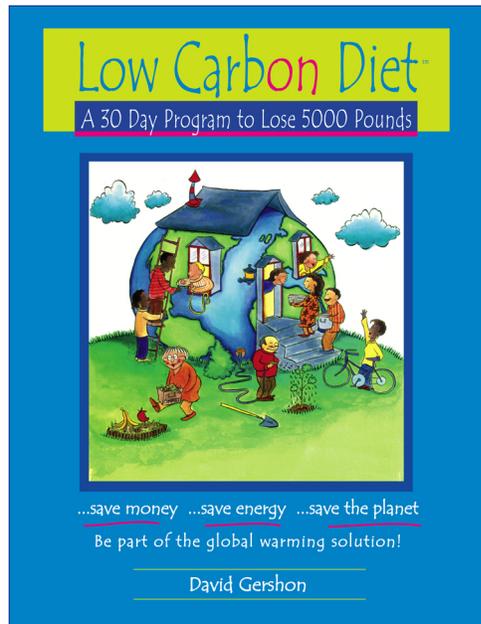


# COOL COMMUNITY CAPACITY BUILDING PROGRAM

EMPOWERING CITIZENS TO REDUCE THEIR CARBON FOOTPRINT 20% BY 2010



## Overview

There is an unprecedented readiness amongst individuals to take personal action on the issue of global warming. A recent Yale University study of 1,000 adults indicated that 75% of Americans recognize that their own behavior can help reduce global warming, and 81% believe it is their responsibility to do something about it. Our scientists tell us that we must act now, that we have a very small window before we achieve an irreversible tipping point that will change the planet as we know it – ten years at most.

With a real ticking clock, substantive and timely change needs to come from both the top down and bottom up simultaneously. Our daily lifestyles represent half of America's carbon footprint and our purchases influence the other half. Households represent between 50% and 90% of a community's carbon footprint. It is also the

low-hanging fruit because we can make these changes immediately without waiting for major policy initiatives, new technologies or alternative energy sources to scale up. Further, engaging the citizens of a community builds demand for bold policy changes and the green products and services needed to sustain a climate change movement. How we live our lives is a major part of the problem and solution. To have a chance at tackling this issue, we need a new motto – city and citizen as partners.

The tools are in place to help America's communities empower citizens to reduce their carbon footprint. Empowerment Institute has developed, through 25 years of research, a proven behavior change and community empowerment methodology. It has helped over 250,000 people reduce their environmental footprint by 25% and trained dozens of communities to successfully implement this methodology. At the heart of this methodology is the acclaimed *Low Carbon Diet: A 30 Day Program to Lose 5,000 Pounds* and the Cool Community campaign empowerment strategy and tools.

## How the Campaign Works

The Cool Community campaign engages local organizations across all sectors (including government, environmental organizations, businesses, neighborhood associations, faith-based groups, service clubs and educational institutions) in a two-year campaign to engage up to 85% of the citizenry in *Low Carbon Diet's* proven program for household CO<sub>2</sub>-reduction. The goal of the initiative is to help community residents reduce their carbon-footprint 20% by 2010. The first communities to achieve this goal will also serve as prototypes for the many cities and towns throughout America and around the world who are seeking effective climate change solutions.

A Cool Community campaign is initiated by a community group, business, local government agency or a combination that deploy the following 7-step strategy.

1. Identify the "carbon footprint" of the residential sector of the community.
2. Set a CO<sub>2</sub>-reduction target and timeline (recommended 20% by 2010).
3. Enroll partner organizations.
4. Host, with lead partners, a 2-day Empowerment Institute capacity-building training with follow-up coaching for volunteer leaders from each participating partner organization. Participants learn the *Low Carbon Diet* behavior change and community empowerment strategies of the Cool Community Campaign. Funding for the capacity building training and coaching can come from local businesses, government agencies or foundations.
5. Partner organizations then host a "Global Warming Café" community engagement workshop to introduce the *Low Carbon Diet* and Cool Community Campaign to their members and network.
6. At the end of the Global Warming Cafe, participants are invited to form "EcoTeams" – groups of approximately eight households who serve as a peer support group for completing the *Low Carbon Diet* program. (Like a Weight Watchers support group for one's carbon diet, EcoTeams follow a series of four structured meetings guiding participants through the diet's carefully designed carbon reduction actions). Households participating in the pilot program reduced their carbon footprint on average by 24%. The target for each partner organization is to form 25 EcoTeams a year over two years (50 in total).
7. Momentum for the campaign is built through a visible feedback loop that shows the individual drops filling the bucket. Results are reported and compiled on a graphically engaging website. Reported results include number of partner organizations, teams formed per partner, cumulative CO<sub>2</sub> savings per partner, average CO<sub>2</sub> reduction per household, and cumulative results against quarterly and final community goals.

