NONPROFIT LOOKS TO CUT CARBON USE

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United Way of Long Island is embarking on an energy transformation of its Deer Park headquarters, adding solar, storage batteries and heat pumps while cutting usage to no more than it produces.

The $1.8 million project, with a $1 million state grant and equipment donations from Wallace Eannace and Green America, is expected to serve as a model for so-called net-zero buildings. "We want to produce as much as we use," said Rick Wertheim, United Way's senior vice president of housing and green initiatives. Any excess will be sold back to LIPA, and the proceeds used to fund programs, officials said.

United Way expects the 31,000-square-foot building, with 576 solar arrays, to produce 230 kilowatts of electricity, one of the largest solar arrays of any not-for-profit commercial building, officials said.

“It is leading the nation in advanced design,” said Matt Brown of the New York State Energy Research and Development Authority.

David Calone, a member of the United Way’s executive board, said the savings in energy will help fund more services for the thousands of families United Way serves on Long Island each year.

“This project makes the programs inside sustainable,” said David Manning director of external affairs at Brookhaven National Laboratory.

The building, when finished, will be able to operate in disasters, with batteries storing energy from the solar arrays. It will also serve as a hub for workforce development.

The program has already cut energy use by converting indoor and outdoor lighting to highly efficient LEDs. Wallace and Eannace of Long Island will donate three air-source heat pumps, highly efficient heating and cooling systems, corporate vice president Darrel Clark said.

Theresa Regnante, president and chief executive of United Way, said the program will also be used to educate and train young Long Islanders on installation and use of green and efficient energy products. All the work is expected to be completed by fall of 2022, she said. Unions will help by donating labor for the project, she said, and the agency will fund raise for the balance of the cost.