



A Powerful Mission



Combating climate change, income inequality and unemployment:
For nonprofit GRID Alternatives, it's all in a day's work.

Greening the Grid, Changing the World

Local nonprofit GRID Alternatives makes a powerful impact for environment, low-income residents and unemployment

BY ANNA QUINLAN

When engineering professionals Erica Mackie and Tim Sears founded GRID Alternatives in 2001, neither one had any experience running a nonprofit. But the vision that drove them was simple: free, clean electricity from the sun should be available to everyone. The nonprofit wanted to make solar photovoltaic technology practical and accessible for low-income communities that need the savings and jobs the most, yet have the least access.

Today, GRID Alternatives has seven regional offices in California. The group began a national expansion several years ago and also operates an international program. Thousands of low-income homeowners have been able to go solar. Countless individuals and their families can look forward to greater financial stability as they establish successful careers due in large part to their experience through GRID Alternatives' job training program. And each solar system installed is reducing the greenhouse gas emissions generated each day, making the world a greener, cleaner place for us all to enjoy.

The organization's success is built on their unique program model, to engage everyone in real-world solutions to climate change, unemployment and equitable access to solar technology. Equipment sponsors donate many of the necessary items. GRID's experienced installation staff oversee volunteer work crews that include anyone, from local businesses rolling up their sleeves and

sponsoring an employee team-building workday, to participants in GRID Alternatives' job training program. Qualifying low-income homeowners receive solar panels that ultimately reduce the burden of their monthly energy bills. Each GRID Alternatives solar installation reduces greenhouse emissions, provides hands-on job training in a rapidly growing industry, and provides an ongoing financial benefit for a qualifying household.

Bob Gragson, Executive Director of GRID Alternatives' North Valley office (serving a region spanning from Sacramento to Siskiyou counties), has worked in nonprofits since 1987.

Gragson credits the ongoing success of the organization to the fact that it provides benefits to anyone who gets involved.

"Everyone who participates in a GRID Alternatives install walks away with a meaningful learning experience," he says, whether it's as a homeowner beneficiary or out on the install gaining work experience to find stable employment.

"The industry has been saying hands-on experience is just as important as education," says Gragson, pointing out that all projects are "high-quality installs with brand new and warranted equipment, following the most rigorous safety standards."

Gragson also points out that while the majority of GRID's solar installations are for single-family homeowners, the nonprofit has solarized affordable apartment complexes, installed community

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Bob Gragson

Executive Director of GRID Alternatives North Valley

solar arrays, and provided off-grid systems through their International and Tribal programs.

"Every GRID solar project has low-income beneficiaries, training and engagement opportunities," he says.

And that's why Gragson says his work with GRID Alternatives is so deeply rewarding.

"By reducing energy payments for low-income families, the program can be the difference between families affording their mortgage or utility costs that month, or not. That's huge," he says.

WHAT PEOPLE ARE SAYING ABOUT GRID ALTERNATIVES



"The job training that GRID offers represents a tremendous economic opportunity for low-income residents who want to learn about the solar business and work in a field where their skill is in high demand."

- Julián Castro, Secretary, U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development



"GRID Alternatives helps low-income people be part of the solar revolution."

- California Gov. Jerry Brown



"GRID's unique delivery model offers many benefits to our communities, from decreasing electricity bills for homeowners to helping veterans and other unemployed community members gain job experience installing solar panels."

-Mary Wenzel, Senior V.P. and Director of Environmental Affairs, Wells Fargo



"Using new technology to reduce utility costs for low-income families allows those families to put money back into their local economy. We should find ways to make new, green technology accessible to low-income communities and not just the wealthy. GRID Alternatives makes this possible."

-Eric Guerra, District 6 Sacramento City Councilman



"I can say that when they were here installing ... it was like having family here. I missed them when they left. Everybody was easy to get along with, they seemed to have a very high ethical approach to what they do and it was just fun. All I had to do was provide lunch. It was almost too good to be true."

-Penelope Amadali, homeowner and GRID Alternatives client

Photos courtesy of GRID Alternatives and Eric Guerra

Homeowner and GRID Alternatives client Roy Rivera (left) appears with state Sen. Kevin de León (right) at a speaking event held live at Rivera's home on his solar installation day. Sen. de León, who authored Senate Bill 535 to direct a portion of the State's cap and trade revenue to communities in need, spoke at the event.

