

# 2023 ANNUAL REPORT



**Mission:** Championing high-impact, regional climate solutions by bringing together community expertise, creativity, & resources.

**Vision:** A Vibrant, Just, & Climate-Resilient Central Coast

**Values:** High-Impact Solutions, Environmental Justice, & Economic Vitality



# Messages from...

2023 has been a remarkable year for SLO Climate Coalition, expanding our service and impact reducing climate pollution and increasing community resilience across SLO County. In July, we emerged from fiscal sponsorship as an independent 501(c)3 non-profit organization. This important evolution will increase access to opportunities to further support our service to the community. Notably, SLO County and the City of Atascadero voted to join Central Coast Community Energy, completing two decades of community organizing to create a locally controlled clean energy utility for all SLO County residents and businesses. On behalf of SLO Climate Coalition's Board of Directors, staff, and volunteers, I encourage you to engage with us on our mission to make SLO County carbonfree by 2025.



Eric Veium  
Board Chair



Laura Albers  
Executive  
Director

It was with great honor that I accepted the role of executive director this summer. 2023 was filled with growth, activity, and expansion. As the program director for Resilient SLO, I thrived being part of an organization fueled by so many smart, compassionate, and generous people. They step up in support of the priceless work we are doing for our climate, and in support of our community at large. Whether you are someone already woven into the fabric of who we are, or are just now discovering us, you are why I am here. Together - and only together - we **will** make things better for future generations.

# 2023 Summary

In 2023, SLO Climate Coalition prepared for becoming an official 501(c)(3) nonprofit in 2024 which will open the door for organizational growth and accelerated positive climate and community impact. In that effort, three key people were drafted to be the first board members, and recruitment of additional board members who could oversee crucial elements of the new nonprofit began. SLO Climate Coalition's efforts to professionalize the organization, level up marketing and communications, and increase the impact of our existing programs in support of our common goal to reach carbon neutrality by 2035 were expanded. Funds were obtained to hire personnel to assure that we could achieve our goals, and we actively recruited expert volunteers to lead key coalition development positions. Our collaboration with other organizations and local colleges has increased our outreach dramatically, which included launching into our second year with the College Corps Fellowship program with Cal Poly and Cuesta College. Our organizational strategic plan drafted last year provided guidelines and measurements that further focused efforts to grow and professionalize our programs and organization.

Keeping the following vision, mission, core values, and principles front and center, our robust leadership team and program managers expanded our partnerships, funding, and program impacts.



@sloclimatecoalition



@sloclimatecoalition



@carbonfreeslo



# Vision, Mission, Values

## Vision

A vibrant, just, and climate-resilient Central Coast.

## Mission

SLO Climate Coalition brings together community expertise, creativity, and resources to champion high impact regional climate solutions that inspire other communities to do the same.

## Core Values

Our commitments are reflected in our core values.

1. **Environmental Justice:** We focus on solutions that will support and empower those disproportionately impacted by the climate crisis. We are committed to everyone having a seat at the table and collectively building a community-driven response to our most pressing climate issues.
2. **High Impact Solutions:** We prioritize solutions that will have the biggest positive impact on the climate crisis. The solutions we advance will dramatically increase our region's decarbonization, resilience, equity, and economic vitality. This will look like a future powered by carbon free energy; healthier, resilient, and more affordable homes; electrified transportation and people-centric communities; natural spaces and technologies that store carbon; and a circular economy that creates zero waste.
3. **Economic Vitality:** Economic vitality requires stability. Pitting jobs against a stable climate is a false argument. In fact, we believe addressing the climate crisis is the greatest wealth creation opportunity of our time. We are committed to partnering with business to innovate, develop career opportunities, and increase profits while becoming a socially just and climate-resilient Central Coast.

# Impact in 2023

**3,858** people talking with us about climate change

**1**

501(c)(3)  
incorporation



**2**

Drive Electric  
events

**60**

EV test drives

**1**

City Captain  
Award



**142**

climate actions  
committed to

**5**

presentations on  
climate actions

**3**

webinars



**25**

tabling  
events

**18**

resiliency  
workshops

**24**

SLOCC-  
hosted events

**2,028**



new email  
subscribers



**70+**

College  
Corps Fellows

**20**

campus  
club  
events



# Our Community-Developed Programs

## Resilient SLO

**Program Leadership:** Laura Albers

Resilient SLO is a grassroots program of SLO Climate Coalition, dedicated to building greater social equity, a healthier environment, and developing sustainable neighborhoods. Its mission is to guide citizens through actions they can take to reduce emissions that cause climate change. Together with our friends, neighbors, and co-workers, we can help create a cleaner, healthier future, save money, and reduce our impact on the environment. Actions are simple everyday things that everyone can do!

