

# Santa Fe's Carbon Offset Project



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## Project Summary

The Climate Change Leadership Institute, Santa Fe Green Chamber of Commerce, Citizens Climate Lobby, New Mexico Energy Smart Academy at the Santa Fe Community College and many other leading entities are together spearheading this local carbon offset project to fund energy efficiency assistance for low income households and do native grass/carbon sink planting throughout Santa Fe County. Teams of citizens and local businesses are being asked to volunteer and contribute to the project as a way to help offset current US per capita emissions of carbon dioxide. Foundations are being asked to make donations including matching contributions from what is raised in the local community. This community service project will achieve many goals at once: save water & energy, empower those in need, beautify the community, reduce our carbon footprint and raise awareness to take care of the environment that sustains us all.

### **Providing Energy Efficiency Assistance for Low Income Households**

This project will directly help empower low income households by supporting targeted, cost effective energy efficiency improvements for mobile home communities that generally rely on high cost propane or electric and are in dire need of support. At a time when federal money for low income energy efficiency is drastically shrinking, there is a huge gap to fill in helping low income families and at the same time advance majorly needed energy efficiency progress. With the dollars raised from this project we will partner with Los Amigos to serve mobile home communities in Santa Fe County by doing leak and air pressure testing, vital ductwork and essential installations including carbon monoxide alarms and low-flow shower heads to help these families keep safe and save money, energy and water at once while reducing their carbon footprint. This is a manageable service as well as a proven way to cost effectively deploy resources to stimulate important conservation gains while helping reduce the high poverty rate.

### **Local Restoration thru Native Grass/Carbon Sink Planting**

Planting native seed grass is an enlivening and low cost way of establishing meaningful carbon sinks that at the same time add to the aesthetics of the community. Native grasses in our Northern New Mexico region need little water and care to take root and once they do the roots run deep which is why they are such an effective carbon sink. A portion of the community contributions and matching funding will go towards acquiring the dry blend variety of native grass seeds at bulk prices. The planting of the seeds will be done as a volunteer component of the project and

the plantings themselves will be done at strategic locations in conjunction with the Community College, County and City of Santa Fe as well as residential communities, participating businesses and other partners. We will undertake this restoration project in collaboration with experts in the field (including Plants of the Southwest, local nurseries including Agua Fria Nursery and permaculture specialists). Together we will properly plant the native grasses at optimal places and times during organized volunteer service~planting days.

### **Project Impacts, Modeling Results & Evaluation**

Santa Fe's Carbon Offset Project has several distinguishing characteristics. First, the project is truly local -- being of the community, for the community and by the community. Second, the project provides a concrete way to address problems - of energy inefficiency, climate change and/or the feeling of powerlessness about these issues - by embracing team-oriented, direct-action based solutions. Third, the project puts a premium on modeling and evaluation. We have forecasted that every mobile home served by the project will save approximately 750 lbs of CO<sub>2</sub>, 37.5 million BTUs of energy and 5,840 gallons of water every year (plus significant savings over the project lifetime and meaningful financial savings by the mobile home owner or tenant). We will provide offset certificates to contributors, and the key project impacts will be measured, verified and shared with the public. Fourth, as shown below, the project is accountable.

#### **Accountability**

The Climate Change Leadership Institute (CCLI) is accountably implementing the Santa Fe Carbon Offset Project purely as a community service endeavor and will not receive fees or apply any surcharges for administering the project. All donations for this project are and will be strictly used for the community service benefits of low income household energy efficiency support and native seed grass planting. All project donations by participating individuals, teams, businesses & foundations are tax deductible because CCLI is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization, and will not provide any goods or services in whole or in part for the contributions.

#### **Publicity**

Sponsors, foundations and other donors contributing to Santa Fe's Carbon Offset Project will be featured on the website, in our project PSAs, in newspaper stories if possible as well as a host of other venues including the opportunity for further level certification with the Santa Fe Green Chamber of Commerce. We will have special events in the Fall including a Sunday Brunch at Vinaigrette and an evening event at the Tesuque Village Market at which we will feature the project sponsors. There also will be - in conjunction with the native grass planting - a community picnic at which we will recognize donors. These series of special events will not only be a chance to thank those who are giving to the project, they will be educational and informative. There will be brief presentations made about this local project, as well as the associated drive for a nationwide carbon fee and dividend, and a presentation on concrete ways to reduce our energy, water & carbon footprint - enabling community members who donate to the project the real opportunity to earn back what they give by taking brighter steps of conservation. The important multi-purpose goal of these events is to express gratitude for the donations made, celebrate teamwork achievements on-going and encourage further strides in sustainability that lie ahead.

For more information: go to Climate Change Leadership Institute (CCLI) // 911 Stagecoach Rd., Santa Fe, NM 87501 // #505-988-3364 // [ccli@takeresponsibility.us](mailto:ccli@takeresponsibility.us) // [www.takeresponsibility.us](http://www.takeresponsibility.us).