PHOTO COURTESY OF GRID ALTERNATIVES



Shining the Light of Hope

Low-income resident receives cost-saving solar panels from nonprofit GRID Alternatives

BY ANNA QUINLAN

When Roy Rivera heard that he might qualify to get no-cost solar energy for his home, he thought it sounded too good to be true. Since Rivera has a disability and lives on a fixed income, he had always assumed that having solar panels installed was a luxury that he could not afford.

But when he was referred to GRID Alternatives by NeighborWorks Sacramento, the nonprofit that helped him purchase his home, Rivera knew it was an opportunity too good to pass up. As a nonprofit, GRID installs solar systems for low-income homeowners at no to very low cost. Rivera moved forward with the application process, which focused on qualifying factors like income and roof condition. He says the process was relatively simple, and he was thrilled to find out that he had been approved.

After qualifying, GRID installed solar panels on Rivera's roof in May of 2015 — just in time to begin reducing the high energy bills caused by two separate air conditioning units that he utilizes due to a medical condition.

"Last month the solar panels kicked in 400 kilowatt-hours, and 330 kWh the month before that," says Rivera's caretaker, Roger VanVoorhis. "That's a big, big help."

VanVoorhis describes the actual installation process as a "great experience," crediting GRID's instal-

lation team with an extremely high level of customer service.

"They explained everything — repeatedly, if necessary — to make sure we understood everything," he says. "The two installers that came out were among the most pleasant people you could deal with. They were quick and considerate, even of the dogs who barked their heads off at them!"

Rivera says the energy cost savings from using solar panels makes him better able to afford essentials like his medical expenses.

"When you have a budget, which is stretched just about as far as you can go, it makes a big difference," he says.

Rivera and VanVoorhis are such big fans of the work that GRID Alternatives has done that they've referred the program to several neighbors.

"We're so grateful to NeighborWorks for putting us in touch with GRID, and of course we couldn't be happier with our experience with GRID and how it's helping," says VanVoorhis.

He and Rivera hope that as community awareness about GRID increases, more people facing medical and financial hardship will be able to benefit.

"WE COULDN'T BE HAPPIER WITH OUR EXPERIENCE WITH GRID AND HOW IT'S HELPING."

Roger VanVoorhis
Caretaker for GRID Alternatives client

MAKING AN IMPACT

As an organization that prides itself on having a positive impact on people, the planet and employment, GRID Alternatives has an impressive record.

Here is a look at the difference GRID Alternatives has made, locally and nationally, since 2001:



Total installations
Nationwide: 6,000
North Valley: 450



Projected energy savings for
low-income homeowners
Nationwide: \$156 mil
North Valley: \$13 mil



Number of job trainees
Nationwide: 23,000
North Valley: 1,300



Check out more impacts by the numbers at
www.GRIDAlternatives.org/about/project-map.

Data current as of Nov. 2015



Cesar Ramos loves being able to help low-income homeowners and the environment in his job as outreach coordinator.
PHOTO BY MELISSA UROFF

Sharing the Good News

Outreach worker loves bringing the unexpected gift of solar power to underserved areas

BY SUSAN WINLOW

Cesar Ramos loves the reaction he gets from people when he tells them that with GRID Alternatives, no- to very-low-cost solar power is possible.

Ramos, an outreach coordinator for the organization, laughs as he recounts his door-to-door encounters with disbelieving people who think solar power is out of their financial reach.

"It's like they don't believe it at first," he says.

When he tells clients that his nonprofit installs solar panels for low-income homeowners at no to very low cost, with the state picking up part of the tab, a common response is, "No way!"

That reaction has opened the door to what Ramos says has been a positive reception since GRID Alternatives North Valley expanded operations into the Sacramento area this past summer. GRID Alternatives received funding to serve Sacramento through the California Department of Community Services and Development's Low-Income Weatherization Program as a result of Senate Bill 535 and the State's cap and trade program. Those funds weren't available locally until this year, Ramos says.

The goal of GRID Alternatives is to make renewable technology and job training available to underserved communities, he says. The two-pronged program brings solar power and a 50 percent to 80 percent reduction in electricity costs to income-eligible customers,

"WHEN I REACH OUT TO A PERSON, IT'S LIKE TALKING TO A FRIEND OR A FAMILY MEMBER."

