

Regional Building Decarbonization Technical Committee

Meeting date: March 4, 2025

Agenda Item #: 4 (Attachment A)

Program History and Mission

Agenda item type: Discussion

Summary

Overview of DRCOG's \$199.7 million Climate Pollution Reduction Grant to implement a regional building decarbonization program.

Background

The \$199.7 million grant from the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) will fund an ambitious and comprehensive regional program aimed at transforming the building sector in the Denver area, with focused investment in underserved low-income and disadvantaged communities.

This significant funding will support several coordinated initiatives that will reduce carbon pollution from buildings, foster workforce development and offer financial incentives for home services and electric appliances, such as heat pumps, water heaters, and electric cooktops and ranges. Each initiative will address specific environmental and industry challenges and improve air quality and public health in the Denver region.

DRCOG staff will provide an overview and budget for the program initiatives and discuss upcoming steps to operationalize the program.

Action by others

None

Previous discussion/action

None

Recommendation

None

Attachment(s)

1. Regional Building Decarbonization Program Staff Bios
2. Staff presentation

For more information

If you need additional information, please contact Robert Spotts, climate pollution reduction manager, at 303-480-5626 or rspotts@drcog.org.



Regional Building Decarbonization Program Staff Bios

Robert Spotts, Manager

Robert leads the Decarbonize DRCOG initiative, overseeing strategies to reduce building emissions and accelerate workforce and industry development in the region. Robert has worked at DRCOG since 2007 and led the Carbon Pollution Reduction Program at DRCOG since 2023, guiding the completion of the Priority Climate Action Plan and the development of the implementation grant application. He has built strong partnerships across the region and state, leveraging his extensive experience at DRCOG in air quality and greenhouse gas initiatives. A longtime leader in transportation electrification, Robert is the longest-serving Board member of Drive Clean Colorado, where he served as President for four years, spearheaded strategic planning, and helped expand the agency statewide. He earned his BA in Geography and his Master of Urban and Regional Planning from the University of Colorado – Denver.

Chris Selk, Program Manager (Communications)

Chris Selk is DRCOG's Program Manager (Communications) for Building Decarbonization. She spent nearly 25 years as a newspaper editor and reporter before an interest in transportation led her to a career in transit communications and business development. Most recently, Chris was principal-in-charge of communications and community engagement for the Interstate Bridge Replacement Program in the Pacific Northwest.

Clay McCombe, Program Manager (Workforce and Industry Development)

Clay McCombe works at the intersection of workforce development, beneficial electrification and social justice. His early years in workforce development involved managing federal grants for a Colorado nonprofit that helped individuals exiting incarceration transition back into the workforce. He later would move on to work for the City and County of Denver's Office of Climate Action, where he was tasked with accelerating the building electrification workforce in Denver. In this role, Clay oversaw two landscape studies on Denver's labor gap in electrification (both residential and commercial), which had not been explored in such granularity to date. Clay was introduced to the Climate Pollution Reduction Grant (and DRCOG) when he was asked to design the workforce component of DRCOG's grant application to the EPA. He then would go on to lead several workforce working groups with DRCOG throughout 2024, leading to his transition to lead the implementation of these programs here in 2025. Clay believes these programs will transform DRCOG's local economies and will set a standard for the rest of the country on how climate action can be equitable and provide economic mobility for communities.

Mac Prather, PE, Program Manager (Incentives, Advising and Disadvantaged Communities)

Mac Prather is a Professional Engineer licensed in Missouri, USA with expertise in mechanical equipment, mechanical and thermo-fluid systems, and community-based, and humanitarian projects. Mac has worked as a designer and technical expert on multi-million-dollar infrastructure projects and in the non-profit sector providing private-sector quality pro-bono engineering services to CBOs, communities, and other under-resourced clients. Most recently Mac was the Program lead for Residential Electrification Programs with the City and County of



Denver's Climate Action Office where he led their heat pump rebates, Healthy Homes Program and cooling access pilots. Mac is honored to join the DRCOG team as Program Manager for Incentive, Energy Advising and Low-Income and Disproportionately Impacted Community Programs.

Gregory Miao, Program Manager (Building Policy)

Gregory Miao is a Program Manager at DRCOG where he leads the Building Policy Collaborative. Prior to working at DRCOG, Gregory worked on legal issues related to housing, planning, and the built environment as an attorney at ChangeLab Solutions, developed regional cooperative agreements in Greater Boston with the Metropolitan Area Planning Council, and represented several Massachusetts communities as a municipal attorney. Gregory graduated from St. Lawrence University and holds a JD from Case Western Reserve University and a master's in urban and regional policy from Northeastern University. He is the current President of the Board of Directors of America Walks.





