

An Innovative Staffing Approach for Municipal Energy Management in Local Governments

Many small communities lack the staffing resources and economies of scale necessary to plan for climate protection, access project funds, and accelerate energy efficiency efforts.

69% of 2,176 local governments responding to a 2010 sustainability survey indicated that energy is a priority or high priority, but only 29% have dedicated staff to energy programs.¹

At the same time, a rapidly emerging group of qualified, passionate people are eager to tackle climate change issues, but they have limited ability to gain professional experience in the energy field.

To help place these talented professionals where the help is most needed, SEI is piloting a model utilizing a technical support team composed of Climate Corps Bay Area (CCBA) AmeriCorps volunteers¹ and an Encore Fellow², a retired energy professional, to assist the seven small California local governments participating in ScCAP.

Through the mentorship of the Encore Fellow, the two AmeriCorps fellows have been able to quickly acquire the technical and professional development skills needed to help the ScCAP cities implement municipal energy management projects. Key services provided by the support team during their year of service include the following:

- Municipal staff trainings on available energy management tools (e.g. Portfolio Manager, EnergyCAP Express, Pacific Gas and Electric Company's online tools, etc.)
- Municipal facility energy use and cost tracking and assessment reports
- Inventories of building systems (e.g. HVAC, lighting, and controls) to optimize selection of energy efficient replacements

¹ <http://www.climatecorps-bayarea.org/>

² <http://www.encore.org/fellowships>

Climate Protection in Small Cities

Over two-thirds of U.S. citizens reside in jurisdictions with populations under 100,000. Unfortunately, these communities often lack the staffing resources and economies of scale necessary to plan for climate protection, access project funds, and accelerate energy efficiency efforts. As California aims to achieve a significant reduction in GHG emissions over the coming years, small local governments are facing challenges related to energy and climate action planning.

To overcome these challenges, small communities are coming together to realize the benefits of collaboration. Acting together at a regional level, small local governments are leveraging resources, sharing best practices, and taking collective action to achieve California's climate and energy goals.

Strategic Energy Innovations (SEI), a non-profit sustainability organization and seven small California Bay Area local governments—the Cities of Albany, Benicia, El Cerrito, Moraga, Orinda, Piedmont, and San Pablo—have come together to form the Small Cities Climate Action Partnership (ScCAP) to address reduce energy use in their communities. Not only has this partnership empowered small local governments to implement climate protection measures that they would not have pursued on their own, it has also made it possible for small local governments to become leaders in addressing climate change.

Funding for ScCAP is provided by the U.S. Department of Environmental Protection Agency and Pacific Gas and Electric Company (PG&E).



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- Identification of energy efficiency and renewable energy projects and their potential energy savings estimates
- Utility rate change option assessments to reduce monthly utility expenditures
- Customized municipal Energy Action Plans that work synergistically with the local government Climate Action Plans
- Optimization of utility meters and billing organization

The success of the ScCAP technical support team supports the concept that innovative approaches to staffing can effectively help small local governments meet energy and climate change goals and reduce administrative burdens.

Below are testimonials from ScCAP city partners about their experience working with the ScCAP technical support team:

"Working with the ScCAP team was a pleasure. SEI, Climate Corps, and Encore members are extremely knowledgeable and dedicated to helping cities effectively manage energy use through innovative and practical methods. The team continues to be a sounding board while the City develops energy management techniques and assesses potential energy upgrades at its facilities."

- Alex Porteshawver, Climate Action Plan Coordinator, City of Benicia

"Encore Fellow and Climate Corps members provided Piedmont with a thorough commissioning review of our new City Hall HVAC system so that we could program it to work as efficiently as possible. In addition, they helped us plan for future upgrades at the City's Swim Center. As a result of the assistance provided by the SCCAP Support Team, Piedmont was able to make significant measurable gains in meeting the City's climate action goals."

- Kevin Jackson, Assistant Planner, City of Piedmont

"The City of San Pablo is experiencing significant energy savings thanks in large part to the ScCAP Technical Support Team. With limited staff, the City has been able to implement energy management practices that have produced valuable information about building electricity use. Working with Liz, Nick and Frank to compile and review information, investigate anomalies and highlight potential energy savings was an extremely valuable experience for the City. In addition, in developing energy management resources and tools, Nick and Liz were exceedingly thorough and always provided us with any information we requested! Thanks team!"

- Emily Alter, Environmental Program Analyst, City of San Pablo



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