

## Proposal Narrative

### Background

In 2008, the City of Evanston (City) adopted the [Evanston Climate Action Plan \(ECAP\)](#) designed to meet the City's commitment as a signatory of the U.S. Mayor's Climate Protection Agreement to "meet or beat" the targets of the UN sponsored 2005 Kyoto Protocol. Over 250 volunteers and City staff helped create the ECAP, resulting in broad-based community support and engagement for the plan. The ECAP includes 220 strategies to meet the City's goal of reducing greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions 13% by the end of 2012.

The City has already reduced municipal greenhouse gas emissions by 22% below the 2005 baseline. However, efforts by the wider Evanston community have not had a measurable reduction in greenhouse gas emissions. In addition, many residents still lack a basic understanding of anticipated local changes to our climate and actions needed by the community to improve our resiliency to these changes. To meet the ECAP's goals and prepare Evanston for local climate vulnerabilities, there must be wider, deeper, and more active participation among Evanston residents.

The Academy addresses these deficits by building community participation in the ECAP's implementation by engaging grass-roots community networks including after school programs, religious congregations, block party groups, and summer camps. Outreach to and participation in the Academy by the informal leaders of these networks will lead to recruiting a broader and more deeply engaged group of citizens who will make personal changes and also influence others to make similar changes. The Academy will lead to large scale behavior change across the community with measurable results at both the household and community wide level to address both climate vulnerabilities and changes needed to reduce climate change.

Since the adoption of the ECAP, Evanston continues to confirm that environmental sustainability is a priority and has begun to expand its definition of sustainability. For example, the Evanston Community Foundation (ECF), along with other community partners, led a community-wide process in 2011 to develop 10 forward-looking ideas to celebrate Evanston's 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2013. This year-long process engaged over 2300 community members. Of the 10 final ideas, half focus on the ECAP's goals, while others address social equity and economic viability in Evanston. Many in Evanston now believe that the time is ripe to springboard the next wave of ECAP implementation and use a broader definition of what sustainability means in order to engage a new and more diverse part of the community that will lead to large scale behavior change among a broader group of citizens.

### Project goals/purpose

The goal of the Academy is to develop over time a critical mass of engaged, informed, and activated "green citizens" who will make the requisite behavioral changes needed to achieve the goals of the ECAP and improve the communities resiliency towards local climate vulnerabilities. The objective is to ultimately enlist these "green citizens" to then work with the community group and networks they're a part of to further community-wide behavioral changes. Another goal of the Academy is to develop a joint educational

initiative between the City of Evanston and several important community groups including the Evanston Community Foundation, Evanston Environmental Association, Evanston Ecology Center and Institute for Sustainability and Energy at Northwestern University. The Academy would build upon the existing strengths of each organization and their on-going work in the areas of climate change and adaptation. In summary, the Academy will initiate and set in motion the types of community-wide behavior changes needed to fully implement the ECAP.

The Academy will include two key parts: a 25-person adult Academy Class which will attend two monthly educational sessions over a 12-month period and cover all the topics of the ECAP and a monthly mini-Academy learning session, open to the general public on a first-come, first-serve basis to provide access to the learning on a wider basis.

### **Work Plan**

The main activities of the Academy are described below. A detailed schedule and budget are included as Attachments 1 and 2.

#### **Task 1 – Project and Grant Management**

The City’s Sustainability Director will quickly convene the Academy Steering Committee (Committee) once grant recipients are announced. The Committee will provide overall management and coordination of the Academy and will provide progress reports, as needed, to the WWP. The Committee will include not only environmental and sustainability leaders from the community but also leaders from various neighborhoods, particularly those with less previous involvement in sustainability issues.

#### **Task 2 – Curriculum Development and Scheduling**

With input from the Steering Committee, a draft curriculum for the Academy is developed in outline form and will be fully developed by the Committee. The Committee will hire an Academy Coordinator who will work under the direction of the Committee to secure instructors and presenters for the Academy Sessions, schedule hands-on field trips/site visits, prepare monthly session materials and correspond with the participants.

