which target populations?

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# Data collection and analysis

Outlier Research & Evaluation led the independent evaluation of the ISEIF model in partnership with The American Council for an Energy Efficient Economy (ACEEE) and The Center for Urban Research and Learning at Loyola University Chicago (CURL).



## Model specification

In spring 2022 we reviewed ISEIF grant guidelines, applications, and reports from the prior five years of ISEIF operation, prioritizing documents from 2019, 2020 and 2021.

Based upon this review, we identified approximately 50 “ISEIF funding model” components. We reviewed these with ISEIF staff to confirm and clarify, and then asked staff to identify the most essential components.

## Grantee survey

In partnership with ISEIF, we created a survey that identified 19 key components of the ISEIF model and their impact on grantees’ funded work. The survey also inquired about other factors that affected grantees’ success.

Fifty-six ISEIF grantees were recruited for the survey and 33 (59%) completed the survey in Fall 2022. We analyzed quantitative data using descriptive and inferential statistics and identified patterns in open-ended responses.

## Focus groups & interviews

We created focus group and interview protocols to explore the impact of the ISEIF model components and other factors that influenced grantee success with target populations.

We conducted two focus groups in April 2023 consisting of 11 individuals from 10 grantee organizations. We also conducted 6 interviews with other grantees unable to attend focus groups. Transcripts were coded drawing on concepts in the evaluation questions.

# ISEIF funding model

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# What is the “ISEIF model” for working with grantees?

*"So they weren't like a gatekeeper, they were actually like a **promoter and connector** amongst other grantors -- which is not usually the case I would say.*

*It's kind of hard to find that kind of champion within a foundation that's willing to take their time to connect."*

**- ISEIF grantee**

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## What

**ISEIF staff identified many key structural elements that comprised the ISEIF model:**

- + Concentrating on education and energy literacy
- + Serving populations with outside energy burdens
- + Testing multiple approaches simultaneously
- + Maintaining an open application process
- + Funding creative grantees that experiment with new strategies
- + Prioritizing grantees that are trusted by the communities where they work (rather than energy content knowledge, per se)
- + Expecting grantees to attend cross-grantee events
- + Encouraging grantees to address ISEIF energy-related priorities within other activities that are more appealing to the grantees' target population
- + Collecting data on the demographics of the populations served, as well as impacts

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## How

**ISEIF staff identified several expectations for how they and grantees would interact:**

- + Being open to stories and anecdotes (beyond quantitative data) when assessing grantee performance
- + Responding to grantee needs and partnering with a problem-solving approach
- + Connecting grantees to each other, expecting them to coordinate, and providing supports for effective interactions and partnerships
- + Providing detailed proposal feedback, including new ideas and connections to other resources
- + Providing easy and timely ISEIF staff access to grantees

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ISEIF staff identified several specific *staff* qualities and areas of knowledge that facilitated success within the ISEIF funding model:

*A willingness to take risks and "fund something new that has potential to work – and then tweaking what doesn't"*

*An interest in connecting with experts in other fields*

*Respecting grantee organizations as experts*

*Being aware of the power dynamic with grantees*

*Speaking many languages – technology, community, electricity, utilities*

*- ISEIF staff*

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# How has the “ISEIF model” for working with grantees evolved?

*“I think we were really a different grantee, where our mission was not solely connected to what ISEIF’s traditional funding sources were for when they first started.*

*But I think we came in at a time when they were really looking to diversify their grantees and what they wanted to do and be more innovative and creative.”*

**- ISEIF grantee**

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The ISEIF model is a mix of policies and practices required by statute as well as those developed over time in partnership with grantees and other stakeholders. ISEIF funding priorities were also shaped by the pace and timing of the smart grid technology roll-out, which experienced initial delays but was complete in both utility service areas by 2019.

Staff at ISEIF identified changes over time in **what they did** and **how they worked**:

## **+ Small grants program**

After completing its first “Education, Outreach, and Research” funding round in 2013, ISEIF added a “small grants” funding stream for annual grants up to \$15,000.

