



Community Weatherization Coalition

2023 Annual Report

The Community Weatherization Coalition (CWC) has grown! The CWC had been in need of additional team members for some time, and we were able to hire *two* additional staff members in February 2023 thanks in large part to our ARPA contract signed with the County at the end of 2022. We now have three full-time and one part-time staff member and have diversified our team. Our full-time staff addition, Katie Greene, was hired from within, as she's been a CWC volunteer energy coach since 2019. She graduated from the University of Florida (UF) graduate with a major in Sustainability and the Built Environment. Her main focus is recruiting clients and executing tune-ups for the [Alachua County Energy Efficiency Program \(ACEEP\)](#). Aiyana Graham is a fulltime student at the University of Florida, who was hired for 15 hours per week to help us keep up with growing administrative tasks such as scheduling tune-ups and volunteers, as well as aiding in outreach and tune-ups.



Aiyana Graham (bottom right, one of CWC's newest staff members) pictured with Intern Keana Hall (top right) & visitor at left; 8/23 Dayspring Church Event.

Over the past year or so, our contracts have become more and more specialized, requiring more rigorous income and geographic guidelines for certain funders. This increases the staff time needed to recruit, qualify applicants, and schedule tune-ups. Increasing our team size and having available paid staff to fill the gaps in meeting these needs has been a key component of our successes this year. **We are proud to report that thanks to our grantors, volunteers, and supporters, we exceeded our 2023 tune-ups goals by 25%!**

Our goals for 2023 were:

- Continue to offer our latest DIY home energy tune-up program alongside our flagship volunteer-powered tune-ups and serve at least 35 households with DIY kits. Actual reached: **41** DIY households.
- Carry out 165 in-home tune-ups engaging as many of our newest class of Energy Coaches as possible. Actual carried out: **206** volunteer- or staff-led tune-ups in 2023.
 - 44.2% of our in-home clients were renters.
- Train 40 new volunteers as energy coaches. Actual number trained: **41**. Our most active Spring '23 recruit, Dean Mimms, has been leading the pack this year, by helping at 10 tune-ups since completing the training in April, as well as multiple outreach events.
 - **108** individual volunteers donated over 2,200 hours to various CWC projects this year, valued at nearly \$70,000.
- Continue our upgrade program, with CAPP funds, to serve at least **4** homeowners in 2023 across the county with next-level repairs such as attic insulation, energy-efficient water heaters, washing machines, and refrigerators. Actually served: **5** households.
- Serve at least 15 ARPA-Qualified Households. Our new ARPA contract went into effect early this year, which is targeted at low-income renters. It offers lessors next-level energy efficiency upgrades for their properties outside of city limits, up to \$15,000, to help to lower utility expenses for their



From left: Marianne Schmink, client Dora M., volunteer Dean Mimms at a tune-up.

renters. The CWC is partnering with Rebuilding Together North Central FL (RTNCF); after CWC staff perform qualified tune-ups to evaluate the rental properties for next-level upgrades, RTNCF staff facilitate the next-level upgrades and landlord mortgage documents. We have exceeded the number of tune-ups required for the pilot, however due to not all lessors pursuing the forgivable loan and next steps, the pilot program has been extended through March 2024 and additional tune-ups are being scheduled.

More details on these accomplishments follow:

- **“DIY Energy Tune-Up” Program:** Although demand has slowed significantly for our DIY program since our in-home tune-up program reopened in 2021, we have continued it, and it has been well-received by participants. Kits include step-by-step diagrams and instructional videos available on the CWC’s [YouTube playlist](#) to assist participants. Since the inception of the program in summer of 2020, **174** DIY households have taken part in the program. In addition to kits offered at Cone Park library in 2021 and Waldo Library in 2022, we began partnering with Library Partnership Branch in northeast Gainesville in spring of 2023. This location has been a hit, with a current waitlist of more than a dozen households.
- **New Way to Offer Weatherization Training:** On December 3rd, CWC offered “For Our Planet and Our Wallets: Bringing Community Conservation Home”, a new, intensive workshop format in partnership with Temple Shir Shalom, the Climate Reality Project, and Solar Impact, helping 19 individuals to skill up around household conservation. With this introduction to weatherization and CWC’s programs, we are hopeful several of the attendees may become future DIY participants, Energy Coaches and/or CWC donors.



CWC spring '23 intern, Taylor DiPietro, pictured at our “Launch Party,” helped secure a \$1,000 grant through UF’s Path to Purpose Program, seeding the launch of DIY kits to Library Partnership Branch, 4/23

Other major accomplishments in 2023, include the following:

- **CareerSource Partnership:** We pursued a new partnership with CareerSource, which funds paid Youth Intern for 300 hours of service. Keana Hall was with us August 17-November 1, averaging 30 hours per week. Keana was instrumental in daily operations and tune-up support, completing 16 tune-ups during her time with us and aiding with outreach, client recruitment, and more. This is Keana’s first experience working in a non-profit setting and she reported, “I love it!”
- **Diversification of Funding:** We have continued to diversify our funding this year; in partnership with Rebuilding Together NCF, we were awarded a grant funded by American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds administered through the County, the [Alachua County Energy Efficiency Program](#) (ACEEP). We are in the pilot phase of this innovative program aimed to help low-income renters with next level energy efficiency upgrades such as new HVAC systems, water heaters, air sealing, and more, while maintaining affordability in rental costs. This grant fully funds our new full-time staff member, Katie Greene’s, position.



