

2025



ANNUAL REPORT



STRATEGIC PLANNING

We kicked off 2025 with two days of Strategic Planning facilitated by UAFS Center for Economic Development (CED) staff. This in-depth working conversation brought together Climate League Board Members, staff, and community friends. We confirmed values, updated vision and mission and set out goals and strategies. Grants from the Western Arkansas Community Foundation and the CED helped make this possible.



OUR MISSION

Our mission is for all Arkansans to live in a healthy sustainable environment.

OUR VISION

Our vision is to collaboratively achieve energy security and an equitable clean energy transition in Arkansas.

OUR BOARD

Jo Elsen – Chair

Fort Smith, AR

Herbert McGill – Vice Chair

Fort Smith, AR

Robert McAfee – Co-Treasurer

Hackett, AR

Keaton Smith – Co-Treasurer

Fayetteville, AR

Shelley Buonaiuto – Secretary

Fayetteville, AR

Chris McNamara – Chair

Emeritus Fayetteville, AR

Chris Balos – Director

Springdale, AR

Diana Casteel – Director

Douglasville, TX

Fay Knox – Director

Deer, AR

Paulette Ann Meikle – Director

Fort Smith, AR

Isaac Salazar – Director

Fort Smith, AR

A Note from our Board Chair

“I wish you could see the amount of community engagement and gratitude that inspires us every day.” - Jo Elsen

What a year! 2025 brought change and challenges, sometimes discouraging, sometimes overwhelming, but our dedicated and talented team persevered and created solutions. I am grateful for the resilience, persistence and dedication of everyone involved with the Climate League - board members, program volunteers, donors, and our staff. I am proud of what we accomplished together.

Our Resource Center’s engagement metrics and the accumulating emission reductions rendered by our Innovation Prize solar installations reflect the lives touched and community impact of our work. The collaborative work going on in the Antioch Community Garden - like a vine that sleeps, then creeps, then leaps into growth - has gotten neighbors out talking with neighbors and has this outdoor classroom flourishing. Our 2025 efforts, outlined in this Annual Report, give hope for 2026. We have exciting, impactful projects planned. New volunteers are already joining in. Our team is fully committed to pursuing energy equity and environmental justice.



OUR STAFF

“Small but mighty”

... that’s what some call us. Our accomplishments are made possible by our dedicated volunteers, board members and staff. **Interested in getting involved?**

Msg. Jan Schaper at janwiththeleague@gmail.com



Jan Schaper
Administrator



Tara McDaniel
Assistant Administrator



Herbert McGill
Outreach Director



Jerminic Knauls
Programs Representative

OUR VOLUNTEERS

helped make these events possible:

- *Spring Egg Charge
- *July Come Cool Off
- *Cheesecake Party
- *Darby Community Connections Fair
- *Autumn Vibes Garden Party



PROGRAM AREAS

In 2025, Climate League staff and volunteers focused on four areas to improve the lives of Arkansans:

- Workforce Development
- Our Resource Center
- Outreach & Education
- Participation in the Antioch for Youth and Family Community Garden Project



58 staff hours

were invested in **Workforce Development**. In support of our Energy Innovation Prize partner, the Arkansas Advanced Energy Foundation, we did background research for AAEF's October SkillSync Employer Forum, which was co-hosted by the City of Fort Smith. Our staff developed a contact database which was used to connect companies in Fort Smith and adjacent Arkansas and Oklahoma Counties with the unique opportunity to participate in the SkillSync event. The initiative works closely with the City of Fort Smith and Metroplan to foster regional economic growth. Focus areas included advanced energy sector, including training, recruitment, and career development.

OUTREACH AND EDUCATION

We love showing up in the community - listening to individual and organizational priorities, making helpful connections and sharing our enthusiasm for clean energy and energy efficiency. Again in 2025, our solar-powered phone charging station prompted conversations. We also brought our kites to the annual Darby Middle School Community Connections Fair. What better way for young folks to experience wind power. Our Autumn Vibes Community Garden Party brought together neighbors, garden lovers, and friends of all ages, as well as service non-profits and business sponsors for an informative and fun afternoon.



26 Attended Community Meetings & Events

5 Hosted Events including

20 Collaborations with other organizations

& approx **700** Attendees

New Community Connections made in **34** Arkansas

OUR RESOURCE CENTER

We've built a steady, trusted presence. Climate League Assistant Administrator, Tara McDaniel, and Program Representative, Jerminic Knauls, operate our Resource Center office, located within the Elizabeth McGill Drop-In Center in Fort Smith. Local residents visit the Center M, W, & F for 1:1 help with utility and energy bill assistance applications and pick up DIY weatherization supplies. Staff also regularly visit the Antioch for Youth and Family Food Bank to handout information about vital resources, like printed applications for the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program.

Sneak Peek: In 2026, thanks to a grant from the Western Arkansas Community Foundation, we will be opening a DIY Home Weatherization Materials Bank and Tool Lending Library within our Resource Center.



"I am so blessed. I was so impressed to even get a call over the weekend to give me information - I sure didn't fall between the cracks." - Loreen age 70 on her interaction with our staff.