This change created connections between small organizations with limited energy expertise (but expertise in local communities) and larger ISEIF-funded energy organizations. The small grant program allowed community partners to obtain funding, rather than working as an uncompensated local partner, and increase future capacity to independently provide energy literacy content.

## **+ Supporting digital media strategies**

Prompted by the COVID pandemic, ISEIF made technical supports to grantees broadly available to improve internet-based engagement. For many grantees, this assistance and funding created substantial new pathways, digital capacity, and ways of working.

## **+ Grantee convenings**

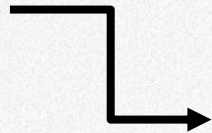
Grantee convenings were initially more consistently structured events, with highly organized interactions among grantees. These became less structured, emphasizing open networking opportunities.

## **+ Flexibility in funding parameters**

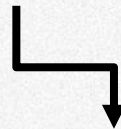
Based upon community feedback, ISEIF funding adopted a broader scope, exploring with grantees new ways to support energy literacy as well as other energy and environmental issues.

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*"And so part of the innovation that happened was that ISEIF listened to the feedback that we were giving them. They expanded the kinds of things that we could talk about, and it wasn't just about smart meters, it was about energy efficiency. It was about, you know, affordability -- how do I manage this whole energy thing so that I can afford it later?"*



**It was about, preventing disconnection -- how I could connect people to LIHEAP services, right?**



*So we would get credit under the ISEIF umbrella of things that we could talk about – we talked about smart meters too – but, even after smart meters, they didn't stop us from talking about solar panels and smart thermostats, and other things **that allowed us to engage customers beyond just one thing.**"*



# Implementation and impact

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# What (positive) factors influenced the implementation of ISEIF's model?

Factors that influence the level and quality of implementation operate at several levels, and grantees and **staff identified several positive influences** on execution of the ISEIF grantmaking approach:

## + Individual-level factors

The program director and associate program officer understood the ISEIF model deeply and possessed the intrinsic motivation for it to succeed.

As individuals they were oriented to innovation and problem-solving, and able to draw upon non-profit experience.

## + Organizational-level factors

ISEIF had a guaranteed pool of funds and no requirement to raise additional funds.

ISEIF had flexibility to move beyond providing baseline information on "the smart grid" and support energy literacy through multiple pathways.

ISEIF was a new and small organization with a flat hierarchy.

ISEIF had turnover in leadership, but identified an internal candidate replacement with extensive experience.

## + Contextual-level factors

ISEIF was able to recruit from a broad pool of non-profit organizations with established local relationships. The availability of grantees that were also members of the communities where they worked allowed ISEIF to sustain its core "familiar faces in familiar spaces" approach to grantmaking.

At an even broader contextual level, information about electricity use and familiarity with smart grid technology was increasing over time separate from ISEIF's efforts.

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# What (challenging) factors influenced the implementation of ISEIF's model?

## **Some factors created challenges for implementing this funding model**

+ The COVID pandemic broke many established outreach models and the impacts were harder to overcome for some (e.g., low-income populations lacking broadband access). However, ISEIF's existing orientation to adapting to change mitigated these impacts.

+ Utilities were important partners in many grantees programs but sometimes had priorities and operations that differed from grantees'.

+ Solicitors in neighborhoods trying to convince residents to change energy providers decreased trust and made it more difficult for ISEIF grantees to use a door-to-door strategy for their energy literacy work.

+ Grantees were not always able to collect detailed demographic data on the populations they served.

+ ISEIF was unable to access data about consumers' actual energy use. This data would have been useful to identify specific relationships between energy literacy programs and energy use.

# Which components of the ISEIF model had the greatest impact on grantee organizations?

*"I wish every funder was like ISEIF, because they were very flexible . They were very understanding. You know, they gave us the opportunity to -- if we needed to change something in our line item, I would just email you know [ISEIF staff] and ask her and then she would check and the answer always came back: 'Yes.'"*

**- ISEIF grantee**

Grantees who completed a survey on their experiences with ISEIF were asked to reflect on 19 specific components of the ISEIF funding model.

