

2011 IMPACT REPORT



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Our Model and Vision

The DC Project connects and partners with communities to create places of equal opportunity and environmental balance, securing a sustainable future shared by all.

Building Sustainable Communities through Collective Economic Power

We work with communities to apply their own economic power to advance a new clean energy marketplace—one that is inclusive, reduces harmful pollutants, and expands local prosperity.

One of the key barriers to growth of the clean economy is the behavior of everyday people. Effectively engaged communities that have easy access to clean energy services are critical in unlocking the promise of this new economy.

We take an innovative approach to overcoming this root issue: by empowering citizen leaders as messengers, we help citizens and mission-based organizations to pool their purchasing power toward clean energy services.

This networked project approach makes “going green” more affordable for community stakeholders who otherwise can’t afford it, and also allows participants to ensure that their investment creates community benefits, such as local business development, new job opportunities and direct community investment.



Volunteers with The DC Project prepare for a canvass at Deanwood Community Center in southeast D.C.



Homeowners Weatherize Together Silver Spring, Maryland

In the summer of 2011, The DC Project brought together eight households from one neighborhood to form a collective buying group for weatherization services.

They scheduled their energy assessments and efficiency upgrades together.

They received an average discount of 15 percent before federal and local subsidies.

The DC Project brought together a team of neighborhood volunteers and homeowners to recruit participants and select the partner contractor.

The team was able to recruit additional members as the project progressed.

One hundred percent of the people who committed to weatherize completed the program, a testament to the power of community ties and positive peer pressure to incentivize clean energy investment.

The project was featured in the news in Maryland's *Silver Spring Gazette* in August 2011.

Neighborhoods come together to weatherize, saving money and ensuring equity for workers and their community

When homeowners in a community come together as a group to coordinate their home efficiency improvements, they can save money by receiving a discounted price from their local contractor.

Our Community Weatherization Initiative uses this bundling model to drive consumer demand in the residential energy efficiency market.

Our model helps residents save money on services while reducing carbon emissions and creating good green jobs.

Homeowners organized with their neighbors are more likely to follow through with the process because of group accountability as well as the bulk purchase discounts.

By purchasing as a group, homeowners have more buying power than they would when purchasing individually.

With their collective purchasing power, they have more power to influence the business practices of the contractor that they choose to work with.

They can require, for example, that a business hire employees from target populations, provide a living wage, or subcontract with minority-owned businesses.

The DC Project piloted the model in the summer of 2011 and is now organizing teams across D.C., with goal to have three to five teams by spring 2012.



“In a house this old, weatherization crosses your mind every winter. One of the things that pushed me over the edge to [weatherize] was the job creation dimension... there are a whole lot of people in the world who are hurting.

If you can do something to ameliorate their situation, why wouldn't you?”

-Margaret M.,
Homeowner



The DC Project partners with D.C. Sustainable Energy Utility to weatherize 200 moderate-and low-income homes

This year marked the launch of D.C.'s Sustainable Energy Utility (SEU), a third-party (non-utility) entity established with ratepayer funds to reduce energy consumption, increase renewable energy production, reduce growth in demand for energy, with a focus on low-income housing, and increase green collar jobs.

In its first year, the SEU set a goal to subsidize energy efficiency upgrades for 25 homes in each ward of D.C., for a total of 200 homes. As an SEU partner, The DC Project led the efforts to identify and recruit participants.

In partnership with the Greater Washington Urban League, The DC Project field team successfully recruited 255 homeowners in targeted neighborhoods across the city, surpassing the SEU goal.

The DC Project is now in conversations with the SEU to solidify its continued involvement in the program for 2012 and beyond.

Bringing Energy Efficiency to Vulnerable Communities in D.C.

Washington, D.C.'s Ward 7 faces many challenges, with the poverty rate hovering at 30 percent and an unemployment rate of 16 percent.

In August, our team (pictured above) canvassed the Deanwood neighborhood in Ward 7 to recruit homeowners for low-cost SEU energy efficiency upgrades.

Working with a group of 45 Georgetown University student volunteers, we knocked on 435 doors and recruited 58 people to receive energy efficiency upgrades.

The energy bill savings expected as a result of the upgrades are particularly important for lower income areas, which tend to be disproportionately affected by energy costs.

Above: Students from Georgetown University lead a pre-canvass cheer with members of the Deanwood community.

Purchasing energy together, D.C. community institutions achieve sweeping energy bill savings and generate \$1 million in clean energy investment

Through its Community Energy Initiative, The DC Project organizes the collective buying power of mission-based institutions to save money on electricity bills while also investing in clean energy. The pilot purchase was featured in a Sunday edition of [The New York Times](#).