### **Accomplishments**

Fueled by the growth of the program in 2022, as well as another 70+ College Corps Fellows for the 2023-24 school year, SLO Climate Coalition succeeded in engaging people throughout the county in taking everyday climate actions. Through workshops, events, tabling opportunities, and presentations, our Resilient SLO team and College Corps Fellows championed climate actions every week. Thanks to the innovative, creative energy of our young Fellows, we also added some new events, such as an Upcycling Competition, EcoCrafting Workshops, and installation of community gardens. We also started on campus SLO Climate Coalition clubs at both Cal Poly and Cuesta College. Led by our College Corps Fellows, these clubs create a bridge between SLO Climate Coalition's mission and the energetic young adults searching for opportunities to make a difference in our fight against climate change.

### **Key Performance Indicators**

- 3,858 - # of people we spoke to about everyday climate actions
- 142 - # of climate actions committed to by SLO County residents
- 25 - # of tabling events
- 20 - # of college SLO Climate Coalition Club events
- 18 - # of Resiliency Workshops
- 12 - # of Resilient SLO hosted events
- 5 - # of presentations made to other groups/organizations

# Our Community-Developed Programs

## Uniting the Central Coast for Action

**Program Leadership:** John Smigelski and Eric Veium

Uniting the Central Coast for Action is a program of SLO Climate Coalition, working in partnership with Romero Institute's Let's Green CA initiative. Uniting the Central Coast for Action is working to create a resounding voice calling for regional and state-level climate leadership by activating, connecting, and coordinating Central Coast communities, organizations, and citizens around common purpose and action.

### **Accomplishments**

Uniting the Central Coast for Action has been successfully hosting webinars on energy topics with some of the leading voices in the industry to educate community stakeholders, elected officials and staff, including Central Coast Community Energy board members. One webinar, "Shining a Spotlight on Central Coast Climate Action Plans," included presentations from Santa Cruz County, City of Santa Barbara, Santa Barbara County, and the Cities of San Luis Obispo and Watsonville. It highlighted features of their approaches to Climate Action Plans. The next webinar, "How CCA's are addressing Rooftop Solar," presented the results of research performed by Cal Poly College Corps Fellows who researched the policy and programs of 12 CCAs across the state. The findings identified the CCAs most favorable to customer sited solar (Peninsula Clean Energy and others) and the least favorable (Central Coast Community Energy). The third webinar was "The future is here. Electrifying School buses with V2G(Vehicle to Grid)." This webinar brought together Nuvee - BiDirectional charging technology, Blue Bird - EV bus manufacturer, and Orange County School District to provide a 360 view of utilizing electric school buses and their ability to load shift and provide resiliency.

Webinar attendance varied from 60 to over 100. All registrants received a copy of the webinar recording which doubles the potential viewers.

[Webinar #9:](#) Shining a Spotlight on Central Coast Climate Action Plans

[Webinar #10:](#) How are Community Choice Agencies addressing rooftop solar?

[Webinar #11:](#) THE FUTURE IS HERE! Electrifying School Bus Fleets with V2G

# Our Community-Developed Programs

## Green Transportation

**Program Leadership:** Barry Rands

The Green Transportation team promotes and advocates for all modes of carbon-free transportation for those who work or live in San Luis Obispo.

### Accomplishments

The team staged two events to further our effort:

1. Drive Electric Week SLO: This is part of National Drive Electric Week (NDEW), a nationwide effort to raise awareness of the many benefits of all-electric transportation. 2023 was the sixth year that SLO Climate Coalition hosted the event in San Luis Obispo. We expanded the EV showcase at Farmers Market to include an Electrify Your Life Expo in the Library before Farmers Market. Our "EV Ride & Drive" event was held again at Prefumo Creek Commons behind Dick's Sporting Goods. Hundreds attended these events and over 30 test drives were taken.
2. Drive Electric Earth Day (DEED): As part of SLO's Earth Day Fair, DEED showcased a variety of electric cars and bikes, facilitated interaction between EV owners and attendees, offered test drives and rides, and provided information about EVs and financial assistance for driving electric. Approximately 300 attendees passed through the DEED area and more than 30 people took test drives.

National Drive Electric Week and Drive Electric Earth Day events were funded by grants from Electrify America, SLO APCD, and Central Coast Clean Cities Coalition (C5) and collaboratively organized and staged with local and regional partners including C5, SLO APCD, Community Environmental Council, SLOCOG, Earth Day Alliance, City of SLO, CCCE, 3CREN, Sierra Club, ECOSLO, Madonna Enterprises, Alfano Motors, and Ecologistics. Community leaders who spoke at the events included meteorologist John Lindsey, and city council member Michelle Shoresman.