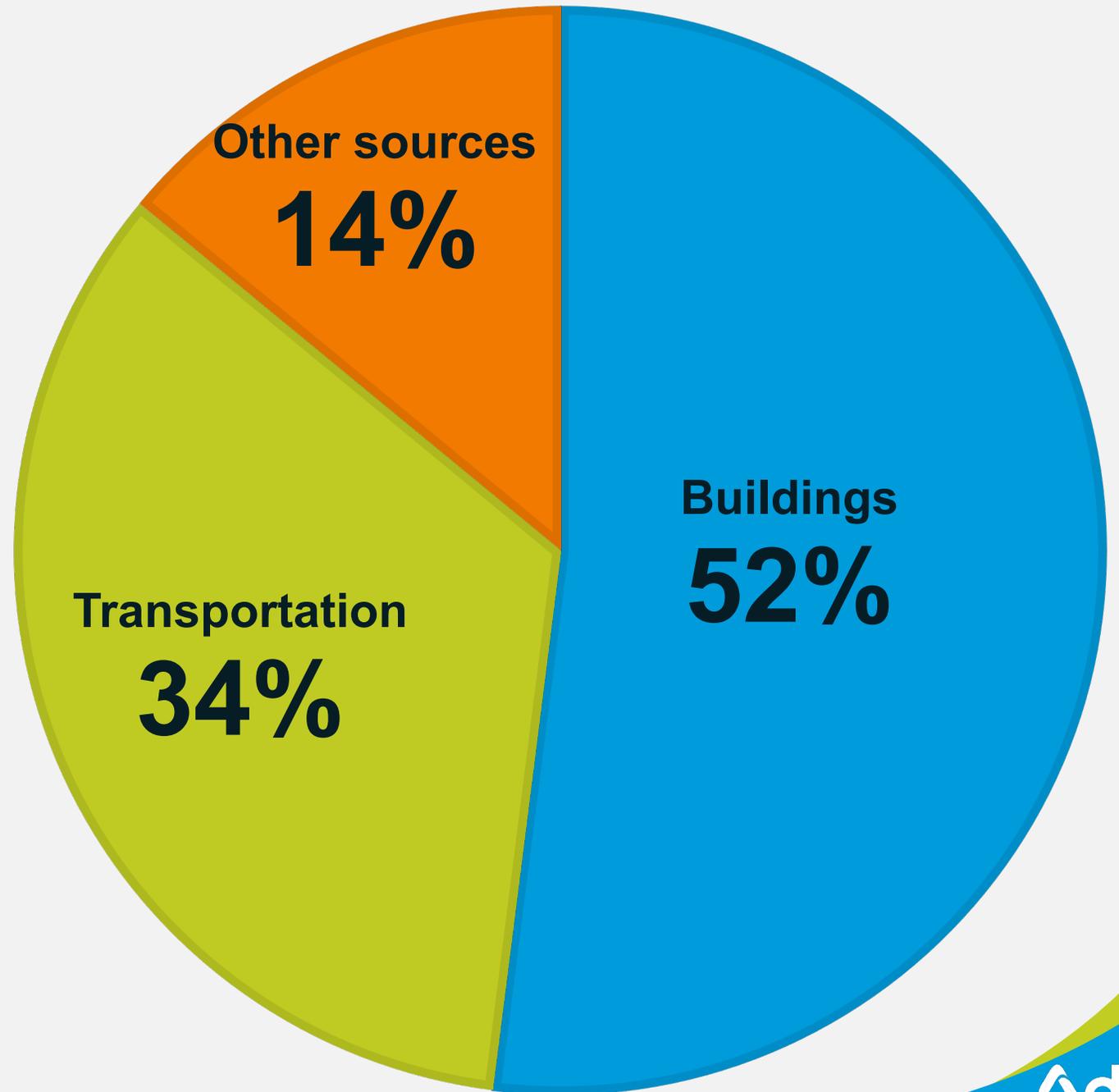
Our History and Our Mission

Regional Building Decarbonization Technical Committee- March 4, 2025

Our problem

DRCOG Greenhouse Gas Emissions

43,700,000 metric tons of CO2
equivalency per year



Our solution





Our History

What is DRCOG?