Cesar Ramos
GRID outreach coordinator

ers, plus it offers no-cost job training in the growing industry of solar installation. Increasing the use of sustainable, green energy also benefits the whole region and the health of our planet.

The savings are a big deal to the homeowners, Ramos says. Many customers with

previously high energy bills and fixed incomes have told him their dreams to help children through college and be able to do simple home maintenance, such as tree trimming, that was previously unaffordable.

Clients must meet a low-income requirement — for example, a household of four in Sacramento County must make \$60,900 or less. Other requirements include a roof typically less than 12 years old and minimal shading around the home.

"It's pretty easy," Ramos says of the requirements, and the process, as well, which strives to engage the homeowner throughout.

Ramos likens himself to a foot soldier — as an outreach coordinator, he's the customer's first introduction to the program. He goes door-to-door, hands out fliers and makes himself known at community events in order to get out the word that solar power is affordable for everyone.

That simple outreach to someone who might need the help is why Ramos likes his job.

"It gives me the opportunity to reach out to people and when I reach out to a person, it's like talking to a friend or a family member," he says.

CALLING ALL HOMEOWNERS: SAVE MONEY, HELP THE ENVIRONMENT

Think solar energy for your home is a luxury you can't afford? Think again. The nonprofit GRID Alternatives uses special state funding to install solar panels for homeowners who live in qualifying service areas and meet low-income requirements.

Think you might qualify for the Solar Affordable Housing Program? Contact GRID Alternatives today to begin taking advantage of all that solar power has to offer:

- * Receive breakthrough solar energy technology at no or very low cost.
- * Save up to 80 percent on monthly utility bills, savings that can help your whole family.
- * Help others learn the solar industry so they can get a job and provide for their families.
- * Solar systems are fully warrantied for parts and labor.

To find out if GRID Alternatives can provide solar power for you, visit www.GRIDAlternatives.org/quality, call 844-474-3683 or email infony@gridalternatives.org to find out more and get prequalified.

How Easy Is It?

The steps toward solar

BY KATE GONZALES

So, think no- to very-low-cost installation of energy- and cost-saving solar panels sounds too good to be true? Not with nonprofit GRID Alternatives. GRID not only makes it possible, but also offers an easy, stress-free process for qualifying homeowners.

If you are a homeowner who might qualify, take these steps to **save up to 80 percent** on energy bills with help from GRID Alternatives:



1 See if you qualify



To qualify for no- to very-low-cost solar installation, you must:

- ☐ Own and live in your home with a solar-suitable roof
- ☐ Earn 80 percent or less of the county's median income (a family of four living in Sacramento County, for example, must have earned \$60,900 or less in the last tax year)
- ☐ Live in one of GRID Alternatives' service areas. In Sacramento, GRID is currently serving qualified homeowners in these ZIP codes: 95605, 95612, 95652, 95670, 95691, 95811, 95814, 95815, 95817, 95823, 95824, 95827, 95828, 95829, 95833, 95838, 95841 or 95660.

Call 844-474-3683 or visit GRIDAlternatives.org/clients to see if you qualify.

2 Schedule a visit



If you qualify, a GRID Alternatives outreach coordinator will visit your home. Here is what you can expect:

- ☐ Outreach coordinator explains the installation process
- ☐ Q&A opportunity for the homeowner
- ☐ Complete application
- ☐ Outreach coordinator will conduct an energy audit and refer the household to State weatherization and energy efficiency programs to help the homeowner save even more money



Photo courtesy of GRID Alternatives

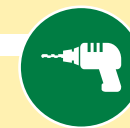
3 Construction site visit



Next, GRID's solar installation staff will visit your home to decide if it is fit for solar installation.

- ☐ Installer inspects and photographs the roof
- ☐ If the home passes the inspection, GRID staff will design your solar system
- ☐ GRID Alternatives presents homeowner with an analysis of expected savings through solar, and environmental benefit

4 Time to install!



When the necessary paperwork is submitted, GRID Alternatives will schedule an installation date. The installation typically takes about two days. GRID Alternatives takes care of the required permits. All you need to do is:

- ☐ Be present at home during the installation
- ☐ Provide lunch for installation team*

*If cost prohibits you from providing lunch for the team of eight to 10 installers, that will not impact eligibility.

5 Save money!



Begin saving up to **80% in energy bills** and feel good about your role in the growing green energy movement.

