

Energy Insecurity Visioning Workshop Notes

- 890,000 AZ households are energy insecure
 - Most are low-moderate income
 - NOT weatherized
 - Extreme heat days will increase
- Breakout 1
 - Climate change has not been accepted by the population.
 - Funding is needed for helping people with utilities
 - Solar project for homeowners to help with energy costs
 - Pair with utility companies for installation
 - Solar training in community colleges with scholarships or grants
 - Construction and housing are often not weatherized and need better insulation and/or repairs
- Preliminary vision for 2035 Energy Security
- Initial Vision Elements
 - ~<445,000 of energy insecure households in AZ are energy secure
 - 0 indoor deaths
 - EQUITY for ALL regardless of income or neighborhood
- Next steps:
 - Post-survey
 - Refine information gathered today
 - Share draft vision with workgroup members
 - Complete a final vision

Breakout #1

Group 1:

Facilitator: Lauren Ross

Note taker: Gabby McCrossan

Participants:

1. What do you think are the most significant challenges and opportunities to achieving a fair, equitable, and healthy energy future in Maricopa County?
 1. Charles - corporation and political barriers - rate structure overhaul; free basic service; corporation commission
 2. Cynthia - umbrella issue is affordability across Maricopa County
 3. Liv - households eligible for LIHEAP stark difference between what is available and who receives these LIHEAP services
 4. Brandon (City of Tempe) - not having as many LIHEAP funds and less southerwestern centric;
 5. Cynthia - Huge gap = the need is so great but the funding level is never appropriate
2. Lauren: What would you say that LIHEAP or bill assistance is deliver and working towards long-term solutions? Have you thought about this in your work? How do you balance that in other solutions

1. Energy affordability or inability to afford you bill - needs to be seen at a large complex context; Advocates continue to work towards bringing more bill assistance to the state but this always a bandaid; if we do not fix the systematic issues then we will never get an where; advocating for tier-rates based on income; advocating for simplified application process; what can do in the interim so that people have access to affordable bills
3. What are some the challenges that you see to addressing systemic issues
 1. Emma - the built environment in neighborhoods. Some neighborhoods have poor infrastructure; the efficiency of the equipment. If you add the inefficiency, the building stock, and the high rates there is no coming out of that hole on top of paying for rent, bills
 2. Some will have to build the system and build an effective electric grid, and who will pay for it
4. How do you currently address energy insecurity in your professional work?"
 - Braden Energy literacy and cost-savings opportunities; bring customers with low-income to the SRP board. One of the challenges we are having is policy shift but we need cultural shift and regulatory at the AC; require an inclusive engagement with the community
 - Emma: Survival mode - gets to the point that you are getting use to the craziness and the increase of heat is one of those things. Making the community aware that this is not normal and it is important for them to have their voices heard. Many competing issues that residents are facing
 - Gail - key informants and partners in terms of the solutions that we generate. Extreme heat = pandemic // natural disaster; regular rules can not apply and realize that we are in the business of saving lives
 - Trisha - constant waiting list - weatherization and rehab; previous weatherize homes now eligible

Group 2:

Facilitator: Vjollca Berisha

Note taker:

Participants:

1. **What do you think are the most significant challenges and opportunities to achieving a fair, equitable, and healthy energy future in Maricopa County?**

-One of the most significant challenges across the whole country is we are in denial that climate change is not happening so what do we do about it if we can't agree. We are already seeing significant impacts, we haven't even begun to address. This is happening very quickly and we have so many groups and political sides that are saying it's not even happening. We need so much more for our funding. Could we do a community solar project? They build a community of solar fields to use and then it pays for itself and they continue to get funding. Energy companies do not help the community because the communities do not own it. Also helping to bring solar training to the community, use community colleges to teach different people in these communities, or have scholarships to teach how to install these solar panels. Also adding in trees to reduce heat on their homes. - Ronda Seifert AHCCCS

- There is never enough money to serve the people that need help, so usually people on waitlist never get served. Where people live and housing, if it's not efficient they pay tons of utility bills, someone paying 800\$ a month just for power. Because of the weatherization program they then only paid 200\$ a month. The women they worked with then was able to buy so many school supplies for children since savings had such an impact. Look at ways we can serve people in that non efficient housing, it has long term effects for the community. -Carrie Smith COO at foundation for senior living