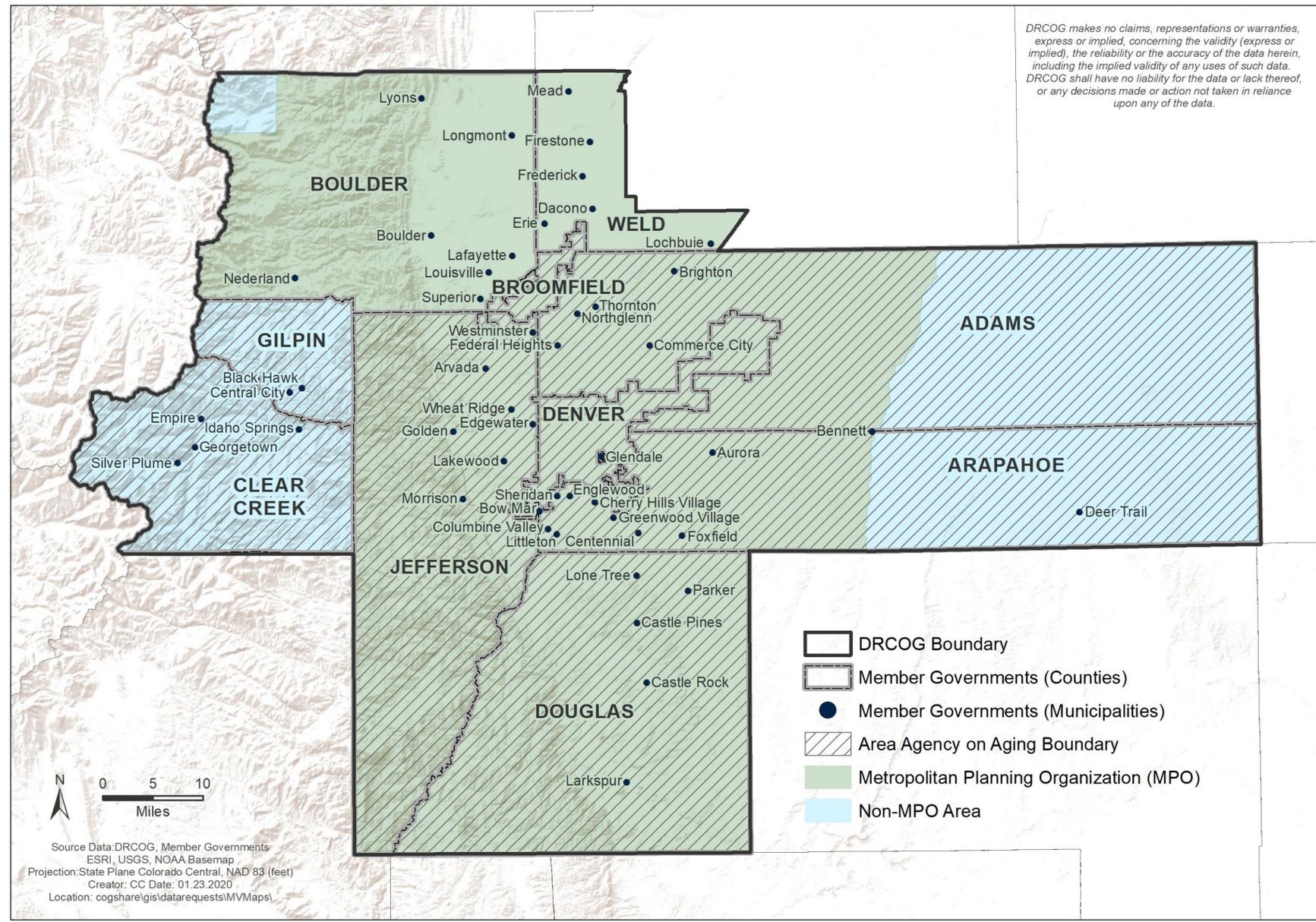
The Denver Regional Council of Governments is a planning organization where local governments collaborate to establish guidelines, set policy and allocate funding in the areas of **transportation** and **personal mobility**, **growth** and **development**, and **aging** and **disability resources**.