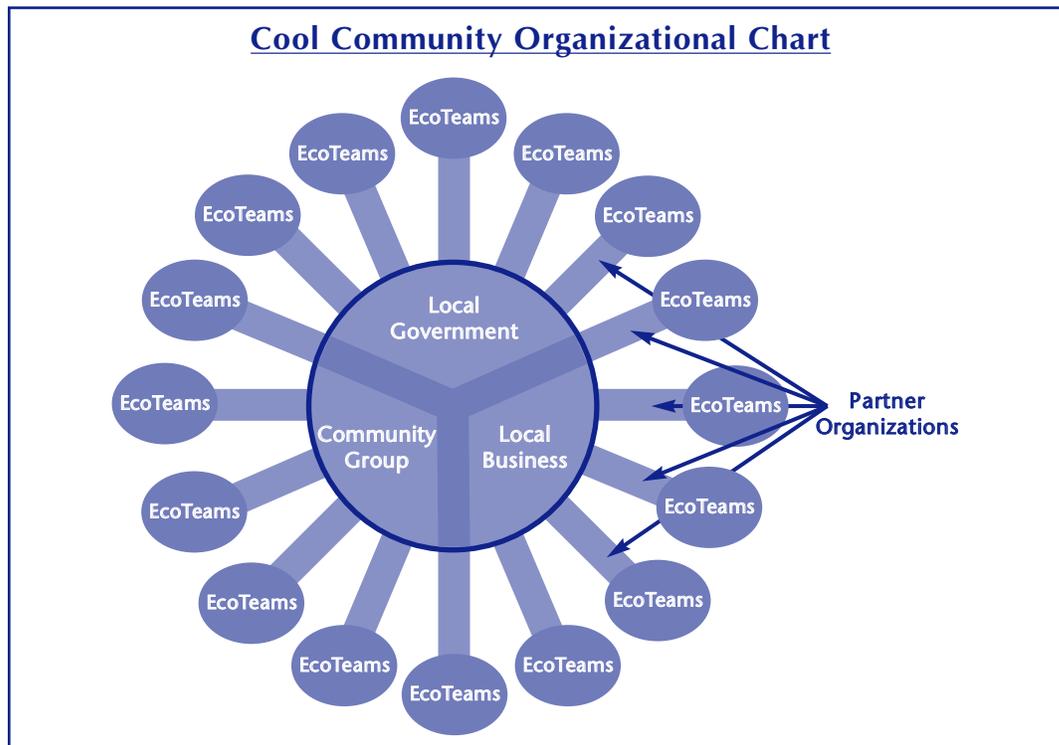
### **Organizing Strategy Example**

- ▷ Total population of municipality or region is 100,000.
- ▷ With 2.5 people per household on average, this equates to 40,000 households.
- ▷ The campaign's maximum participation target is 85% or 34,000 households.
- ▷ With an average of eight households per EcoTeam, 85% of the households represents 4,250 EcoTeams.
- ▷ To achieve this number requires the participation of approximately 85 local campaign partners with each committing to form 50 EcoTeams over two years.

### **Municipality's Role**

- 1) Help campaign management team identify and mobilize partner organizations.
- 2) Mayor or top elected official, with the campaign management team, hosts a community meeting to introduce the campaign and invite partner organizations to participate.

- 3) Municipality actively engages in the campaign through the participation of elected officials on "Turbo Teams" and serves as one of the partner organizations engaging employees.
- 4) Municipal website is used as one of the feedback hubs of community progress toward campaign goals.
- 5) Municipality provides recognition for accomplishments of partner organizations.



### Cool Community Capacity-Building Training Objectives

- Learn the campaign design and change architecture including goals, implementation strategy, social diffusion process, and feedback structure.
- Integrate the campaign into existing community-based carbon reduction strategies of policy development, education/outreach, media information campaigns, financial incentives and green products and services.
- Build skills in hosting a global warming café including recruitment of participants, working with different time formats, room design, facilitation of world café process, presentation of *Low Carbon Diet* slide presentation with FAQ, and EcoTeam formation.
- Build skills and learn tools for management of EcoTeams, on-going collection of team carbon reduction results and posting to community website.
- Build skills in empowerment behavior change coaching for supporting EcoTeams in accomplishing their goals.
- Develop a personal, organizational and community vision around participation in the campaign.

- Cultivate opportunities for synergy between organizations to create multiple benefits for participants and the community.
- Organize an implementation support system for partner organizations of buddies, community of practice groups, monthly master classes and web.

### **Empowerment Institute Responsibilities**

- Deliver 2-day capacity building training for partner organizations.
- Provide 12 monthly 1-hour master classes, via conference call, for partner organizations focusing on program implementation and best practice exchange.
- Provide 12 hours of consultation to campaign management team.

### **Campaign Manager Responsibilities**

*These responsibilities can be held by one organization or divided amongst several lead partners such as a community group, local government and business. Time required to manage the campaign is estimated to be one FTE.*

- Support local government in creating a community carbon reduction goal, if it does not already exist, and identify residential sector carbon footprint.
- Identify and enroll participants in capacity-building training and arrange logistics.
- Integrate campaign into other community-based carbon reduction initiatives.
- Manage monthly master class agenda, participation of partners and call logistics.
- Support partner organizations through empowerment coaching and the support systems in staying on track with their EcoTeam formation goals.
- Develop Cool Community campaign website for posting of results. This can be expanded to include more functions as desire and resources permit.
- Collect EcoTeam results from partner organizations and post on web-site.
- Manage outreach to the media as part of the enrollment and feedback system.

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