

## *Stimulus Grows Green Jobs*

The ever changing economic climate has created a unique position for Community Resource Project, Inc. (CRP). In a time when job losses continue to rise, expansion envelopes the horizon line for organizations that promote renewable energy and efficiency. In January of 2009 CRP hired 18 new employees in order to successfully serve the growing number of income-qualified Tri-county residents in need of nutrition, energy assistance and educational support.

Much of the increase to energy efficiency programs can be attributed to the new Obama administration.. President Obama has staunchly stated that he wants to double renewable energy production within the next three years. Currently there is an average 243,000 homes weatherized annually. If President Obama's plan succeeds this would equate to 2 millions homes in 2009. Additionally, rising fuel and food prices, a rapid and steadily increasing unemployment rate, and dropping wages have pushed our elected officials in Washington fund programs at a level that would allow non-profit organizations such as CRP to meet the needs presented by its community. As a result, CRP's energy programs, such as Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP), Energy Crisis Intervention Program (ECIP) and Weatherization, are working overtime to fill the gap. Like in many places around the country, high unemployment rates in CRP's service area are increasing demand for our programs. In January 2009 Sacramento county reported an unemployment rate of 8.7%, Yuba county is facing a 14.4% rate and Sutter county reported an astounding 15.3% unemployment rate. This does not include the 20,000 layoff notices for State jobs that were sent out starting February 17.

The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 allocated \$11 billion for green energy sector jobs. Part of the above funding are energy efficiency programs targeting the low-income community, such as Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) and the Department of Energy's Weatherization program. As a result of the stimulus package passed in September 2008 CRP's LIHEAP grant increased by \$2.3 million. Furthermore, due to the passage of the new package in February 09 we anticipate an additional \$2 million. This translates to an operating budget of at least \$10 million which CRP is using to purchase more materials in which to weatherize more homes and hire additional call center staff, to expand the number of HEAP participants.

Green jobs are opening up and will continue to make up a large percentage of new jobs in the coming years. According to the *Green Jobs Report*, a study done by the American Solar Energy Society and Management Information Services, Inc., energy efficiency and renewable energy will create up to 37 million jobs by 2030. Included in the list of hot green jobs are electricians, mechanical engineers, welders, truck drivers, construction managers, environmental scientists, accountants and energy audit specialists. CRP maintains its own crew of 15 construction employees who specialize in installation of anything from dual paned windows to fireplace inserts. Notably, jobs in the energy efficiency industry cannot be outsourced away from the United States and this fact puts CRP on the map when it comes to job creation.

In January 2009, CRP hired seven Eligibility Technicians for HEAP, two Outreach Technicians, two Weatherization specialists and seven more employees for billing, scheduling and administration. They were also able to purchase five new vehicles and signed an additional lease to house Weatherization supplies and operations. This expansion fills a need for clients that continue to qualify for help as well as for first time clients finding themselves out of work perhaps for the first time in their lives. New staff is hired with unique language skills and are sensitive to the fear and ambiguity many new clients may have regarding public assistance. Employees come from diverse backgrounds, representing the communities they serve. CRP has become a watering hole that serves all of the Sacramento communities

Sources:

Neal Lurie, "ASES Green Collar Jobs report forecasts 37 million jobs from renewable energy by 2030", [www.ases.org/greenjobs](http://www.ases.org/greenjobs), 1/15/09

Labor Force Statistics are extracted from the California Employment Development Department

**ASES Green Collar Jobs report forecasts 37 million jobs from renewable energy by 2030**