81 instances of application assistance

**FREE DIY
Weatherization
Supplies Distributed** **208**

558
engagements between
community and our Program
Representative

COMMUNITY GARDEN ACTIVITIES



Sneak Peek: In 2026, thanks to an anonymous donor, we'll be adding a three bin compost system to the garden - perfect for building soil and engaging local students.

“This intergenerational space nourishes the body and feeds the mind.” - Herbert McGill, Climate League Outreach Director

In 2025, we went all out in the Anitoch for Youth and Family Community Garden. An Arkansas Interfaith Power and Light grant funded 10 raised beds and a pollinator garden, which overflowed with flowers and food under the care of Climate League Outreach Director Herbert McGill as well as student and adult volunteers.

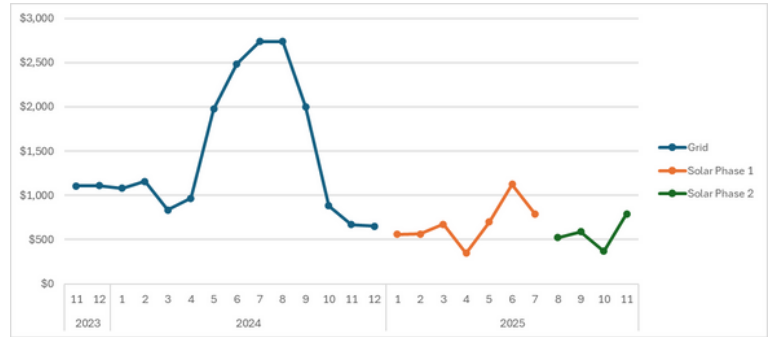
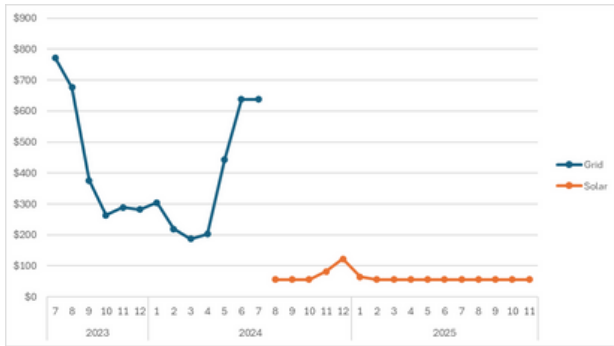
A Spring Egg Charge collaboration brought hundreds of students from Howard Elementary out for hands-on experience with solar energy and garden veggies.

Sneak Peek: In 2026, we'll be working with Solar Under the Sun to add a small solar system to the garden for phone charging and the like.



CEIP IMPACT UPDATE

In 2023-2024, three Community Energy Innovation Prize (CEIP) awards were granted to the Arkansas Climate League. With that funding, solar arrays were installed on two Fort Smith nonprofits, Antioch for Youth and Family and the Elizabeth McGill Drop-In Center. Here are our current results of their impact using Energy Star Portfolio Manager to collect the data.



Elizabeth McGill Drop-In Center
 Installation at the facility was completed by Stitt Solar in August of 2024.
\$3,746.97 first full year of savings!