And now **building decarbonization!**



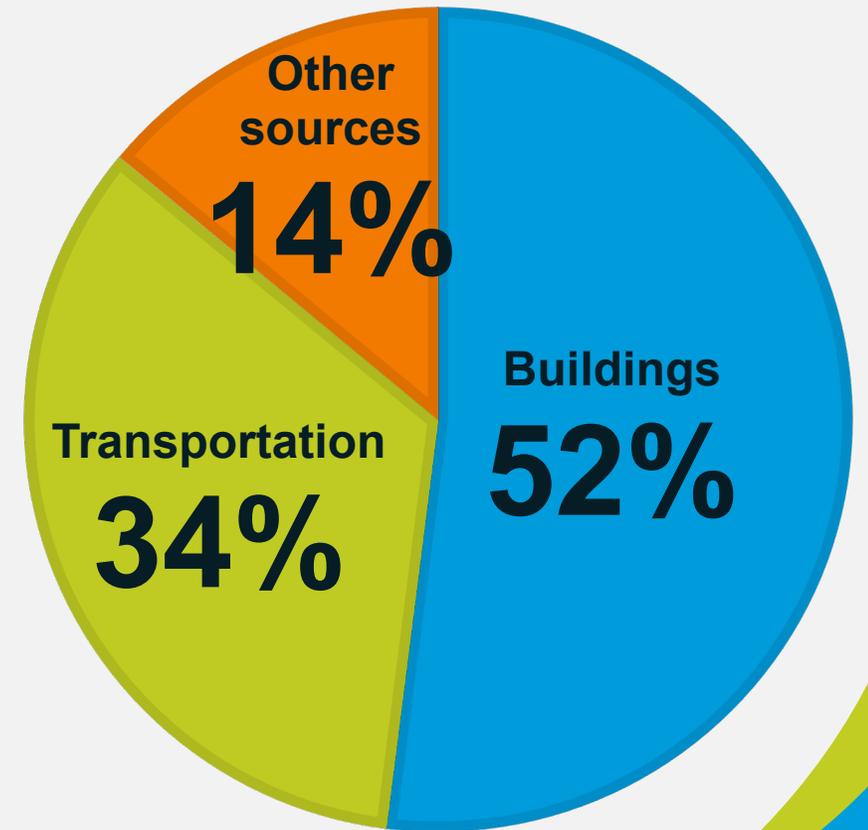
Denver Regional Council of Governments

Area	~10 counties (58 member governments)
	5,288 square miles (comparable to Connecticut)
	3.4 million people (comparable to Utah)
	Ute, Cheyenne, and Arapaho peoples (traditional territory)
Elevation	From Grays Peak (14,278 feet)
	To South Platte River (4,432 feet)
Roles	Regional planning commission (state statute)
	Area Agency on Aging (federal)
	Metropolitan planning organization (federal)



EPA's Climate Pollution Reduction Grant Program

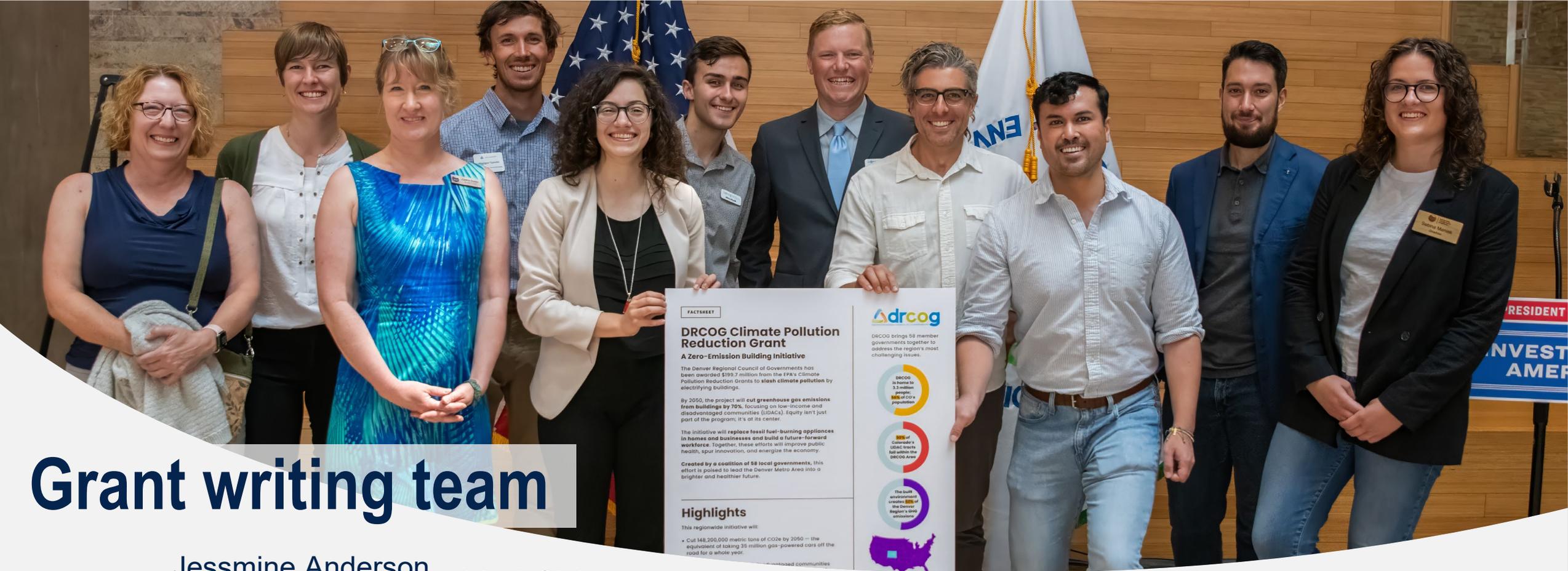
- In April 2023, the DRCOG Board voted unanimously to authorize DRCOG as the lead agency and grant recipient for the Planning Grant.
 - \$1 million planning grant awarded in August 2023.
 - Priority Climate Action Plan adopted in February 2024.
 - Focused on buildings and transportation.
- In January 2024, the DRCOG Board voted unanimously to pursue a building decarbonization grant.