Building Bright Futures

GRID solar job training program boosts careers and fights unemployment

BY ANNA QUINLAN

Zack Peek, 27, has been interested in solar energy since his early days at California State University, Chico. It was this interest that led him to join Net Impact, a nonprofit, sustainable-business networking group, and eventually become an event planner for the organization's Chico chapter. Through one of the events he planned, he had the opportunity to work with GRID Alternatives and recognized right away that GRID was the perfect fit for him as he sought a career in solar.

"The work that I saw GRID Alternatives doing seemed like the most direct path towards making a difference, which is what I was trying to do," says Peek.

When he was 22 and still a student, he entered the job training program offered by GRID. As a central element of GRID's mission, the job training program combats unemployment by providing no-cost training opportunities for careers in the growing solar industry. GRID focuses on recruiting trainees from the very same economically disadvantaged neighborhoods it

serves with no- to very-low-cost solar installations, providing additional benefit to the community.

Peek says that as a GRID job trainee, he received mentorship from professionals who were already working in the solar energy arena. Having no previous experience in the field himself, Peek relied on GRID's experienced staff to teach him the ropes, noting that it's rare to find a job training program that offers so much hands-on experience to even the greenest of trainees.

Peek appreciated that there were no minimum or maximum hourly requirements to participate in the training program, and that he was able to sign up for evening trainings and weekend installs so that he could balance the work with his college course load. He also found the work very rewarding.

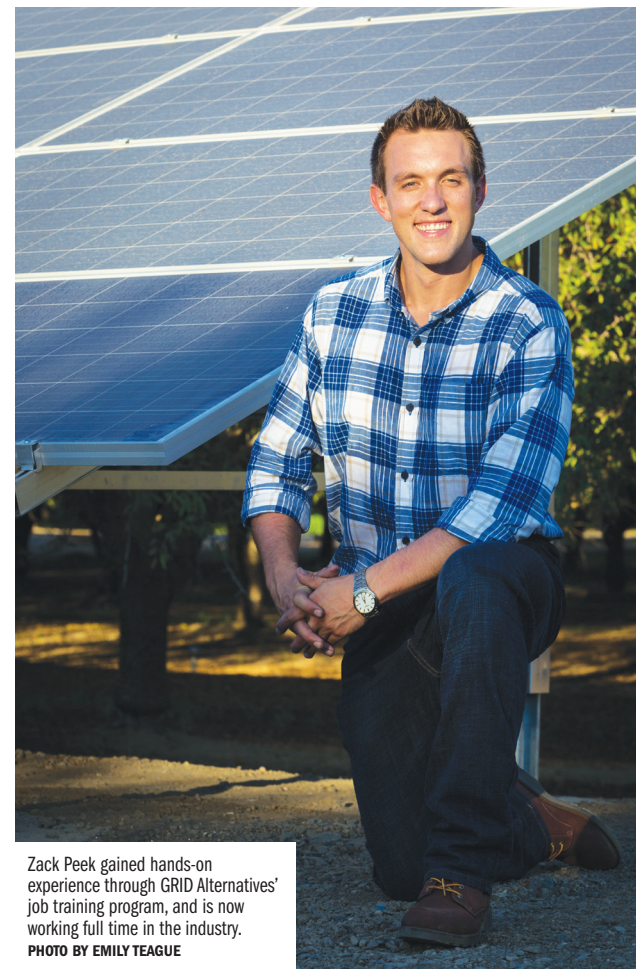
"Since GRID focuses purely on low-income residential installs, they're able to relieve a lot of pressure on individuals or families with burdensome energy bills," he says.

After about a year in GRID Alternatives' job training program, Peek earned a Team Leader qualification. With a broader skill set, he took on more responsibility, including checking other people's work.

"I was looking to push my résumé into a leadership role in solar, and GRID was the perfect place to learn the necessary skills," he says.

The experience gave him the pathway he sought to developing his career. He's now working on solar energy design and sales at United Sun Energy, where he has worked for about a year. Peek says GRID's job training program can prepare someone for a variety of different career paths.

"One guy that was in the program with me was working towards an engineering position," he says. "For someone that is looking to grow their career in solar, GRID has a ton to offer."



Zack Peek gained hands-on experience through GRID Alternatives' job training program, and is now working full time in the industry.