Academy sessions will occur monthly and include one 3-hour evening classroom session and one weekend hands-on “experiential” session. Instructors from area universities and sustainability practitioners will teach evening sessions, while weekend sessions will consist of onsite, interactive learning sessions that put into practice the information presented during the classroom session. The content for each month’s sessions will focus on an overall topic from the ECAP and the specific behavioral changes that are needed for individuals to reduce their carbon footprint as well as improve resiliency to climate vulnerabilities. Each session will also address the question “Why does the ECAP matter to me?” by including a broad perspective of sustainability that includes environmental benefits as well as financial savings, improvements in health and a safer and more inclusive community.

In addition to the main Academy sessions, we will hold monthly mini-Academy sessions on each topic, using an abbreviated version of the same material. These mini-Academy

sessions will be open to the general public and give a wider audience an opportunity to learn specific material based on their individual interests and availability.

### Task 3 – Outreach and Participant Recruitment

Participants for the Academy will be strategically recruited to include 25 adults from the Evanston community who represent neighborhoods across the city and who bring diverse socio-economic, gender and age perspectives to the Academy. Currently, participation in “green” activities in Evanston skews towards white, middle-aged, male, and affluent, so as we described previously, the Committee will employ innovative approaches to recruiting the desired group of diverse participants. The Committee will work with, among others, community organizations and networks, elected and community leaders, and the faith-based community to help identify individuals for the program and make presentations and personal invitations at community and Ward meetings. The Committee will also work with other organizations that serve the lower-income, minority families in the community and seek out influential individuals who can participate in the program and later serve as a role model for others around them.

One example of this innovative recruiting includes working with the City’s free lunch program for summer camps to get children excited about the program and help recruit their parents to participate. This, family-based strategy was developed with a City Alderman during the proposal process who pointed to research that says children have significant influence on their parents and can help support and motivate behavioral changes in the home. The Committee will offer youth activities that parallel the Academy’s curriculum and provide supervised activity space during the evening sessions so parents can bring their children and engage them in the process.

Academy participants will not be charged for participation in the inaugural Academy program with the intention that the initial group of participants will provide feedback and help shape the Academy’s future sessions. Members of the community that are interested in the Academy but are unable to make a commitment to the full 12-month Academy program will be invited to attend the monthly mini-Academy sessions.

### Task 4 – Academy Instruction

Our goal is to hold the orientation session for the Academy in early September, 2013, with monthly Academy sessions running from September through June. The session in June will also include a graduation ceremony. Academy sessions will be facilitated by Catherine Hurley, the City’s Sustainability Director, and by Fred Schneider, President of the Evanston Environmental Association (EEA). They will be held primarily at the Evanston Ecology Center. The mini-Academy sessions will be held in parallel to the main sessions and will follow the same topics each month.

We are enthusiastic about the Academy’s interactive components which will help participants change their own behavior and reduce their own environmental impact while initiating new sustainable norms that will influence others living in their immediate neighborhoods. The interactive components include monthly on-site immersion visits with non-profit and for-profit experts and practitioners in sustainability, and a set of practical environmental tools that participants will use to improve the efficiency of their homes while

changing their behaviors. The accompanying set of environmental tools will include educational resources, such as information on home composting, or hardware devices such as faucet aerators and Compact Fluorescent Light bulbs (CFLs) that will improve the overall efficiency of their homes. A significant portion of the grant budget is used to provide the following resources to Academy participants:

- Books on Climate Change and Green Living, examples include:
  - *The Climate Challenge: 101 Solutions to Global Warming*, by Guy Dauncey
  - *No Impact Man*, by Colin Beaven
  - *Big Green Purse: Use Your Spending Power to Create a Cleaner, Greener World*, by Diane MacEachern
- Professional home energy audit
- Reusable bags: grocery bags, lunch bag, fold-up travel bag
- Reusable water bottles
- Leak detection tablets, Faucet aerators
- Toilet volume displacer
- Pots, soil and seeds for container gardening

The mini-Academy sessions will include the classroom components only and will not include the environmental toolkit free of charge. The mini-Academy sessions will make attendees aware of the tools which would help attendees incorporate the learning at home and direct individuals on where the items can be purchased.

#### Task 5 – Evaluation

Academy evaluation will be completed through a series of pre- and post-measurements to gauge changes in participants' knowledge, comprehension, behavior and participation in volunteer and civic opportunities; and will include evaluations of each individual Academy session. During the curriculum development process, the Committee will develop these pre- and post-test instruments. Results from these evaluations will be compiled and reviewed by the Committee and available to funders at the completion of the grant period.