Front Range Beneficial Electrification Network

- Formed in August 2022.
- Accelerate the adoption of building efficiency and electrification through regional collaboration with a focus on equity.
- We go further if we go together.





Grant writing team

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FACTSHEET

drcog

DRCOG Climate Pollution Reduction Grant
A Zero-Emission Building Initiative

The Denver Regional Council of Governments has been awarded \$199.7 million from the EPA's Climate Pollution Reduction Grants to slash climate pollution by electrifying buildings.

By 2050, the project will cut greenhouse gas emissions from buildings by 70%, focusing on low-income and disadvantaged communities (LIDACs). Equity isn't just part of the program; it's at its center.

The initiative will replace fossil fuel-burning appliances in homes and businesses and build a future-forward workforce. Together, these efforts will improve public health, spur innovation, and energize the economy.

Created by a coalition of 58 local governments, this effort is poised to lead the Denver Metro Area into a brighter and healthier future.

Highlights

This regionwide initiative will:

- Cut 148,200,000 metric tons of CO₂e by 2050 — the equivalent of taking 35 million gas-powered cars off the road for a whole year.

...disadvantaged communities

DRCOG brings 58 member governments together to address the region's most challenging issues.

- DRCOG is home to 3.2 million people, 80% of CO's population
- 95% of Colorado's LIDACs reside full within the DRCOG Area
- The built environment creates 88% of the Denver Region's GHG emissions

90 letters of support, including...

Elected Officials (12)

Sen. Michael Bennett
Sen. John Hickenlooper
Rep. Diana DeGette (CO-1)
Rep. Joe Neguse (CO-2)
Rep. Jason Crow (CO-6)
Rep. Brittany Petterson (CO-7)
Rep. Yadira Caraveo (CO-8)
Gov. Jared Polis
Att'y. Gen. Phil Weiser

Governments (18)

Counties, cities and towns throughout the region

Labor/Building Sector (31)

African-American Trade Association
Denver Joint Electrical Apprenticeship & Training Committee
Denver Metro Building Owners and Managers Association
Energy Efficiency Business Coalition
International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers Local 68
Independent Electrical Contractors Rocky Mountain Association
Pipefitters Local Union No. 208
Rocky Mountain Mechanical Contractors Association
Sheet Metal, Air, Rail and Transportation Workers Local Union 9

Nonprofits (19)

Bloc Power
Energy Outreach Colorado
Habitat for Humanity of Metro Denver
Regional Air Quality Council
Rewiring America
U.S. Green Building Council

Workforce Development (7)

CO Community College System
Denver Workforce Dev. Division
Mi Casa Resource Center

Utilities (3)

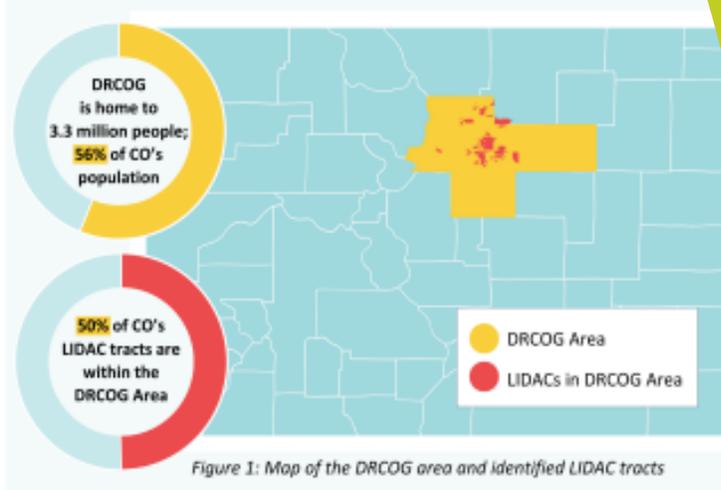
Longmont Power
Xcel Energy
United Power

Workplan

Section 1: Overall Project Summary & Approach

1.a. Description of GHG Reduction Measures

Project Summary: *Decarbonize DRCOG: A Zero-Emission Building Initiative* aims to transform the built environment and associated markets within the Denver Regional Council of Governments (DRCOG) area (Figure 1) and beyond, with emphasis on low-income and disadvantaged communities (LIDACs). This program directly impacts the 56% of Coloradans (over 3.3M people) living across DRCOG's 58 member jurisdictions, with the goal of achieving a region-wide zero operational emission building sector by 2050. In



alignment with the Biden Administration's Justice40 Initiative, 47% of requested funds will be directed to LIDACs. By focusing on building decarbonization, *Decarbonize DRCOG* will address Goal 1 Objective 1.1 of EPA's Strategic Plan to aggressively reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions from all sectors while increasing energy and resource efficiency.