PHOTO BY EMILY TEAGUE

***"FOR SOMEONE THAT IS
LOOKING TO GROW THEIR
CAREER IN SOLAR,
GRID HAS A TON TO OFFER."***

Zack Peek
Former GRID job trainee

JOB TRAINING FOR A BETTER FUTURE

GRID Alternatives provides a classroom in the field for job trainees, giving students hands-on experience in the rapidly growing field of solar installation. The solar industry is one of the fastest growing job creators in the nation, and GRID Alternatives' workforce program provides hands-on solar installation instruction to trainees, with no experience

required. GRID Alternatives has several programs and initiatives to provide training and connect employers to job seekers.

Their Solar Futures program, for example, is targeted at high school juniors and seniors, giving them opportunities to learn more about solar power and

career pathways in the booming solar industry. The SolarCorps Fellowships, meanwhile, offer an opportunity for highly motivated and enthusiastic people to join GRID Alternatives for a one-year paid fellowship in service to their community. In addition, the nonprofit has taken on a national effort to increase diversity in the growing solar energy industry.

Initiatives like Women in Solar and RISE help to make training, networking and mentorship opportunities widely available to encourage diverse entrants into the industry.

To learn more and get involved, visit www.GRIDAlternatives.org.



Steve Geiger, professor and department chair of the Construction and Energy Technology Department at Sierra College, loves partnering with GRID Alternatives to achieve two goals at once: providing his students hands-on field experience and creating a more sustainable energy solution for our region.

PHOTO BY MELISSA UROFF

A Part of the Solution

Partner works hand-in-hand with GRID to make positive impacts

BY ANNA QUINLAN

One of Steve Geiger's favorite things about his work as a professor and department chair of the Construction and Energy Technology Department at Sierra College is the opportunity he has to train his students, not simply teach them. When the dean of the college approached him five years ago and recommended that he look into partnering with GRID Alternatives, he immediately recognized that it was a perfect fit. Geiger was able to get several of his Beginning Photovoltaic students involved with GRID as job trainees, giving them valuable hands-on experience.

"GRID is appealing to us because students can actually get out there on a roof and start installing [solar panels], even if they don't have any previous experience. It provides a real career path," Geiger says.

Sierra College's highly regarded Energy Technology Program boasts one of the highest test rates in the nation for the North American Board of Certified Energy Practitioners exam, a national solar installation certification that students can seek. The program was recognized for its excellence with the Placer County Economic Development Public Sector Award in 2009 and the Sierra Business Council Vision Award in 2011.

But while students receive an excellent foundation in the classroom, Geiger encour-

***"THE MORE
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BIGGER IMPACT
GRID CAN MAKE."***

Steve Geiger
Sierra College professor,
GRID partner and board member

ages them to get practical solar installation experience by volunteering in groups or individually with GRID Alternatives.

"We love GRID," Geiger says. "It's really a training program. Just what the organization does and stands for. It's really just a win-win."

Geiger says involvement in GRID is a big part of his students' success in the job market.

"Our students go to work for all the solar companies in the area here, and they're highly skilled when they come out of the program," Geiger says.

Geiger believes so strongly in the work that GRID is doing that he became a board member for the GRID Alternatives North Valley affiliate. He partners with the nonprofit to organize volunteer orientations and solar installations specifically for Sierra College student groups.

"The programs at GRID are built to accommodate a high level of community engagement," says Geiger. "We want businesses, professionals, community groups and individuals to get involved. The more people that get involved, the bigger impact GRID can make, not only from a financial aspect in terms of reducing energy costs for low-income families, but also by helping the environment, one house at a time."

Geiger hopes that more people in the community will take a look at the cause behind GRID's mission and notes that for many professionals and businesses, "getting involved with GRID can be part of their cause-marketing campaign."

Geiger says GRID's work benefits everyone involved, from helping the job trainees to become more prepared for the workforce, to reducing the homeowner's energy costs, to providing a team-building experience for the corporate partners.

"What I love about working with GRID is that I'm part of the solution," Geiger says.

MAKE A DIFFERENCE: BECOME A PARTNER



GRID Alternatives is not alone in making their vision of transitioning to accessible clean, renewable energy a reality. GRID engages industry, agencies and individuals to solve pressing energy, environmental and economic challenges. GRID Alternatives needs the help of local organizations like yours to make a real impact on our region:

Corporate Sponsors

Your employees will feel a sense of accomplishment and connection to the community and to one another through sponsoring team-building opportunities with GRID Alternatives. Employees gain hands-on volunteer experience with solar during team installations. Businesses can provide tax-deductible donations of services or funds.