-I think it's also party about the eligibility requirements and application processes that are scaring people away from getting help - Jessica Whitney Epi Data Analysts, MCDPH

-Bigger challenges are the people don't have availability with language technology to find better resources, and to get help, or it is scary to get the resources, they are maybe not on a good qualification for it. -Teresa Sosa

-Elevate the vulnerable communities and prioritize the people with highest energy security so we can improve housing efficiency and cost. - Berisha

2.How do you currently address energy insecurity in your professional work?"

- Went to go talk to a community and heard many stories. Maybe if all stakeholders came together and bought a mobile home?. -Berisha

-Weatherization program which is helping people get their utilities bill down. -Carrie Smith

-We support them to find help and give more information, more security to feel confident to access how they can find this. They need someone to show them the best ways. -Teresa Sosa

Worked with Therssas team and the community then felt more comfortable taking the survey. - Berisha

Group 3:

Facilitator: Allie McGranaghan

Note taker: Chloe Pyne

Participants:

1. What do you think are the most significant challenges and opportunities to achieving a fair, equitable, and healthy energy future in Maricopa County?
 1. Melissa Guardaro
 1. Lack of empathy of what a 2% utility hike means to different people; of the agreement that there needs to be a basic human need. A Lot of people trying to resolve this problem,we are at least starting to address the problem
 - b. Shelley Morgan
 1. These are significant challenges, and it hinges on other types of insecurity within a community. AKA being energy secure means you are secure with your income. People are in crisis for more than just energy, they are making choices that impact their health and wellbeing. We should bring secure housing into this

baseline, making assistance available for those that need help and resources. How can we expand these safety nets, not as a crutch, but can be utilized when a family needs it.

- c. Bonnie Temme
 - 1. Affordable house?! Not having the capacity to make changes to the dwelling can have a heavy impact on a utility bill.
- d. Vicki Copeland
 - 1. How do people prioritize all of their needs in one way, and why should they have to? Not having access to utilities is a basic need. If someone is not able to pay for medication it might be because it is for their utilities, trying to understand what people's needs are - and trying to find solutions is difficult from a health plan perspective. Who has the time to learn every independent scenario, and find a solution for that moment - maybe a baseline of what is a basic need. Dwelling needs to support electricity, which can be amplified by the dwelling if it does have electricity. To HAVE to be energy efficient for the bare minimum
- e. Mutual agreement among breakout participants that yes, we do need a baseline of basic needs for energy security. However, the problem is so much bigger than ensuring people have access to electricity. Many of the dwellings energy-insecure people live in are not energy efficient, nor do the residents have the capacity to make changes to the dwellings.
 - 2. How do you currently address energy insecurity in your professional work?"
- . **SKIP**

Breakout #2

Group 1:

Facilitator: Lauren Ross

Note taker: Gabby McCrossan

Participants:

1. **When you imagine an energy secure Maricopa County, what does that mean to you?**
 - Emma Viera: The construction of housing and buildings are aligned with clean energy. Having roofs or walls that are solar, and this will augment the energy in that household, neighborhood, or community. Or having cars or bicycles or motorcycles that are electric, but maintaining safe, easy access for cycling.
 - Key points: aligning housing with clean energy, and expanding modes of transportation beyond cars.
 - Lauren: A household that can cool themselves comfortably in their own home without worrying about how their energy bill will impact their ability to pay their other bills