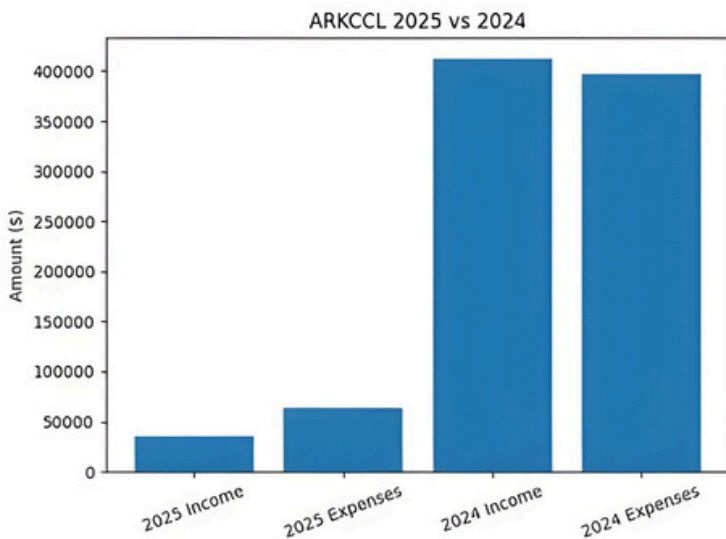
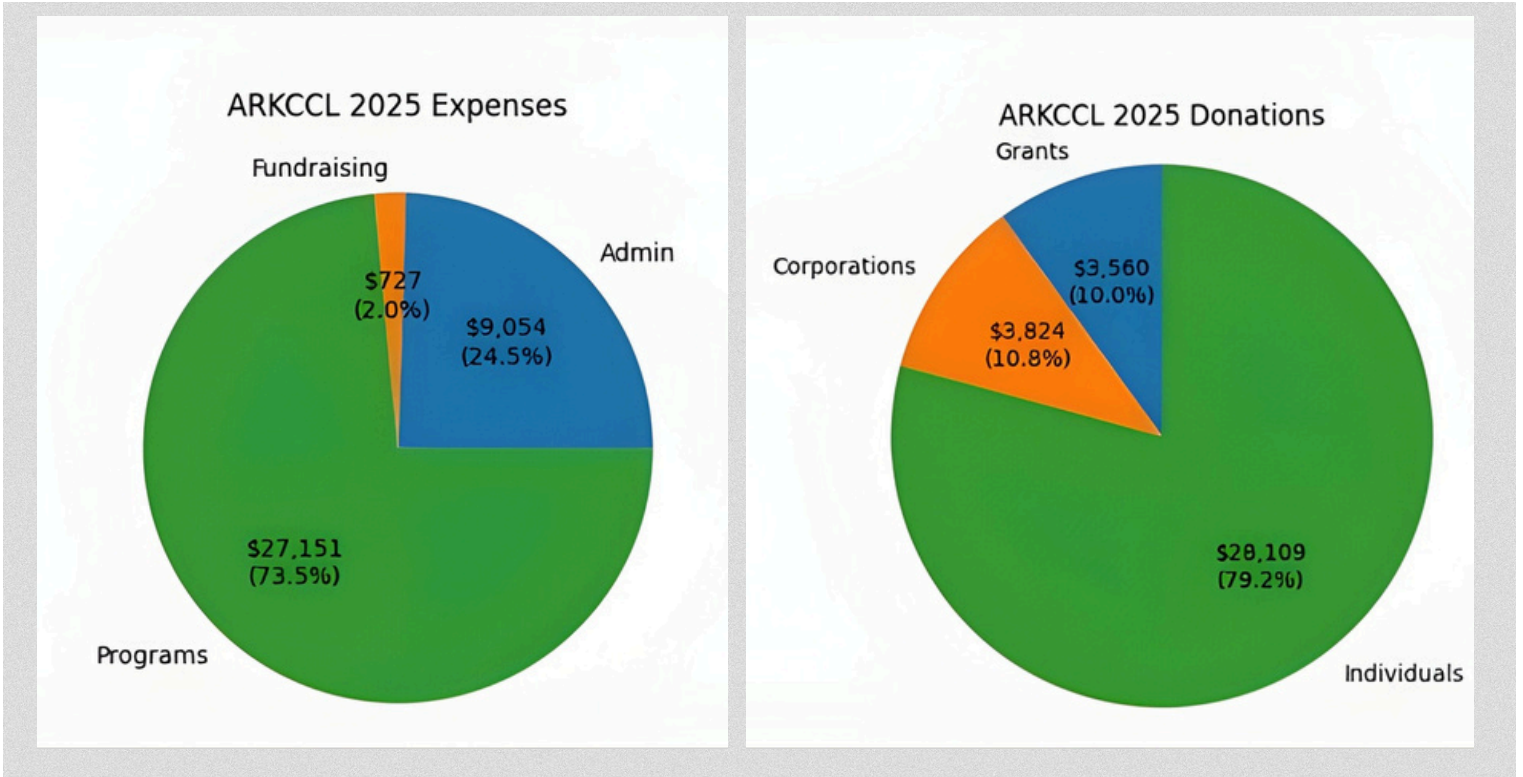
Antioch for Youth and Family
 The Antioch installation was completed in two phases, starting in Dec. 2024, finishing in Feb. 2025. The facility has saved **\$10506.85 in the first 11 months**, including Solar Phase 1 and other months including Solar Phase 1 & 2 installations in use. More data on savings is anticipated in 2026.



ANTIOCH 42.2%
MCGILL 100%
 REDUCTION IN GHG
 EMISSIONS INTENSITY*

*BASED ON ENERGY STAR PORTFOLIO MANAGER DATA AFTER INSTALLATIONS

ANNUAL FINANCES



The significant year over year difference in income and expenses between 2024 and 2025 is due to The Climate League’s People Power Team securing three rounds of Dept of Energy Community Energy Innovation Prize Funds in 2024 and putting these funds in the McGill Center and Antioch solar systems.

THANK YOU 2025 SUPPORTERS

Together, We Are Improving Lives

Anonymous
 Anonymous
 Anonymous
 Anonymous
 Anonymous
 Anonymous
 Mary Adams
 Dick Bennett
 Shelley Buonaiuto
 Michael Cooper
 Jo Elsen
 Shannon Farhat
 Carol Florida
 Lori Garvey
 Andre Good
 Hannah Goynes
 Kathy Jarvis
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AR Vein Clinic & Skin Care
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 Denali Water Solutions
 Fort Smith Glass Pick Up
 The Stitt Group
 Yogaterrium

Arkansas Community
 Foundation
 Keep Fort Smith Beautiful
 Western Arkansas Community
 Foundation

In-Kind Donations

Al the One-Man Band
 Hiland Dairy
 John Stem
 John Ware
 Pine Ridge Gardens
 Sebastian County Conservation
 District

STAY CONNECTED IN 2026



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Platinum
Transparency
2026

Candid.