

COMMUNITY-SCALE IN ENERGY DEMOCRACY

CSI's role in Energy Democracy:

- Landscape and elevate how communities of color are innovating energy efficiency and renewable energy projects, highlighting barriers and opportunities;
- Identify policies supporting local energy production and distribution in communities of color;
- Challenge funders to think about how to support community-scale projects;
- Help environmental groups develop a race analysis and support community strategies.

Community-scale in Energy Democracy is about:

- Community residents being engaged as planners, decision-makers, owners and innovators in local energy use and production.
- Utilizing community assets (such as farms, schools, churches or vacant lots) to generate clean renewable energy.
- Community-driven projects to weatherize buildings and increase energy efficiency.
- The triple bottom line of lowering energy costs, reducing emissions and creating green jobs.

Challenges to community-scale in the Energy Democracy:

- *Energy Industry*: Big oil, coal and natural gas companies reap the rewards of tax breaks and public investment that they don't need while cleaner, local energy producers get little public capital.
- *Energy policy*: Federal policy relies heavily on homeowner tax credits to support renewable energy production, which excludes the majority of people of color who are renters and non-profits that do not pay taxes.
- *Access to financing*: Community-scale developers struggle to find financing, particularly in communities of color that have faced historical redlining and disinvestment.
- *Lack of participation in the planning process*: Community members, particularly in communities of color, are often left out of municipal or state level energy planning while private utilities and political appointees hold sway.

Examples of communities of color leading efforts for community-scale change:

- CSI case studies on *Boston Energy Service Cooperative* and *Broadway Triangle Community Plan* in Brooklyn offer examples of community plans for energy savings and renewable energy production.

- *People United for Sustainable Housing* (PUSH – in Buffalo NY) has pioneered a community aggregation model bringing together residents to bargain with contractors for a “group price” and local hiring for energy efficiency upgrades in their neighborhood.
- *Black Mesa Water Coalition* in Arizona is working to transition a coal plant into a solar production site owned by community members and former coal company employees with proceeds going to develop local innovation around energy, food production and retail.

Polices CSI is exploring to support community-scale innovation:

- *Energy Investment Districts (EIDs)* support local leadership and invest in the social, economic and physical infrastructure to reduce carbon emissions through energy efficiency and renewable energy generation. EIDs are governed by community members situated within the EID zone, who preside over a participatory practice of decision-making..