CareerSource Intern Keana Hall at her first tune-up

Additionally, we secured additional *foundation* funds for the first time in recent history. We were awarded \$14,800 from Clay Electric Foundation in late 2022, which we used to fund 14 tune-ups for Clay Electric customers in 2023 and plan to apply again for 2024.

- **Expansion of programs to other Florida counties:** The Florida Energy Equity Coalition (FEEC), a Task Force initiated by the CWC with UF IFAS County Extension in 2020, has been successful this year in moving towards a funded pilot program in Florida counties. Following a positive meeting with IFAS administrators, the original MOU signed in 2021 is in the process of being extended for 5 more years, through 2028, and will expand to also include FAMU. The FEEC team has received \$189,000 in funding for a two-year pilot program which will be administered by UF's Program for Resource Efficient Communities (PREC). The funding will support a coordinator and fundraiser, as well as providing resources to extension agents in counties where home energy efficiency programs are being expanded. The funds include \$18,000 for the CWC to compensate for training and consulting services provided.



In addition to this effort, RTNCF/CWC has also reached out to Rebuilding Together affiliates in other states and counties. [Rebuilding Together Tampa Bay](#) has indicated interest in participating in the CWC training program as a step towards strengthening their weatherization and energy efficiency program. [Rebuilding Together East Bay](#) (Berkeley, CA) met with CWC in December to inquire about our energy coach training program to possibly implement into their electrification programs. Lynne Young of [ECO-Action](#) in Atlanta, who participated in the Green Jobs Roundtable last year, participated in the CWC's fall training. CWC is currently discussing mechanisms to extend access to our training programs more broadly.

- **Department of Energy EMPOWER Project:** CWC has continued to take a leading role in the US Department of Energy's [LEAP Communities](#) EMPOWER Project focused on Springhill, Greater Duval, and SWAG neighborhoods. This initiative is a major step towards addressing the key question posed in our 2021 retreat (*How can CWC fulfill our mission in order to better address housing inequities in our community*), providing opportunities for CWC to engage in expanded outreach to underserved neighborhoods, to expand our services, and to advocate for an equitable transition to clean energy in our community. The NAACP and the CWC, as the two community partners, are leading the development of this program. With the technical assistance provided, Project EMPOWER is exploring the potential to reduce energy bills for residents through expanded energy efficiency and weatherization as well as electrification and preparation for solar; explore the potential to develop solar projects to benefit eligible low-income neighborhoods; and contribute to development of a green jobs pipeline accessible to underserved communities in Alachua County.

A kickoff meeting held in the Springhill community in February of 2023 at the Cotton Club included community members from the three priority communities and EMPOWER team members. At the meeting community members discussed barriers to access existing weatherization services, and the EMPOWER team followed up by organizing a monthly Weatherization Coordination meeting that brings



together the local service providers. This group developed a spreadsheet summarizing the different services provided, and eligibility criteria for each, which will be shared in the community to help guide residents seeking services. The weatherization service providers also identified a bottleneck in services provision: the lack of certified inspectors. A smaller group, including representatives of code enforcement departments from the City and the County, worked with Santa Fe College to establish the need for a new training program. As a result, Santa Fe College offered the first Weatherization Technician Certification modules starting in October of 2023.

On October 31, 2022 the project organized a Green Jobs Pipeline Roundtable Discussion attended by over 60 people, focused on expanding existing programs in public schools' curriculum, vocational training programs, internships, business and entrepreneurship opportunities, and sustainability policy related to green jobs. At the Roundtable, a Green Jobs Advisory Council was formed, which has been meeting monthly since December 2022, co-chaired by representatives of the Alachua County Public Schools and Santa Fe College.

A small \$10,000 grant for green jobs development was received (by CareerSource North Central Florida) from Jobs for the Future (JFF), making the team eligible for future rounds of more funding. We are currently awaiting results of the second phase competition for \$75,000. The EMPOWER Team is now working with leaders of the three focus communities to plan community events funded by the JFF grant to highlight green jobs opportunities and other aspects of the EMPOWER Project.

Funds from this grant also were used to co-sponsor the September 30th [Climate Change Summit](#), attended by over 180 people. CWC also was a co-sponsor of this event, which featured a presentation of the "Critical Infrastructure and Land Use Climate Vulnerability Analysis" followed by small group discussions focused on energy, health, food and water that each featured three topic guides, moderated by four local mayors. One of these mayors, Jacquelyn Randall of Hawthorne, is now planning to host a Climate Summit on Nature Day.

While the EMPOWER project does not provide any funding, the EMPOWER team is actively engaged in developing and submitting proposals to fund weatherization, solar implementation, and green jobs workforce development. Four other proposals have been submitted by the team to support weatherization and solar projects, in addition to the successful JFF grant. The EMPOWER Project has been extended through March 2024 to complete some ongoing work, and EMPOWER Coalition plans to continue working together beyond the end of the initial DOE project.

- CWC's WUFT Media's Greater Good Feature aired in November, available on YouTube at: www.youtube.com/watch?v=G4tfcTUyY4