

## **Environmental Justice and Energy: Strategies for Collaborating with Vulnerable Communities**

Hoi-Fei Mok: Program Officer, ICLEI (Moderator)

Speakers:

1. Tom Esqueda, Executive Director, Grid Alternatives
2. Jessica Guadalupe Tovar, Organizer, Local Clean Energy Alliance
3. Abigail Leonard, Director of Programs-Rising Sun Energy Center

### **Tom Esqueda, Executive Director, Grid Alternatives**

#### **What is GRID Alternatives? What does the organization provide?**

-Non-profit Solar Program organization. Providing solar to underserved communities in residential area and multi family buildings.

-In 2009, the organization started in Fresno by installing solar for low-income housing-Volunteers are key components-community based volunteers.

#### **Why solar for low-income?**

-Low-income families are often exposed to the highest levels of environmental pollution. Those on a fixed or limited income are the most vulnerable to changes in energy costs.

#### **Grid's growing impacts:**

-Systems installed: 8,561

Lifetime savings: \$252,046,814

Volunteers Trained: 32,191

#### **Community Engagement?**

-Workshops are provided to homeowners, aiding them to lower their energy use, and reduce the costs and emissions associated with the amount of energy use.

**Q:** How is this organization helping the youth population, can you please elaborate?

**A:** One of the main goals of this organization is to train volunteers for the entry-level solar jobs.

**Q:** Who do you choose on the "panel" or on the committee of this type of organization?

**A:** Organization should reflect the community you are serving. So, choosing the committee members that belong to and understand the communities are the best choice. It's very crucial to have them involved in the process. Workshops/Trainings: available for individuals who are interested.

### **Jessica Guadalupe Tovar, Organizer, Local Clean Energy Alliance**

#### **Community Choice Energy Program**

-Local based energy built out

-Hybrid system--per cure the energy but will be using PG&E infrastructure

#### EAST BAY COMMUNITY ENRGY

Markey Purchase  
Unstable electricity  
Price volatility  
No guarantee of GHG emissions reductions

#### **CCA**

Local Renewable  
Price stability  
Reduction of GHG

#### **Community Engagement**

Local Buildout Planning-how do we phase in local clean energy  
Economic and environmental justice  
Small, medium and large projects as one  
Creating sustainable jobs  
Energy Democracy  
Setting Community Benefit Goals-quarterly brain sessions, discussing types of program that will benefit the community, ideas outside of the box  
Workshops are being done to engage and educate, build alliance, sign-on organizations, campaign update events, Representation of women, people of color  
CA Nurse association, faith based leaders, Physicians for social responsibility, Intl. Brotherhood of Electrical workers  
-AC Transit has the highest solar transit in the world

#### **Abigail Leonard, Director of Programs-Rising Sun Energy Center**

-Empower individuals to achieve environmental stability  
-Economic equity and climate resilience  
-Youth and adult are the focus in engaging  
California Youth Energy Services/ Green Energy training services  
CYES:  
-Since 2000  
-Employee youth (15-24 year old) to serve the community where they reside, providing no-cost energy efficient and water conserving services  
-Green career engagement opportunities  
-No cost-funded by tax payer dollars  
Fostering resiliency  
-13 site offices that serves different jurisdictions  
Green house calls-pre-booked appointment, teams of two, providing assessments, installation-all 100% LEDs starting 2017, Level-two power strips= motion sensors?  
-Educating residents  
-Meaningful paid jobs  
GETS:

- Adult pre-apprenticeship job training program for construction and union career
- They receive 3 certifications
- Combines 9 weeks of classrooms
- Also have 2 weeks training
- Participants are on poverty level and people of color
- 685 Participants trained
- \$19.55 Average hourly starting wage
- 82% graduated placed into employment
- 93% Participants satisfaction with program

### **Rosie Casillas, SCE-Manager, Income Qualified Program**

#### State level Programs

- Educating public on energy efficiency
- California Alternate Rates for Energy (CARE) 30% rate discount on the bills
- Household that do not qualify for CARE-may qualify for Family Electric Rate Assistance (FERA)- higher income level, 12 % discount on their monthly electric bills.
- Eligibility is based on number in household
- Prospective household may enroll via mail-in application or online at SEC's website [sce.com/billhelp](http://sce.com/billhelp)
- CARE/FERA enrollment between utilities (SCE and SoCalGas)

#### -Energy Assistance Fund:

- Helps income-qualified residential households pay their electric bill
- Maximum of \$100 is available once per 12 months
- More than 15,000 families received assistance in 2016 through EAF

#### Energy Savings Assistance Program (ESA)

- Helps conserve energy and reduce their electricity costs by replacing their old inefficient appliances
- Refrigerators replacements
- Pool Pump Replacement
- Weatherization

**Q:** Is ESA available for renters?

**A:** Yes, Landlord would need to fill out the form.