The majority of all respondents identified all 19 positive -- *increasing* impact on their project. Very few individuals identified any ISEIF model component as *decreasing* the impact of their project.

Four components in particular were identified by *ninety percent or more* of respondents as increasing the impact of their projects. Each of these underscores grantees' appreciation for local decision-making.

## Four of the most impactful model components



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# Which components of the ISEIF model had the greatest impact on grantee organizations?

*"We get a lot of scammers trying to get people to change their bills. We've been around for 10 years, a trusted staff, trusted organization. So it was a resource for folks to run their bills through and help them get back to ComEd if they were taken advantage of by another vendor."*

*- ISEIF grantee*

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## **Funded organizations trusted by the community**

Grantees identified several ways in which being a trusted partner was valuable in their work, most typically in recruiting for programs.

ISEIF's encouragement of partnerships across organizations also built trust by, for example, "providing another level of credibility" when a small neighborhood organization became affiliated with a well-known state-wide organization.

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## **Allowed grantees to experiment**

The prominence of innovation is obvious in ISEIF's name, and grantees valued many ways in which the foundation encouraged experimentation and innovation. As one example, ISEIF supported additional market research to determine effective outreach strategies for a group (disabled individuals) that did not appear in existing market segmentation studies.

*"The way they operated was truly as the foundation promoting supporting, innovative approaches to the problem and thinking very broadly about what that problem is and how to go about doing that."*

*"One of the things that ISEIF didn't discourage was experimenting. You know, we had the opportunity to fail. And that's not often available."*

*- ISEIF grantee*

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# Which components of the ISEIF model had the greatest impact on grantee organizations?

*"So it being an immersive program -- where it's a component added to our already existing program -- really, really helped.*

*Because otherwise I don't think our young people would have been interested and engage in a solo program about being energy efficient."*

**- ISEIF grantee**

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## Assuming grantees knew best

Grantees identified several instances where ISEIF allowed them to control the pace of program development so that it would fit within the grantee's organization and purpose. These included a municipal organization that was funded to spend a year conducting research on the appropriate role and leverage of municipalities in promoting energy literacy.

*"...typically, funders tend to tell you what to do, right? It's very top down in what's expected of you. What was different about ISEIF relationships with grantees was, it wasn't just top down, right? **They were listening -- they were willing to listen. So in some ways, it was some grassroots up...new innovative strategies that they hadn't done before.**"*

**- ISEIF grantee**

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## Flexibility with grantees

Grantees identified a range of expenses they said other funders would often exclude from budgets, including extra staff time for recruiting, materials, and stipends for participants.

*"Under a lot of other funding structures, it doesn't matter who the funder is, right? You set goals, you're expected to meet those goals, or else. Right? **And it's not to say that ISEIF just let us do whatever we want to do, and there wasn't any structure, right?** But it wasn't just like, 'Okay, you're not going to be funded and you're left to your own devices.' It was like, 'Okay, we noticed that you're not meeting your goals, what are some other resources that we can help to bring to the table that can help you meet those goals, if those goals haven't shifted?'"*

**- ISEIF grantee**

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# Which grantee programs were most successful? Why, and for which target populations?

*"It's not just a matter of making a grant and evaluating the end product. Or making a grant and reviewing the quarterly reports, ensuring that the budget is reconciled along the way.... **They need to develop the relationship that will enable them ultimately to partner in the success of what the grant is intended to do, or to create, right?**"*

*And I think ISEIF did that all the way along, and I think they did that with most, if not all, of their grantees."*

*- ISEIF grantee*

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ISEIF categorized grantees into five types (e.g., Tech Solutions, Youth STEM Programs). Our analysis was not able to distinguish the most successful programs according to program type.

ISEIF grantees who completed the survey typically rated themselves as *successful* or *very successful* in meeting their programs' primary goals, with no clear distinction among grantee program types. The most successful programs did not appear in our data to differ much from most other programs.

These high overall levels of self-reported success are likely to reflect, at least in part, ISEIF's active problem-solving with grantees struggling early in implementation to achieve their initial goals. This includes ISEIF's willingness to change approaches while maintaining integrity with the original goals.

