
ANNUAL REPORT



2024

OUR VISION

“We want all Arkansans to benefit from the green energy transition.”

OUR PURPOSE

The Arkansas Climate League improves lives. With programming focused primarily in Fort Smith, Arkansas, our team is dedicated to making sure low-income families and neighborhoods are included in the green energy transition. Collaboration and sensitivity to overlapping needs like energy, food and health security are the heart of our work. We show up, listen, build relationships and partner to take action.



OUR BOARD

Chair

Jo Elsken Fort Smith, AR

Co-Treasurers

Robert McAfee – Hackett, AR

Keaton Smith – Fayetteville, AR

Secretary

Shelley Buonaituro – Fayetteville, AR

Directors

Chris Balos – Springdale, AR

Diana Casteel – Douglasville, TX

Fay Knox – Deer, AR

Herbert McGill – Fort Smith, AR

Paulette Ann Meikle – Fort Smith, AR

Isaac Salazar – Fort Smith, AR

Chair Emeritus

Chris McNamara – Fayetteville, AR



A SHOUT OUT!

“Our dedicated board members played a critical role in shaping and realizing our 2024 successes. Here’s just some of what they did!

- *Leading grant writing.*
- *Securing donations.*
- *Staffing our resource table at community events like Juneteenth.*
- *Managing solar contracts.*
- *Traveling for Innovation Prize events.*
- *Giving presentations.*
- *Networking at meetings such as the River Valley Non-Profits pictured above.”*

-Jan Schaper, Arkansas Climate League Administrator



A LETTER FROM OUR BOARD CHAIR, JO ELSKÉN

Reflecting on 2024 fills me with pride and hope. It was a year of extraordinary challenges and successes. The accomplishments recorded here were achieved by a team that is blessed with complementary skills and resources and, regardless of the commitment required, said “Yes” to every challenge! The image that comes to my mind is the literal creation of a watershed: the confluence of many beautifully unique streams reinforcing each other to nourish healthy growth. The metrics support that it was a watershed year made possible by the confluence of all of our unique skills coming together, complementing each other, and creating successes.

2024 felt successful. Everything we had been doing in 2023 was amplified in 2024: more events, more speaking invitations, more volunteers, more staff, more publicity, more funding, and most importantly- more established relationships with area residents.

I feel blessed to be part of the League’s long legacy of environmental work. From our staff to volunteers to donors, I’m amazed at the deep commitment to energy equity and environmental justice.

I look forward to our two-day strategic planning in March and to further building up our organizational resilience and effectiveness. Thank you for all your nourishing encouragement, advice, and support.

OUR STAFF

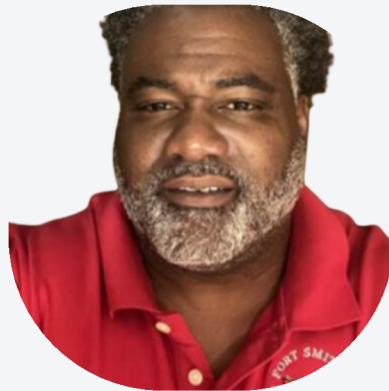
Donor generosity and three rounds of Community Energy Innovation Prize wins grew our contractor and on-call team. We enter 2025 with 43 hours of weekly staff time. Our small, collaborative team dreams big and gets things done.