Equipment

Distributors or manufacturers can donate solar equipment to help solar make it to the roofs of families in need. Equipment sponsor products get in the hands of new and seasoned solar trainees locally or nationally.

Government

Local and state government agencies can meet clean energy goals while supporting job training and affordable home ownership by connecting funding, programs and/or potential clients to GRID Alternatives.

Job training

Job training organizations, high schools and colleges can help the people they serve gain new, marketable skills in the solar industry as they learn to install solar panels. GRID Alternatives will schedule hands-on experience and professional development with their job training partners.



Join GRID today!
Contact Rebekah Casey at 916-588-9279 or
rcasey@gridalternatives.org for more
information on partnership opportunities.

It's Easy Being Green

Homeowners

If you're a homeowner who meets GRID Alternatives' qualifications, you can see up to 80 percent in energy savings each year with a solar panel installation for your home. To qualify, you must:

- ☐ Own and live in your home with a solar-suitable roof
- ☐ Earn 80 percent or less of the median income in the county you live in (*EX: For Sacramento County, a family of four must have earned \$60,900 or less in the last tax year.*)
- ☐ Live in one of GRID Alternatives' service areas

Reach out today to see if you qualify for solar panel installation by calling 844-474-3683 or visiting www.GRIDAlternatives.org/qualify.

Potential partners

Want to make a long-lasting impact in your community? There are many ways you can help the environment while benefiting from a partnership with GRID Alternatives. You can provide a meaningful, team-building experience for your staff or your students when you sponsor a solar installation as a group. Businesses and individuals can also make an impact through tax-deductible donations of money or equipment or help connect the nonprofit to the low-income clients you serve.

For more information on partnership opportunities and benefits, visit www.GRIDAlternatives.org/regions/northvalley/partner. Or contact Rebekah Casey at 916-588-9279 or rcasey@gridalternatives.org.

their communities and makes clean, renewable energy accessible for all. Whether you are a homeowner, a business or organization looking for new partnership opportunities, or someone seeking job skills, you can be a part of a successful transition to renewable energy that includes everyone.

Job trainees

Want to boost your résumé while helping the environment? Develop new, marketable skills in the growing solar industry with hands-on instruction and experience installing solar panels from beginning to end.

Visit www.GRIDAlternatives.org/volunteer or contact Hilary Tellesen at htellesen@gridalternatives.org for more information on job training.



PARTNERS MAKE IT POSSIBLE

Corporate and Nonprofit Partners and Supporters

Alliance to Save Energy
Bike & Build
Butte Environmental Council
Capital City Solar
Chico Electric
Honnold Foundation
Mounting Systems, Inc.
Pacific Gas and Electric Company
Rabobank, N.A.
Sacramento Municipal Utility District
Sacramento News & Review
SolarCity
SunPower by AES
Union Bank
UNFI
Walmart
Wells Fargo
ZGlobal

Job Training & Educational Participants

American River College
Butte College
California State University, Chico
John Muir Charter School
Northern California Construction Training Inc.
River City High School
Sacramento Regional Conservation Corps
Sierra College
UC Davis Hubert H. Humphrey Fellowship Program
Yolo County Office of Education

GRID Alternatives envisions a future in which clean solar energy is accessible to everyone. The work they do benefits individual homeowners, local economies and the planet and is only possible through strong, meaningful partnerships. Through partnerships with equipment producers and manufacturers, government agencies and

others, GRID Alternatives has been able to deliver the benefits of cost-saving solar energy to communities across the nation.

The North Valley regional office thanks the partners and supporters who have helped to make an impact locally and globally:

Government Partners & Supporters

California Department of Community Services and Development
California Public Utilities Commission
City of Chico
City of Davis
City of Roseville
City of West Sacramento
City of Woodland
City of Yuba City

Affordable Housing Partners

Community Housing Improvement Program
Habitat for Humanity of Butte County
Habitat for Humanity Yuba/Sutter Inc.
NeighborWorks Sacramento
Nevada County Habitat for Humanity
Self Help Home Improvement Project

Equipment Partners

Enphase Energy
IronRidge
SunEdison
SunPower Corp.
Sunrun/SnapNrack/AEE



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