*"Although [ISEIF] showed flexibility with regard to how we might pivot to something else, **they were quite thoughtful about ensuring that that pivot wasn't just to check a box and do 'something, anything,' but rather was closely related to the original mission and objective of the grant.**"*

*- ISEIF grantee*

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# Which grantee programs were most successful? Why, and for which target populations?

*"I think urban areas are easier to reach out and we had more success...we also do outreach downstate for instance, and it's harder to reach the same amount of attendance for an event that is downstate."*

*- ISEIF grantee*

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ISEIF organized grantees into several types. Survey data suggested that grantees running "youth STEM programs" were mostly likely to report success in meeting their primary goals. This may be a less complex task than for other targets (e.g., "direct outreach to communities and groups").

Survey data provides some evidence that projects serving populations without a high school education reported higher levels of success than programs serving populations with higher education. This is consistent both with ISEIF's priorities and familiarity with this population in its funding portfolio, and other research on difficulties engaging more educated and wealthier populations.

Outreach in non-urban settings was identified as generally more difficult than in urban areas. For specific target populations, grantees reported success when they could adapt engagement strategies. For example, for senior populations and younger individuals with no internet access, grantees would print forms and use the mail, while using the internet for younger populations with access.

The COVID pandemic accelerated the use of online resources. For populations with internet access this created new efficiencies and broader connections. Those without internet access during COVID were sometimes left out.

*"Mailing forms takes so much longer...when COVID hit, we started using, like Jot forms and things like that to gather data to a secure website so they can upload their utility bills and we can forward those on to CUB, you know, to do bill review."*

*- ISEIF grantee*



# Discussion

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# Discussion

*"So actually, not only did they fund us, but then **they helped us develop it into something more, gave us some connections, gave us the idea of connecting with other [organizations] so that it's more far reaching, and then funded us even greater.***

*It's been an amazing connection."*

*- ISEIF grantee*

## Where does ISEIF fit in the context of energy literacy programs?

The ISEIF model is intentionally innovative. It does not prioritize closely replicating existing specific energy literacy approaches. Instead, ISEIF funding is informed by **components of programs** that are known to be effective.

For example, a review by the American Council for an Energy-Efficient Economy (ACEEE) validated the effectiveness of a "trusted sources" strategy in driving energy program uptake, compared to messages from government or utilities. Similarly, programs with multiple strategies help to reinforce energy literacy and behavioral change (Sussman and Chikumbo, 2016).

## Where does ISEIF fit among grantors in the energy literacy field?

Although ISEIF does not specifically identify itself as adopting the six commonly accepted practices of trust-based philanthropy, its approach is consistent with many of these principles:

- \* Provide transparency and responsiveness
- \* Solicit and act on grantee feedback
- \* Provide non-financial resources
- \* Expect the funder to connect with prospective grantees
- \* Simplify paperwork
- \* Provide multi-year, unrestricted funding

The ISEIF model differs from this practices most evidently in its annual funding cycles.

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# Discussion

*"...they allow that flexibility of implementing new things -- **they were always open to new implementation.** So that makes things a lot easier to work with them. And I think that's one of the main differences that I noticed from other funders."*

*- ISEIF grantee*

*"While you're dealing with that vulnerable population, why don't we talk to them and give them a smart thermostat? We had the funding in our budget – ISEIF allowed us to make these purchases -- **and the utilities wouldn't allow that....** So some of the ideas that we had were not implementable. Again, none were ISEIF's fault but it wasn't working...."*

*- ISEIF grantee*

## **ISEIF was structured on a timeline to be innovative**

Multi-year funding with time for development was *"unlike many other grants where you've got a year to get things done and you've got to have these incredibly accelerated timelines and then it's done...**They don't provide rocket fuel, they provide airplane fuel to get you slowly off the runway.**"*

## **Trust is important at many levels**

The ISEIF model is grounded in the value of trust at multiple levels. It relies upon finding trusted organizations in communities to increase energy literacy in a local population. And it relies upon a trust-based approach with those grantees to improve the programming grantees offer. As noted, the model also links grantees together in ways that allows existing trust in one organization to provide a "halo" for partnering organizations.