- Braden Kay: Climate resilience to extreme heat is very important, but also Tempe has been pushing the idea of “resilience hubs” where there is accessible energy and cooling available to every resident in maricopa within walking distance.
 - There are ways to make sure that our investments into renewable energy benefit frontline, overburdened communities. There should be an emphasis on energy equity with focus on the economic aspect of energy.
 - There are some challenges related to battery availability and affordability
 - Key points: in this vision utilities are active partners, this is not only a residential idea, but both residential and community based
- Cynthia Zwick: The placement of energy facilities has to be equitable. Right now they tend to be located in lower income communities who then experience higher rates of pollution. There needs to be a commitment to more energy efficient, affordable housing. Utilities need to see themselves as part of a community and take into account the needs of all customers and not only those with more wealth or power.
- Charles Redman: All areas of the city are not necessarily equal, but they are all desirable. Maricopa county is an interesting geographic arrangement because it is much more of a checkerboard. Investments to bring everyone up to desirability are possible. The upstream issues are the important ones to address; affordability from the supply side; income inequality from the capital side; etc. Phoenix is in some ways trying to be a showcase city, and perception of Phoenix is important so education that we are trying to do things to solve these complex problems is important, along with the message that there ARE things that we can do about these problems. Solving these problems can be tied to better economic outcomes and this should be emphasized in this space as well.

2. What do you think are the most critical elements to realize this future?

- Skip

3. What stakeholders have to be at the table?

a. How would you involve the community?

- Gail LaGrander: accessibility. There is a lot of information that could be disseminated and translated into different languages that can help people to understand extreme heat and resiliency strategies.
 - We need pass community participation and mass campaigning to bring advocates to these issues.
 - Having community liaisons is critically important. Having attended many community stakeholder meetings, Gail has failed to see any elected officials participating and listening to the communities that they represent.
- Emma Viera: Planning professionals, and professional stakeholders like those in the energy industry. How are they working with each other and other groups to meet the goals for 2035.

Lauren Question: Are affordable housing advocates talking about these issues when advocating for upgrades to housing or new construction? Are they thinking about the intersection of energy, climate, extreme heat, and justice.

- Trisha Ekenberg: A lot of local jurisdictions have their own housing funds and they might use these funds for different things than “we” might use them for. When they go in to try to do weatherization work, they can’t use their own funds for that. Setting higher priorities for weatherization or what constitutes an emergency with regard to local funds could help.
- Cynthia Zwick: Energy/Extreme heat doesn’t always come to front-of-mind when thinking about top priorities. There tends to be a siloed approach to issues, and so in housing conversations that she has been a part of there is not a lot of emphasis on energy or extreme heat resiliency.
 - The legislation in AZ is really not supportive for people who are tenants, or living in mobile homes and they are not prioritized or supported by the legislation
- Gail LaGrander: When talking about the most vulnerable and at-risk people in mobile homes and RVs we need to address the gaps in accessibility for them to be served
- Emma Viera: We have not done a good job of making this a public health issue, and the reality is that it is.

Lauren Question: Curious about the jobs element of these programs, thoughts on generating good local jobs through this work.

- Trisha: With some of the plans from the new admin, there are some expectations for jobs. Expect a huge uptick in jobs in the next few years.
- Cynthia: Huge opportunities to train people through the weatherization program for jobs in A/C or construction. People are aging out or getting hired into the private sector because of their skills and so there is an opportunity to train more people, and then advocate for increased pay so that these trained people stay in their jobs. There is also an opportunity to recruit people who are working in low wage jobs, but there doesn’t seem to be a lot of intention to make this happen.

Group 2:

Facilitator: Vjollca Berisha

Note taker: Emma Nelson

Participants:

1. When you imagine an energy secure Maricopa County, what does that mean to you?

-Sandra Mendez: Energy rates are affordable for everyone, this means different things to different people. But our most vulnerable groups of people, especially families with children. If families can’t afford their bills, then there are sufficient funds for these people so they can maintain their utilities. How can we help people to pay their utilities in the summer? Invision a different mechanism so these households can easily access their utilities still.

-Ronda Seifert: Collaboration, we need all the communities and cities who are struggling, we need to collaborate, because we want to help people. Work together to address this all as quickly as possible. It felt like communities that were working in silos found themselves working

much easier together. Even groups within our county that would for sure work together on specific projects.

-Berisha: Healthy people, when you have healthy people, there is affordable utilities, affordable housing, no one is left behind.

2. What do you think are the most critical elements to realize this future?

-Ronda Seifert: Collaboration and funding because funding is very important. Leadership, especially political leadership.

-Sandra Mendez: Advocacy

-Berisha: Having the right stakeholders at the table. There are specific stakeholders that should be involved in this project. Also having community.

