

MEA EmPOWERS American Visionary Art Museum with \$40,000 for Energy Efficiency Measures



For Baltimore's [American Visionary Art Museum](#), replacing the HVAC chiller to the 15-year-old exhibition building was a critical fix. Besides cooling its more than 100,000 annual visitors, the museum is responsible for the preservation of a vast collection of visionary art.

Katie Adams, the museum's Director of Development, identifies the museum as a "storehouse for intuitive, self-taught artists" and notes that AVAM is the "only museum of its kind in the country." She says, "It is imperative we maintain care of the collection." Temperature and humidity are concerns for the curators of this unique collection.

AVAM received a \$40,000 grant through the Maryland Energy Administration's (MEA) [EmPOWER Clean Energy Communities Grant program](#). In addition to replacing the chiller, the funds are being used to seal the roofing connection to further preserve interior climate conditions. These energy efficiency improvements, which are also partially funded by a zero-interest [Jane E. Lawton Conservation Loan](#) from the MEA contributed to energy savings estimated at 78,000 kWh every year, which would translate to an annual savings of more than \$9,000*.

More importantly, "MEA sparked our conversations about energy savings," says Adams. AVAM is actively seeking ways to incorporate further efficiency improvements throughout its campus. The museum has recently pursued a comprehensive energy efficiency audit, and "as soon as we get that energy audit," Adams says, "I think we'll be able to rock and roll with a lot of projects."

Adams' has a newfound excitement for energy efficiency. "At AVAM, we're all about creative acts of all sorts," she says. "If that comes as financial savings and sustainability, that's great."

Since 2009, MEA has awarded nearly \$8 million in EmPOWER Clean Energy Communities Grants and MEA plans to award another \$1.4 million in grants this year. Those grants are funded through proceeds from the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative (RGGI).

*\$9,165 is based on a commercial rate of 11.75 cents per kWh per <http://www.eia.doe.gov>.