Green Transportation Team leader, Barry Rands, was recognized for his efforts in promoting Drive Electric events in San Luis Obispo by Plug In America, presenting him with the City Captain Award at its 2023 Drive Electric Awards ceremony in November.

# Our Community-Developed Programs

## Better Buildings SLO

**Program Leadership:** Eric Veium

Still in its early stages of development, SLO Climate Coalition recognizes the importance of healthy, low carbon homes and is actively exploring community needs and opportunities to support the difficult work of existing building decarbonization.

### Accomplishments

In order to continue developing this program to support home energy efficiency and electrification, paid staff and other funding resources are necessary. Several large grants were applied for including a \$300k CA Air Resources Board (CARB) Community Air Grant that we have been awarded. This grant will fund, over a period of two years, the development and operation of a home electrification navigation service that will assist homeowners through the challenging process of replacing their fossil fuel powered appliances with clean efficient electric appliances.

Following is the grant's project description:

SLO Climate Coalition will develop and implement eHomeAssist, a healthy home visits and concierge program to improve air quality for low and moderate income homeowners and renters in San Luis Obispo County, using a three-tiered approach.

- **Tier 1:** outreach to 2,500 households to guide them towards suitable pollution reductions. Expectation: up to 1,250 households using ResilientSLO.org for personalized climate action and disaster preparedness resources.
- **Tier 2:** 250 households will be selected for healthy home visits, supported by College Corps Fellows. Homes will be assessed for potential upgrades like weatherization, gas-to-electric appliance replacements, electric vehicles, and solar and battery installations.
- **Tier 3:** 200 homes will receive customized support through our eHomeAssist service, guiding them through the rebate process, managing contractors, and completing renovations.

The goal is to complete 200 projects, utilizing approximately \$2,000,000 in rebates and incentives (about \$10,000 per household). The program will employ 80 College Corps Fellows over two years, providing outreach, professional skills, and job training. Funded by various rebates, grants, and incentives, these projects will create high-quality local jobs and result in healthier, more comfortable homes for participating low-income households, along with reduced utility bills and project cost coverage.

# Internal Development

## Human Resources

**Program Leadership:** Chris Lopez

Last year, SLO Climate Coalition made meaningful advancements in the continued development of our operations-related departments. After a series of in-depth self-assessment sessions, SLO Climate Coalition identified challenges facing our human resources operations. For our 2024 acquisition program, we will develop and implement a more efficient applicant data tracking system to facilitate reviewing and comparing data to previous months and years. This initiative will also aim to simplify the interview process and create a training program for directors, managers, and supervisors to ensure consistency. Complementary to this, for our 2024 talent development and retention program, we will prioritize the creation and implementation of an employee handbook designed for paid staff, as well as a volunteer handbook tailored for non-paid staff. Following the completion of these handbooks, SLO Climate Coalition will re-evaluate the success of our contract termination/volunteer separation programs to suggest further updates aligned with the organization's changing needs.

### Accomplishments

In 2023, SLO Climate Coalition successfully established two strategic human resource programs tailored to a growing hybrid employee, volunteer, and contractor workforce:

- Acquisition
  - Our acquisition program helped streamline our recruiting and hiring process by identifying new recruiting platforms, continuously evaluating staffing/talent needs, and eliminating outdated job ads. Our most noteworthy team member acquisition was the addition of an IT Manager. In addition, although we decreased the average number of active job posts in 2023, we achieved a 28% increase in applications compared to the previous year.
- Talent Development & Retention
  - The organization's talent development and retention program we implemented in 2022 was instrumental in welcoming new team members in 2023. We identified pain points in the current process, and proposed creative ways to reduce redundancies and streamline the process. At the same time, we began the creation of employee and volunteer handbooks - the next crucial step in strengthening our onboarding and talent development procedures.

# Internal Development

## Climate Equity

**Program Leadership:** Jennifer Chassman Browne

To support SLO Climate Coalition's core value of Environmental Justice, the Equity Advisor engages with the Coalition's leadership team, other community organizations, and community representatives to do the following:

- Accomplish racial and social equity and environmental justice as SLO Climate Coalition implements climate action.
- Focus on solutions identified by and that support and empower those disproportionately impacted by the climate crisis.
- Give everyone a seat at the table and collectively build a community-driven response to our most pressing climate issues.
- Bring to light and advocate for efforts to meet the needs of those in underrepresented communities as they are partners in work towards environmental justice.