Decarbonize DRCOG focuses on four key GHG Reduction Measures* (or "Measures"):

- ▶ **Measure 1, Full-service Decarbonization for LIDAC Populations:** (or "LIDAC Decarbonization") Free retrofits and upgrade services from start to finish, designed to meet LIDAC resident needs.
- ▶ **Measure 2, Energy Advising:** (or "Advisors") Free, data-driven, client-focused, and vendor-neutral to help residential, multifamily, and commercial building owners through decarbonization.
- ▶ **Measure 3, Rebates and Incentives:** Funds to mitigate costs, accelerate adoption, and spur market growth.
- ▶ **Measure 4, Building Policy Collaborative:** (or "Policy Collaborative") Facilitated support for policy development and coordinating zero-emissions building policy implementation region-wide; funds to grow local capacity.

*Each of these measures is described in detail including the major features, tasks, milestones, and performance metrics on page 6 of this Workplan.

These Measures are built on a foundation of three Market Transformation Support Initiatives ("Market Transformation Support Initiatives"), prioritizing LIDACs: robust **community engagement**; comprehensive **community development**; and high-quality **workforce and industry development**. Each *Decarbonize DRCOG* Measure is designed to reduce GHG emissions; however, the program's true strength lies in the impact of these measures working together. The collective success of these measures will be measured by the program's impact on GHG emissions and the number of jobs created.

Our workplan

- Comprehensive program structure
- Defines the boundaries and responsibilities of the work to be undertaken.
- Forms the basis of the contractual agreement with the EPA



July 2024, DRCOG was awarded \$199.7 million from the Environmental Protection Agency's Climate Pollution Reduction Program!



Our mission



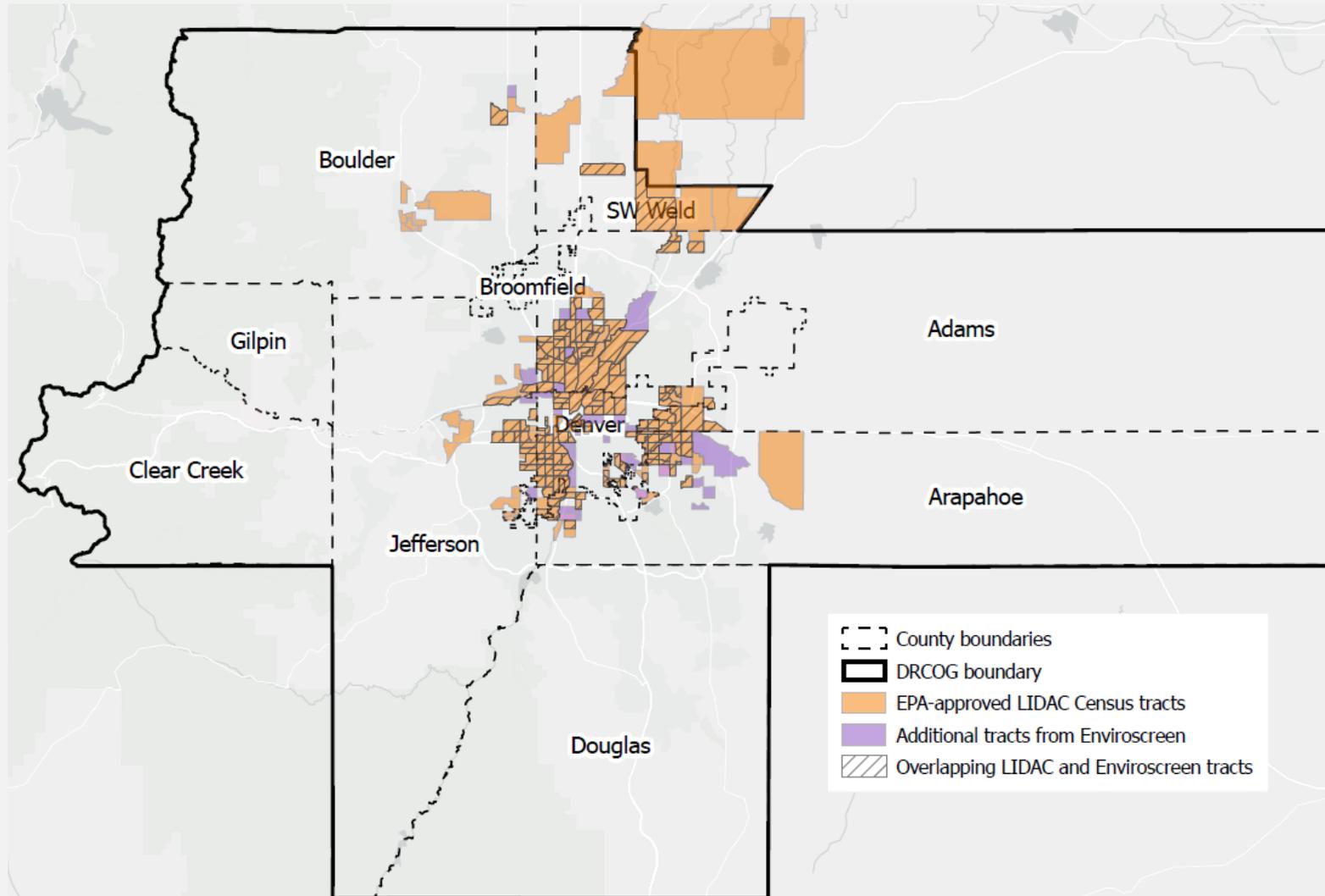
Our challenges

While technology solutions exist, **barriers to adoption** include:

- Residents and building owners have **limited awareness** of electric appliance options.
- Significant deficiencies in **workforce and contractor readiness**.
- Upfront costs to achieve long-term **cost and emissions savings**.
- **Patchwork** regulatory landscape.

Investing in equity

47% of funds benefit low-income and disadvantaged communities



Program Structure

\$47.1M



***Full-Service
Decarbonization for LIDAC***

\$17M



***Energy Improvement
Advisor Program***

\$4.26M



***Financial Incentives and
Rebates***

\$13.4M



***Workforce/Industry
Development***

\$38.4M



Building Policy Collaborative

\$6M



Innovation Fund

\$19M



***Community Engagement, Program Co-Creation, Education and
Accessibility through Marketing***

PROGRAM STRUCTURE



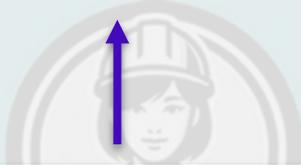
***Full-Service
Decarbonization for LIDAC***



***Energy Improvement
Advisor Program***



***Financial Incentives and
Rebates***



**Three services for home and building owners,
based on need**



*Community Engagement, Program Co-Creation, Education
and Accessibility through Marketing*

PROGRAM STRUCTURE

Three supports to accelerate implementation

*Full-Service Decarbonisation
Program for LIDAs*



**Workforce/Industry
Development**

*Energy Improvement
Advisor Program*



Building Policy Collaborative

*Financial Incentives
and Rebates*

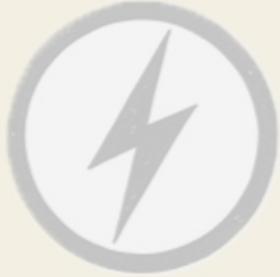


Innovation Fund



*Community Engagement, Program Co-Creation, Education
and Accessibility through Marketing*

PROGRAM STRUCTURE



Full-Service Decarbonization Program for LIDAC



Energy Improvement Advisor Program



Financial Incentives and Rebates

Co-creation of meaningful, equitable, far-reaching programs



Workforce Development



Local Policy Accelerator



Innovation Fund



Community Engagement, Program Co-Creation, Education and Accessibility through Marketing

Our budget and our impact

Program administration, communications and marketing	\$32.5m	Over 1.6 million people engaged
Low-income and disadvantaged communities decarbonization	\$48.1m	1,600 residences retrofit
Energy advising services	\$17.5m	Over 50,000 clients advised
Rebates and Incentives	\$43.1m	Over 40,000 rebates issued
Building policy collaborative	\$39.2m	58 jurisdictions supported
Innovation	\$6.0m	25 grants awarded
Workforce and industry development	\$13.4m	4,800 workers trained
Total CPRG Funds	\$199.7m	
<i>In-kind local staff time</i>	<i>\$3.0m</i>	<i>5.1 full-time equivalent</i>
<i>Leveraged funds</i>	<i>\$70.2m</i>	<i>Committed by Denver, Boulder and Boulder County</i>



Our partners



Building Decarbonization Network

Up to \$1 billion coming to Colorado in building decarbonization

- Decarbonize DRCOG- \$200 million
 - Holistic, market transformation strategy (2024-2029)
- Xcel Energy (Clean Heat Plan) - \$330 million
 - Large rebates for customers and workforce development (2025-2027)
- Colorado Energy Office (HEAR & HOMES) \$103 million
 - Appliance rebates and installations for low-income households (2025-2031)
- Rewiring America (Power Forward Communities) - \$2 billion*
 - Creative solutions, advertising, technology, drive down costs (2025-2031)
- Collective Clean Energy Fund* - \$120 million*
 - Subsidized, low-interest financing to support green projects (2025-2027)

*Allocated funds to Colorado currently unknown



Program implementation and oversight

Organizational chart

Manager
(Robert)

Communications
Program Manager
(Chris)

- Senior Program Specialist (Communications)
- Senior Program Specialist (Community Engagement)

Workforce/Industry
Program Manager
(Clay)

- Senior Program Specialist (Workforce & Industry Development)

Building Policy
Program Manager
(Greg)

- Senior Program Specialist (Building Policy)