#### **Intended outcomes and impacts**

Over the short term, we expect participants will significantly increase their general knowledge and understanding of climate change issues and solutions and make personal behavior changes such as increasing their participation in the city's recycling program, diverting food waste through backyard composting, replacing incandescent light bulbs with CFLs, reducing their water consumption, and walking their children to school instead of driving. We also expect participants to learn about sustainability in terms of balancing environmental, social and economic aspects of their lives and community. We expect medium term outcomes to include measurable reductions in participants' energy and water usage, increases in recycling and waste diversion, and increased participation in community projects and organizations that support sustainable behavior in the community. Long term outcomes will be measured well after the Academy sessions have ended and include measurable reduction in overall household greenhouse gas emissions as a result in sustained changes in behavior, and increased knowledge of climate change, sustainability issues and solutions across the community as a whole.

### **Plans for evaluating success and tracking/demonstrating impact**

The Committee will measure short and medium term outcomes at the end of the Academy and after six months using pre- and post- measurements. We will measure long term outcomes by tracking involvement of our Academy graduates in civic and sustainability groups. In addition, we will continue to measure communitywide greenhouse gas emissions and look for trends in emission reductions that further indicate the Academy's impact on Evanston. We will create a simple on-line tool for graduates to self-report their personal behavior changes and community involvement, and summarize their information annually.

### **Key staff or implementation partners**

The Academy is a joint effort among the City of Evanston's Sustainability Director, the Evanston Community Foundation, and the Evanston Environmental Association, in partnership with the Initiative for Sustainability and Energy at Northwestern University (project partners). The Academy Steering Committee will include Catherine Hurley, Sustainability Director for the City of Evanston; Marybeth Schroeder, Vice President of Programs with the Evanston Community Foundation; and Fred Schneider, President of the Evanston Environmental Association. The Steering Committee will also include Claire Alden, Recreation Program Manager at the Evanston Ecology Center; a member of the staff of the Institute for Sustainability and Energy at Northwestern; and the Academy Coordinator. Day to day management of the Academy Coordinator will be handled by Claire Alden. Two Alderman (Alderman Holmes and Alderman Braithwaite), whose Wards cover the neighborhoods we will target for participants who bring greater diversity of racial perspectives and socio-economic experiences within the community, will also serve as consultants to the Steering Committee.

Ms. Hurley will be responsible for overall coordination of the Steering Committee and managing the scope, schedule and budget of the Academy. Mr. Schneider will lead the development and implementation of the curriculum. The Academy Coordinator will work on the day-to-day logistics and organizational responsibilities, under the direction of Claire Alden. Ms. Schroeder and staff at ECF will focus on the fund management aspects of the Academy. Additionally, ECF's experience in developing Leadership Evanston, a program successfully building community engagement and development of personal leadership skills in diverse segments of Evanston since 1992, will be valuable during the curriculum development and recruitment of participants phases.

The City, ECF, EEA and ISEN each have programmatic capabilities and successful experiences delivering quality programming in the areas of sustainability, environmental education, and climate change for children, adults and college students. Some working relationships exist between these groups, but the Academy provides a unique opportunity to develop more viable, active and focused relationships and collaborations among all project partners. A brief description of each partner is provided below.

The **City of Evanston, Office of Sustainability** was created in 2007, shortly after the City's Strategic Plan identified environmental sustainability as one of three guiding values for Evanston. The Evanston **Sustainability Director** facilitated the community-based development of the Evanston Climate Action Plan, which was adopted by City Council in 2008. Since 2007, the City has employed a full-time, dedicated Sustainability Director,

currently Catherine Hurley.

Helping Evanston thrive now and forever as a vibrant, inclusive and just community, the **Evanston Community Foundation** builds, connects and distributes resources and knowledge through local organizations for the common good. The Foundation builds endowments for the community, fosters private philanthropy, and finds solutions to community challenges. Since 2004, ECF has successfully raised funds for several matching grants, including \$2 million for the Grand Victoria Communityworks challenge. The Foundation currently manages two environmentally related funds, the Evanston Climate Action Fund and the Green Communities Fund.