Jan Schaper
Administrator



Tara McDaniel
Assistant
Administrator



Herbert McGill
Outreach
Director



Robin McCray
Social Media
Manager



Jerminic Knauls
Resource Center
Manager



Jose VillaNueva
Translator and
Event Assistant

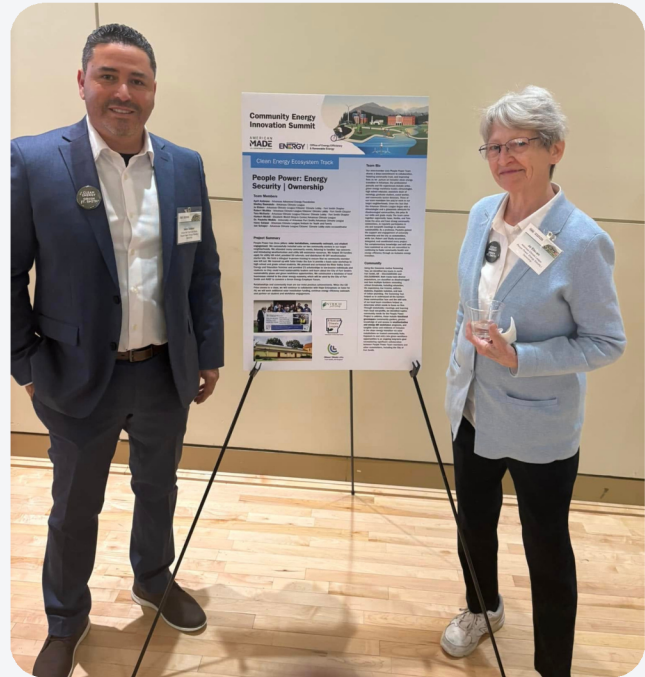


Martha Corona-Orozco
Translator and
Event Assistant

2024 PEOPLE POWER

DOE Community Energy Innovation Prize: The Arkansas Climate League's People Power Team won three Prize rounds, earning **\$360,000 to increase Energy Security and Ownership.** We focused in two low-income Fort Smith neighborhoods, investing in community education, student engagement, and solar installations at the McGill Center and Antioch for Youth and Family, all of which built green energy interest and excitement!

Isaac Salazar and Jo Elsken at Final Prize Competition 12/24.



People Power Team:
Arkansas Climate League:
 Jo Elsken, Robert McAfee,
 Jan Schaper, Shelley
 Buonaiuto
**Antioch for Youth and
 Family:** Isaac Salazar
**Arkansas Advanced Energy
 Foundation:** April Ambrose
CCL Fort Smith: Tara
 McDaniel
McGill Center: Herbert McGill
UAFS: Dr. Paulette Meikle

**The Elizabeth McGill Drop-In Center Is
 Saving \$550/month On Utility Bills!!**



2024 ENERGY EFFICIENCY

Direct Impact: Our staff and volunteers participated in nineteen grassroots events in 2024. Whether we were talking with folks at Cinco de Mayo, celebrating the opening of our Resource Center housed in the Elizabeth McGill Center or co-hosting a community dinner/workshop, we always found folks eager to make their homes more energy efficient and tackle high utility bills. Families from as far as Van Buren lined up for our July Utility Bill Assistance event at Antioch. Thanks to the generosity of donors and ACE Hardware in Fort Smith in 2024 we were able to distribute over 30 DIY home energy efficiency starter kits and provide training on how to use them.



“My family and I were invited to attend a weatherization demonstration from Arkansas Climate League this past week. Every staff member there was so helpful explaining, their products [in the weatherization kits] and how to help families save money.”
 –Lisa, Fort Smith



2024 COMMUNITY GARDEN

Building Community at the Confluence of Food & Energy Insecurity: We jumped at the opportunity to collaboratively initiate the regeneration of Antioch for Youth and Family's Charolette Tidwell Community Garden.

Here are some highlights:

- Partnered with Future School Students to Improve soil & get planting.
- Co-hosted a spring neighborhood picnic and resource fair.
- Arranged for Solar Under the Sun volunteers to provide a solar demo to Future School students (our future green energy professionals!). Thanks Chris and Ruthie McRae!
- Threw an amazing community BBQ (with veggie options) for our Annual Autumn Vibes fundraiser.



2024 PRESENTATIONS, WORKSHOPS, SUMMITS



We had a great reception at AEEA. Our community-centered message highlighted a different way to engage people in solutions for the environment. We had folks follow up with us! - Jo Elsken, Board Chair

Promoting Green Energy and Telling our Story: Again in 2024 we partnered with other climate/environmental groups to deliver the Annual Arkansas Environmental Policy Summit. We also co-planned the River Valley Green Energy and Education Workshop, including providing **23 scholarships** to students and low-income community residents so that they could be included in the green energy transition updates from city officials (Fort Smith's Joshua Robertson above) and industry leaders. We also took our grassroots story on the road, sharing our best practices at the Arkansas Environmental Education Association Conference in Conway and the Citizens' Climate Lobby Third Coast Regional Conference in Galveston, Texas.