3. What stakeholders have to be at the table?

- Ronda Seifert: People from tribal entities, colleges and communities, city councils, government, public health, utilities, Equality Health, and FQHCs.

a. How would you involve the community?

- Sandra Mendez: Public health is running the show in this project, but including healthcare providers like equality health. I do get a lot of inquiries from people that are looking for connections and come in and then are released from ER and go home and its too hot and they're right back in ER. We need to figure out how to loop them back into the feedback especially for this group. Maybe getting feedback from low income people themselves, what are their actual struggles, why and how can they not pay their bills. Some focused groups and surveys.
- Ronda Seifert: State wide, closed group system, system where you can enter someone in, and you can connect them with resources with a closed loop, people that can connect other people with food boxes, energy utilities. <https://healthcurrent.org/sdoh/>
- Theresa Sosa: Sharing information with social workers, main point where communities get together, involving new generations at the schools with younger kids and teens. If we start to try and get more information out to more families, this could start to make things more serious and take action. Giving more workshops and more information and sharing numbers. We share 20-30 min workshops with families and they get so much information. If we share experiences we can all learn from each other.

Group 3:

Facilitator: Allie McGranaghan

Note taker: Chloe Pyne

Participants:

3. When you imagine an energy secure Maricopa County, what does that mean to you?
 - a. Shelley Morgan

i. We tend to focus on low income households when discussing energy insecurity, but people don't realize how closely people live on the edge of that median. It doesn't take much to push people over the edge, if we are talking about energy security for everyone, not just those currently needing the aid, but also those that are just barely scraping by. A safety net to catch them, and give them some relief to cover fundamental basic needs (domino effect).

b. Katrina Gerster

. Relating to the narrative - it's not something energy secure people think about, it is just life. Humanity/empathy problem rather than solutions based. Everyone needs to be aware.

c. Stacy Champion

. High energy bill burden in AZ. Not enough people are involved in the rate cases, and those in survival mode do not have the time to fight these battles. Feels that there is a lot that could be done for people whose AC breaks and do not have the money to repair them, more national attention and recognition to view heat the same way people fund the extreme cold energy insecure people. Lack of solutions, but we need to work much faster. Mentions getting everyone registered for already existing programs, as enrollment is low in some very beneficial programs.

4. What do you think are the most critical elements to realize this future?

. **SKIP**

5. What stakeholders have to be at the table?

. Vicki Copeland

. Society has transitioned to electronic communication, however, if you are energy insecure these electronic sources may not be constantly available. Feels people get overwhelmed by mail and email solicitation when rolling out new programs. While there are programs available that are subsidised, they still typically come at cost and may not be helpful.

a. Stacy Champion

. Agrees with Vicki. Need to take advantage of available means of communicating with those that may need the assistance. If people are sent in circles, places on hold, don't have access to the technology - hinders people getting the help they need. Need to simplify things, and have it accessible for those that need it that may already be overwhelmed, seniors, etc...

b. How would you involve the community?

. Vicki Copeland

1. I have heard discussion on urgency, and the need to move. However, I am hearing more meetings, more engagement... like when does this actually occur.

1. Yes does want to be involve - wants more information on implementation -

i. Stacy Champion

1. Every single person should be posting public comments, more voices, and people weighing in on possible solutions.

1. Program in follow up email

Chat:

From Allie McGranaghan ASU to Everyone: 02:32 PM

Allie McGranaghan - ASU

From Cynthia Zwick to Everyone: 02:33 PM

Cynthia Zwick, Executive Director, Wildfire

From Carrie Smith to Everyone: 02:33 PM

Carrie Smith, COO at Foundation for Senior Living (FSL)

From Gail.LaGrander to Everyone: 02:33 PM

Gail LaGrander, Active Living Specialist, Maricopa County Dept of Public Health

From Lauren Ross, ACEEE to Everyone: 02:33 PM

Lauren Ross, ACEEE

From Katrina Gerster to Everyone: 02:33 PM

Katrina Gerster Air Quality and Climate Specialist, City of Phoenix

From Vicki Copeland (she/her) to Everyone: 02:33 PM

Vicki Copeland, MD, UHCCP Medical Director

From Liv Yoon (she/her) to Everyone: 02:33 PM

Liv Yoon, postdoc researcher at Columbia University (Earth Institute & Mailman School of Public Health)