In 2011, The DC Project focused primarily on houses of worship, as these buildings are often open 24 hours a day. Frequently, congregations run ministries for the homeless, allow community groups to use their buildings or host hostels. As a result, they face significant, often overwhelming energy costs.

By buying together, institutions are able to lock in significantly lower rates than if they purchased their electricity individually.

“These are not the kinds of things that are taught at seminary...how to save money with our energy — it’s innovative and exciting.”

Rev. Dr. Donna Claycomb Sokol, Mount Vernon Place United Methodist Church.
Originally quoted in the *New York Times*.

As a result, participating institutions have more resources to spend on their programming and services for members and the community. They are also provided a structured process for investing in the clean energy economy and community sustainability.

In partnership with Washington Interfaith Network, The DC Project organized nearly 40 institutions in two purchases, saving the groups a total of 12-14 percent (over \$300,000) on their annual energy bills.

Participants also invested nearly \$1 million in renewable energy and energy efficiency initiatives, with two thirds of all participants choosing solar or wind-based clean energy and others making efficiency upgrades. One hundred percent of the green energy purchased through Renewable Energy Credits came from local D.C. sources, ensuring that the purchase benefitted local alternative energy producers.

The DC Project also received revenue from the energy suppliers and purchase participants for its role as an aggregator, which partially offset the costs of organizing the initiative. This revenue, shared with Washington Interfaith Network, will ensure continued investment in assisting community groups to participate in the clean energy economy.



New York Avenue Presbyterian Church, one of many institutions with lower energy bills and a cleaner energy footprint thanks to the Community Energy Initiative.



“We are exploring avenues for conserving energy and consuming energy more efficiently. The sky could be the limit.”

Reverend. Tom Knoll, Pastor at First Trinity Lutheran Church and author of an opinion piece, [“Partnerships Have Benefits,”](#) featured in print and online editions of *The Washington Post*.

Looking forward to 2012

In 2012, we will triple our program impacts, deepening our work on clean energy and energy efficiency in Washington, D.C. while also expanding the application of our model to new communities.

In clean electricity, we will grow our Community Energy Initiative in D.C. and expand to Baltimore and surrounding counties, offering community institutions new opportunities to save money, switch to clean energy, and drive community investment.

We have improved the purchase model to include new opportunities for social impact, like cycling savings into programs supporting disadvantaged communities, increasing our ability to provide deep benefits toward local economic and community development. We'll also continue exploring how collective purchasing can move electricity suppliers to make energy efficiency easier.

Building on our work through WeatherizeDC in energy efficiency, we will develop at least nine new Community Weatherization Initiative groups throughout the D.C. region. These teams will advance positive behavior change while mobilizing hundreds of thousands of dollars in energy efficiency investments in local businesses.

We are also investigating opportunities to facilitate energy efficiency upgrades for nonprofit buildings, focusing on participants in our Community Energy Initiative. We will prioritize efficiency upgrades that make economic sense for community institutions and push towards projects that create high numbers of jobs, include equitable outcomes, and incorporate community-based enterprises.

Finally, The DC Project will improve upon its field leadership role nationally as an advisor on community engagement, collective purchasing, and local benefits in sustainability projects.

Building on past trainings and presentations with over sixty city and state clean energy programs, we will share our tools through video trainings, peer networks, and partnerships with technical assistance providers like the Emerald Cities Collaborative.

While these plans will yield our biggest impact yet, they represent just a piece of what promises to be a historic year for our organization. In January 2012, The DC Project will take on its new identity, Groundswell, revealing a more expansive vision and launching its new website. We look forward to notifying our core supporters in advance of the launch.

At Clinton Global Initiative, The DC Project pledges to achieve national scale



President Bill Clinton and Will Byrne, co-founder and executive director of The DC Project, shake hands at the CGI America commitment signing in June.

In June 2011, The DC Project had the honor of participating in Clinton Global Initiative America, a first-of-its kind summit focused on restoring economic growth in the United States.

While at CGI America, The DC Project made a public commitment to replicate its model for bottom-up, clean economic transformation across the U.S. under its new name, Groundswell.

The DC Project made this commitment in partnership with Rockefeller Foundation and Rockefeller Brothers Fund.

About Us

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Kendeda Fund
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Rockefeller Foundation
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Emerald Cities Collaborative
Goodwill of Greater Washington
Greater Washington Interfaith Power and Light Jubilee Jobs
Spanish Catholic Center- Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of D.C.
Veterans Green Jobs
Washington Interfaith Network

Support our Work

The DC Project is a 501(c) 3 nonprofit organization committed to creating places of equal opportunity and environmental balance. We invite you to join us in achieving our vision by making a donation in support of our work.

Donate online: www.WeatherizeDC.org
Donate by mail: Please make checks out to "The DC Project" and mail to:

The DC Project
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All donations are tax-deductible.



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