BY THE NUMBERS



361

attendants at our Fort Smith community events

19

community events attended

23

solar panels installed

RV-GEEP scholar-ships

local meetings attended

187

30

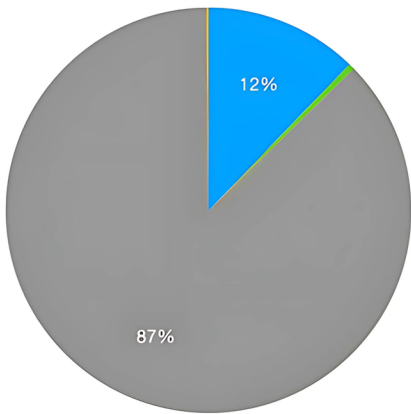
Our Resource Center opened to help families access utility and weatherization assistance. The office answered **50 calls** and **30 drop-ins** requesting help with applications. **Thirty-five** low-income families received **free weatherization kits**.



FINANCES

2024 Financials

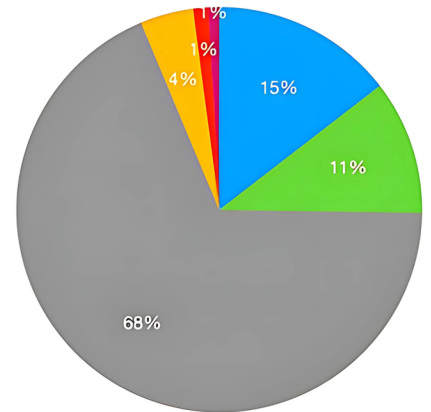
INCOME 2024



● Donation ● Grant Income ● Innovative Prize ● Interest Earned

INCOME	
Donation	\$50,431.00
Grant Income	\$2,000.00
Innovative Prize	\$360,000.00
Interest Earned	\$591.90
TOTAL INCOME	\$413,022.90
EXPENSES	
Contractors	\$27,699.00
Admin & Supplies	\$20,431.39
Solar Panels	130,650.00
Travel & Lodging	8,040.50
Community Garden	2,285.22
Weatherization	1,674.13
TOTAL EXPENSES	190,780.24
LIABILITIES (Solar Installation Completion)	132,650.00
MONEY LEFT OVER	\$88,592.24

EXPENSES 2024



● Contractors ● Admin & Supplies ● Solar Panels
● Travel & Lodging ● Community Garden ● Weatherization

Winnings from three rounds of the Community Energy Innovation Prize are the most eye catching on our 2024 financials. Equally significant to us is something not visible on the surface; that being an increase in individual donors to 53, as well as a 17% year over year increase in donor retention compared to 2022.

total donations made
193

10 recurring monthly donors
53 individual donors

\$250 average donation

\$48,000 in donations

THANK YOU 2024 DONORS

Anonymous	Fay Knox	Jimmie & Becky	Circle of Friends
Anonymous	Rev. Steven &	Neighbors	First Horizon
Anonymous	Jennifer Kurtz	Marti Olson	Foundation
Dick Bennet	Dr. John & Leah	Cissy & Carl Rose	St. Scholastica
Shelley	Lane	Jan Schaper	Monestary
Buonaiuto	Jean L. Larson	Sherry Sims	Tractor Supply-
Kellie Cobb	Kim Lovely	Bruce & Jan	Russellville
Michael Cooper	Madeline	Singleton	Stitt Group
Jo Anne Elsen	Marquette	Doug Skokos	Yogaterrium Inc
Clifton Fleming	Robert McAfee	Keaton Smith	
Carol Florida	Earl McAfee	Liz Smith	
Jessica Fulbright	Tara McDaniel	Norma Smith	
James Giltz	Carol McKee	Steven Smith	
André Good	Chris McNamara	Sophia Stevenson	
Vallie M. Graff	Ruthie McRae	Karen Takemoto	
Terri Hargrove	Ronald Morgan	Melissa Woodall	
Tim Hearn	Bonnie & Rick		
Kathy Jarvis	Murphy		



The League links myself and my students to the community and allows us to learn, serve, and apply our academic knowledge to the lived experiences of our community members.”- Marian Azab, UAFS Assistant Professor & Climate League Volunteer



Brighten your 2025 and ours!! Learn more about volunteering with the Arkansas Climate League and/or follow us on social media. Scan the QR Code, visit our website or find us on Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn or TikTok. www.arkccl.org