From Charles Redman to Everyone: 02:33 PM

Charles Redman

From Emma Viera to Everyone: 02:33 PM

Emma Viera, Executive Director, Unlimited Potential

From Carmen Tirdea (ADHS) to Everyone: 02:33 PM

Carmen Tirdea, Epidemiologist - ADHS

From Tianna Baker -Public Health Intern to Everyone: 02:33 PM

Tianna Baker- Energy insecurity project intern

From Ronda Seifert AHCCCS to Everyone: 02:33 PM

Ronda Seifert, Maternal Child Health/EPSTDT Healthcare Coordinator, AHCCCS

From Jessica Whitney to Everyone: 02:33 PM

Jessie Whitney, Epi Data Analyst, MCDPH

From Liza Oz-Golden to Everyone: 02:34 PM

Liza Golden, Healthy Urban Environments, ASU

From Charles Redman to Everyone: 02:34 PM

again, Charles Redman, Professor of Sustainability, ASU and co-director of HUE (Healthy Urban Environments)

From Braden Kay to Everyone: 02:39 PM

I like these agreements!

Very thoughtful.

From Emma Nelson to Everyone: 02:48 PM

I think you are muted!

From Jessica Whitney to Everyone: 02:54 PM

I don't have a microphone sorry

I think its also party about the eligibility requirements and application processes that are scaring people away from getting help.

From Ronda Seifert AHCCCS to Everyone: 02:59 PM

Funding

Need so much larger than funding

What about a community solar project with grants that benefits the community members?

From Emma Nelson to Everyone: 03:03 PM

We have about 3 minutes left

From Ronda Seifert AHCCCS to Everyone: 03:04 PM

I think if you can find a way to build jobs at the same time, the community will engage

https://www.facebook.com/HBCUGreenFund/?ref=py_c

From Jessica Whitney to Everyone: 03:04 PM

We have to find a creative way to send the information on heat and energy security to communities who lack access to computers and TVs

From Emma Nelson to Everyone: 03:05 PM

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1Ual4-1hgsX6aLBS-S9q0mN3yoLQI6-ZRhkCUIyIVzb0/edit>

From Emma Nelson to Everyone: 03:06 PM

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1Ual4-1hgsX6aLBS-S9q0mN3yoLQI6-ZRhkCUIyIVzb0/edit>

From Ronda Seifert AHCCCS to Everyone: 03:08 PM

This is a recording of a BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, People of Color) Climate Justice Dialogue with lots of great discussion about helping communities who are especially being impacted:

https://www.facebook.com/HBCUGreenFund/?ref=py_c

From Allie McGranaghan ASU to Everyone: 03:09 PM

Thank you for sharing Ronda!

From Ronda Seifert AHCCCS to Everyone: 03:13 PM

The webinar also talked about the Justice 40 Initiative which I had not heard about and it talks about energy efficiency, training & workforce development, affordable & sustainable housing. All good things for our communities who are especially burdened.

I so agree, Lauren. Urgency is needed.

From Gail.LaGrander to Everyone: 03:18 PM

Love this!

From vjollca.berisha, Public Health, Cohort 4 to Everyone: 03:19 PM

Thanks!

From Ronda Seifert AHCCCS to Everyone: 03:34 PM

Totally agree, Vjollca.

Equality Health is another group. And FQHCs.

From Emma Nelson to Everyone: 03:37 PM

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1Ual4-1hgsX6aLBS-S9q0mN3yoLQI6-ZRhkCUIyIVzb0/edit>

We have about 2 minutes left

What was that called Ronda?

From Ronda Seifert AHCCCS to Everyone: 03:41 PM

<https://healthcurrent.org/sdoh/>

From Liv Yoon (she/her) to Everyone: 03:46 PM

Apologies to Group 1 - my internet cutout, then I couldn't get back into the breakout room when it re-connected

From Braden Kay to Everyone: 03:55 PM

Wonderful workshop! This was very helpful. I look forward to reading the draft vision!
From Ronda Seifert AHCCCS to Everyone: 03:57 PM
Love that!! Thank you!