## **Communicating and coordinating with utilities remains a challenge**

The Illinois Science and Energy Innovation Foundation was created to support the adoption of smart grid technology. A core assumption in its founding was that organizations other than utilities might be more trusted messengers and more likely to succeed. However, this division between utilities and ISEIF created both opportunities and challenges.

*"...it sort of looked like ISEIF was something that they had to do and not that they wanted to do. They didn't look at it as a resource."*

*- ISEIF grantee*

During ISEIF implementation, utilities expanded their own outreach activities, replicating some of the approaches and work started early by ISEIF.

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# Limitations

As noted, this evaluation cannot establish statistical differences across specific program elements and specific target populations.

This is in part a result of sample size in our data. But it is also a product of the innovative nature of the ISEIF grantmaking model, which favored:

- \* Flexibility within and across years favoring ongoing development and evolving priorities
- \* Partnerships and joint contributions rather than single actors seeking impacts

\*Energy literacy programs coupled to a wide range of other services and activities rather than operating as standalone activities

\* Innovative approaches rather than a narrower set evidence-based approaches.

We hope this report has underscored the programmatic strengths of such an approach.

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# Recommendations

For other foundations *"it's probably important to work as hard as ISEIF did to build relationships that allowed the grantee the space to be creative in seeking innovative approaches to whatever it is they agreed to do together."*

- ISEIF grantee

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The ISEIF funding model can inform existing philanthropic efforts in the energy literacy field and serve as an example of how new foundations could complement existing field efforts, including the top-down approach commonly available to electrical utilities.

In their survey responses, grantees most frequently identified three ISEIF model components they believe other funders should adopt:

- \* Cross-grantee events and collaboration across grantees
- \* Trusting organizations and providing them flexibility and room to experiment
- \* Helping grantees with connections to resources

These components are among the many other practices cited by grantees elsewhere in this report as supporting impactful local programming.

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# Appendix A: Analytic framework

## Outlier's implementation evaluation approach

We applied an analytic approach that Outlier Research & Evaluation has used across dozens of studies of innovation. Here, the *innovation* was the ISEIF funding approach with grantees.

This analytic approach consists of two parts:

**First**, a component-based description of the innovation being implemented. This includes structural and interactional components.

**Second**, a framework of factors that research has identified as influencing the implementation of innovations.

In combination, these frameworks provide an organized way of describing an innovation and exploring factors that influence its **implementation levels and quality**.

These implementation levels may also be associated with program outcomes.

Innovation Components			
Structural components		Interactional components	
<b>Procedural</b> What processes, materials, steps, sequences are expected?	<b>Educative</b> What do those implementing the innovation need to know in order to implement as expected?	<b>Interactional (Funder)</b> How are those implementing the innovation expected to act and interact?	<b>Interactional (Grantee)</b> How are those participating in the innovation expected to act and interact?



Influential Factors
Characteristics of the Innovation (e.g., complexity)
Characteristics of the Users (e.g., interest in trying new approaches)
User characteristics in interaction with the innovation (e.g., self-efficacy)
Characteristics of the organization (e.g., decision-making processes)
Elements of the environment (e.g., existing field practices)



**Implementation levels and quality of innovation components**

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# Appendix B:

## 19 ISEIF priorities

For the purposes of the grantee survey, ISEIF staff identified 19 components of their work they they tried to prioritize in their funding model. (These are not in ranked order.)

1. Fund organizations that are trusted by the community
2. Fund work with residents with outside energy burdens
3. Fund work with minority ethnic and language groups
4. Fund work that targets underserved groups
5. Fund work that targets consumers interested in sustainability and climate change
6. Fund work on education and energy literacy
7. Trust grassroots organizations to know what's best for their constituents
8. Hold cross-grantee events
9. Encourage shared learning across grantees
10. Encourage grantees to coordinate their efforts with each other
11. Allow an open application process (organizations do not have to be invited to apply for funding)
12. Renew funding for both successful organizations and unsuccessful organizations with a plan to reassess/attempt new strategies
13. Provide feedback to grantees to improve their funding applications
14. Connect grantees to other potential opportunities (e.g., people, organizations, or opportunities that can help grow or expand work)
15. Provide flexibility with grantees (e.g., modifying goals, reallocating budgets, and extending deadlines)
16. Encourage grantees to experiment with new strategies without fear of failure
17. Allow the use of stories/anecdotes to assess performance of grantees
18. Engage in frequent interactions with grantees
19. Be easily accessible to grantees