### **Accomplishments**

SLO Climate Coalition achieved the following accomplishments by prioritizing its commitment to equity:

1. Appointed Jennifer Chassman Browne as Equity Advisor in August 2023.
2. Engaged leadership to focus on and develop a shared understanding of equity, projects, and practices to consider advancing equity in climate action work.
3. Engaged with community representatives and organizations to develop partnerships, including, but not limited to, the City of San Luis Obispo, Diversity Coalition of SLO County, Cal Poly SLO Office of University Diversity and Inclusion, NAACP SLO Branch, Central Coast Climate Justice Network, R.A.C.E. Matters, Asian American Pacific and Islander of SLO County, GALA Pride & Diversity Center, and the Latino Outreach Council.
4. Developed and facilitated equity education sessions and discussions with the leadership team.
5. Developed and facilitated equity education components for the Climate Action Gatherings.

# Internal Development

## Outreach & Communications

**Program Leadership:** Jill ZamEk, Justin Bradshaw, & Shannon Wintzer

The Outreach & Communications team evolved during the 2023/24 year with the addition of a part-time Marketing Manager, an Event Coordinator position, and support from the SLO Climate Coalition College Corps Fellows. The team continued weekly planning meetings to collaborate on direction and plan support resources for upcoming events. Team members worked to improve brand & message consistency and professionalism across all platforms and touchpoints including a comprehensive update to the website. The efforts of this team increased the overall reach of our marketing efforts across all digital platforms and supported in-person participation at various community events throughout the year.

### Accomplishments

#### Professionalizing the Organization

- Creation of consistently branded organizational assets
  - Letterhead
  - Business Cards
  - Virtual Meeting Backgrounds
  - Presentation Template
  - Email Signature Standards
  - SLOCC & Program Logo Lock-ups
- Website Redesign
- Consistently branded social media content
- Branded newsletter with consistent segments
  - Climate Pulse
  - Climate Alerts
- Printed Assets
  - Branded table covers
  - Branded event tents
  - Branded name tags
    - Professional tags for Leadership Team
    - Reusable tags for event attendees



- CONTINUED -

# Internal Development

## Outreach & Communications

### Professionalizing the Organization (continued)

- Marketing Collateral
  - Branded sticker give-aways
  - SLOCC Program one-sheets
  - SLOCC table signs with QR codes to reduce waste

### Increased Reach

Email Subscribers: 2,480 (up from 2,028 at last reporting)

Social Media Metrics (1/23 - 12/23)

- Facebook (1,159 followers)
  - Impressions: 58.3K (262.3% increase)
  - Reach: 22.3K (603.1% increase)
  - Interactions: 1.4K (236.1% increase)
- Instagram (1,130 followers)
  - Reach: 2.6K (28% increase)
  - Interactions: 74 (100% increase)

### Events

- Monthly Climate Action Gathering
- Bi-Monthly Resiliency Workshops
- Uniting the Central Coast for Action Webinars
- Juneteenth Fair at the Plaza
- SLO Chamber Soapbox
- National Drive Electric Week
  - Ride & Drive Event
  - Electrify Your Life - EV Expo & Showcase
- The Bunker - Art & Climate Collide (Exposition & Panel Discussion)
- Annual SLO Climate Coalition Kick-Off Party
- Beaver Festival
- Upcycling Competition
- SLO County Earth Day Fair
- Eco-Craft Workshops (3)



# Our Team

It's the people. It's always the people - who make the work happen, who make the grief bearable, who make the actions fun. These are our people, and any successes we celebrate are because of them.

## Board of Directors

<b>Eric Veium</b> Chair	<b>Kristen Hazard</b> Secretary	<b>June Cochran</b> Treasurer
<b>Larry Allen</b>	<b>Lady Freire</b>	<b>Erin Pearse</b>
	<b>Susan Steeb</b>	

## Leadership Team

<b>Laura Albers</b> Executive Director	<b>Lexi Head</b> Community Engagement Manager	<b>Shannon Wintzer</b> Marketing & Communications Manager
<b>Lucia Stone</b> Events Manager	<b>John Smigelski</b> Uniting the Central Coast for Action Program Lead	<b>Barry Rands</b> Green Transportation Program Lead
<b>Justin Bradshaw</b> Senior Advisor	<b>Chris Lopez</b> Director of Human Resources	<b>Jennifer Browne</b> Inclusivity Consultant
<b>Kevin Browne</b> IT Manager	<b>Jill ZamEk</b> Marketing Assistant; UCCA Team Member	<b>June Cochran</b> Coordinator

## SLO City Liaisons

<b>Michelle Shoresman</b> Council Liaison	<b>Chris Read</b> City Sustainability Dept. Liaison
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# Thank You



We invite you to engage with us, learn about how climate change is affecting our community, and take action through everyday habits as well as large, impactful choices. We can do this hard work together!



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@sloclimatecoalition



@carbonfreeslo



[sloclimatecoalition.org](http://sloclimatecoalition.org)