The **Evanston Environmental Association** is a non-profit organization that's been leading the development and promotion of environmental education and action in Evanston since 1976. Their primary role is to provide continuous leadership, financial and programmatic support for the Evanston Ecology Center and its extensive educational offerings.

The **Evanston Ecology Center** has offered educational programs that foster a greater appreciation, awareness and knowledge of the environment to the local community since the Center's creation in 1974. With two full time staff, the Ecology Center provides 7 summer camps reaching over 800 children, oversees 4 extensive community gardens, special events, school field trips, scout groups, parent/child classes, adult classes and family programs, and care of the resident "wildlife". These activities are attended by more than 5,000 participants annually.

The **Initiative for Sustainability and Energy at Northwestern** (ISEN) was established in 2008 and is an umbrella organization whose unique mission is to catalyze the development of transformational science, technology, education and policy for sustainability and energy at Northwestern University in Evanston, Illinois. ISEN meets this challenge through interdisciplinary training, research, and local and global outreach. ISEN also organizes major conferences at Northwestern with top experts on the topics of energy and sustainability and associated policy and economics.

**Link to officially adopted local sustainability, climate action, or energy efficiency and conservation plan**

<http://www.cityofevanston.org/pdf/ECAP.pdf>

**Information on how the project addresses key selection criteria:**

We believe that the Evanston Sustainability Academy meets and exceeds the criteria set forth for funding under request for proposals.

1. Inclusion of an audience representative of the community at-large with an attempt to reach as many citizens as credibly and meaningful possible. The Academy will initially include 25 adults representing a wide cross-section of the community. In parallel to the intensive evening and weekend sessions, we will also offer an abbreviated version of each month's classroom module to a wider general public audience. These mini-Academy sessions will widely advertised across the community and will be open to the public for free, on a first come, first served basis. The mini-Academy sessions will also serve as a

recruiting tool for future classes of the Academy and allow members of the community to pick and choose the mini-sessions topics to attend based on their interests. We anticipate that several hundred community members will be highly engaged throughout the year with the two options for participation in the Academy. In addition, we plan to video tape the educational sessions for the mini-Academy and will have those available for on-demand viewing following each week's session.

2. Participants are informed about local climate vulnerabilities and strategies taken or proposed to address those vulnerabilities. Our partnership with ISEN will connect the Academy to academic experts in the field of climate change and those Northwestern University professors will serve as some of the instructors for the Academy. This will facilitate quality instruction and learning on the topic of local climate vulnerabilities. In addition, the practioners will focus on the hands-on strategies needed to address our climate vulnerabilities and give participants a practical set of tools to implement changes in their personal lives.

3. Input is solicited from all participants. Through the use of pre- and post-testing, we will evaluate the success of the Academy as well as obtain feedback and input from participants on how the City and the wider community can help address climate vulnerabilities. This input will be used to further inform the City's initiatives related to climate adaptation and help with the allocation of both staff resources and financial investments.

4. The content, materials, and/or outcomes of the proposed engagement strategy are publicized and made available to the wider community at-large. The City of Evanston has a robust communication framework that includes a heavy focus on social media as well as more traditional ways of reaching out the public in the form of public meetings, posters and print mail. All the opportunities to participate in the Academy will be wildy advertised on the City's website, in the electronic and paper newsletters, and at City Council and Aldermanic Ward meetings. In addition, the mini-Academy sessions will be video taped and available for viewing on-line in the week following their in-person presentation. These videos will be linked to a web page on the Cities website that will house all the details on the Academy and direct citizens with information on how to participate.

5. Previous public engagement related to climate change, energy and/or sustainability programming. Since adopting the Evanston Climate Action Plan in 2008, the whole Evanston community has been working tether on both climate mitigation and adaptation strategies. The creation of the ECAP was an excellent example of public engagement and many community groups were formed as a result of the process. The City's Office of Sustainability continues to work with these groups and has held 2 community engagement meetings in 2012 alone to help facilitate on-going collaboration among the groups. In addition, the City has facilitated a high level of public engagement around specific projects associated with the Climate Action Plan. A detailed report summarizing the city's most recent efforts around climate change, energy and sustainability can be viewed on the city's website:

<http://www.cityofevanston.org/sustainability/Final%202011%20ECAP%20Update%20Report%2011.20.12.pdf>