## Appendix C: ISEIF-produced fact sheet

### Grantees reach residents throughout all of IL

- 12,285 events reaching over 941,225 people directly
- 66% of funds to senior & low-income populations
- 75.4 % ComEd, 24.6% Ameren

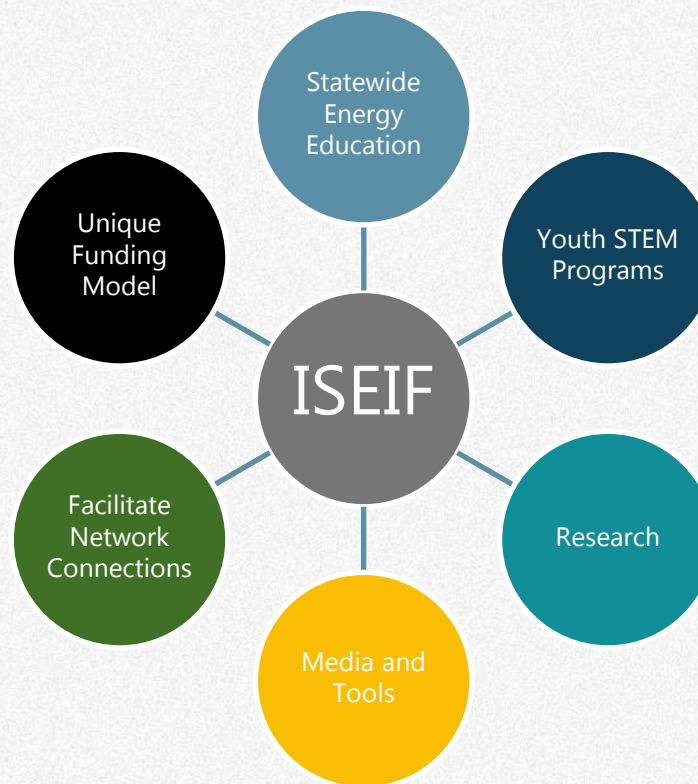
### Funding Model results in greater reach and organizational capacity

- Rooted in grassroots methods & trust from communities
- Messaging separate from utilities' messaging - impact utility cannot achieve
- ISEIF leadership built organizational capacity to capture and use data to determine impact + improvements
- Investment in digital strategy ensured grantees expanded reach during COVID-19 and beyond

### Connect grantees to relevant resources and organizations

- Fund operates as Hub & Spoke
- Grantees connected to energy experts:
  - CUB, Elevate, FIP
- Small grants program intersects energy w/ other topics, assistance from other grantees
- ISEIF-organized events result in idea sharing and collaboration

## 68 organizations funded through 205 grants statewide



### Youth STEM Programs provide real-world opportunities in energy

- ISU's Smart Grid for Schools (SGFS) is the foundational partner for STEM programs
- SGFS engaged **118,195 students & adults**
- CLX developing career pathways in OELW & Construction + Solar
- Digital Badging legitimizes learning experiences for students in this pre-training program
- All youth programs have engaged **120,967 students + adults**

### Research funded explores needs/behaviors around energy

- SILC – Smart Tech for Seniors, People with Disabilities, and Caretakers
- Loyola CURL – Network Effect

### Funding a variety of methods to reach max number of people

- Media & Videos
- Websites & Social Media
- Museum exhibits
- Digital methods have reached over **63M people** reached (video views, likes, interactions, e-mails opened)

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## Appendix D: ISEIF-produced map

Areas in which ISEIF grantees conducted outreach statewide over ten years, a total of 523 zip codes throughout Illinois.