Incentives/LIDAC
Program Manager
(Mac)

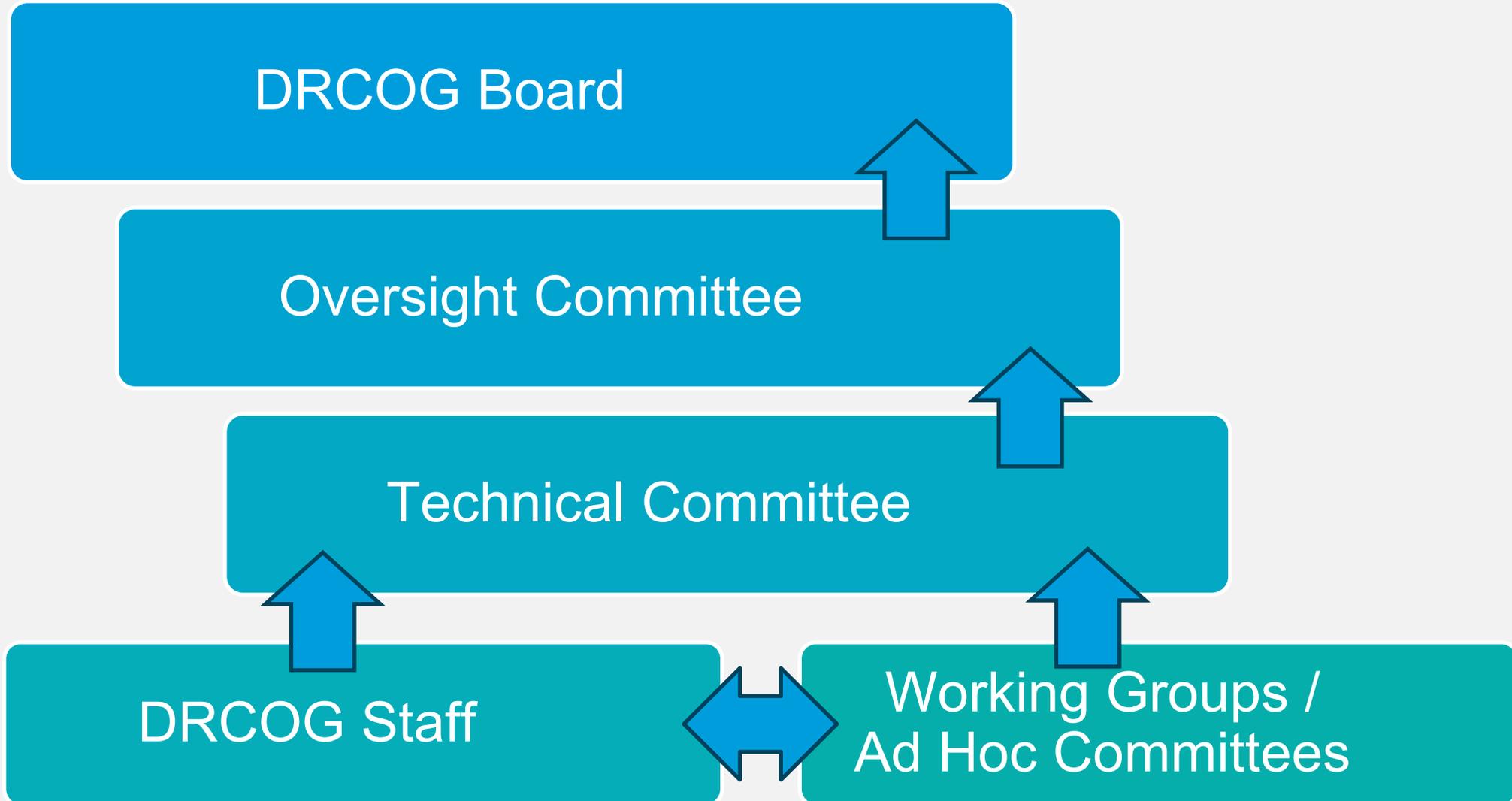
- Senior Program Specialist (Disadvantaged Communities)
- Senior Program Specialist (Incentives and Energy Advising)

Admin & Finance
Director
(Jenny)

Business
Operations
Manager
(Sharon)

- Contracts Lead
- Contract specialist
- Compliance Lead
- Compliance and tracking specialist

Decision-making process



Oversight Committee Responsibilities

- Make recommendations to the DRCOG Board for:
 - Budgetary decisions.
 - Policy decisions.
 - Funding allocations.
- Strategic, visionary programmatic guidance.
- Be ambassadors for our program.

Our aspirations

Equity

We will ensure that the entire region, especially vulnerable populations, benefits from this transition.

Market transformation

We will work ourselves out of a job by creating a new “business as usual.”

Innovation

We will learn from our peers, push boundaries, and pioneer groundbreaking solutions.

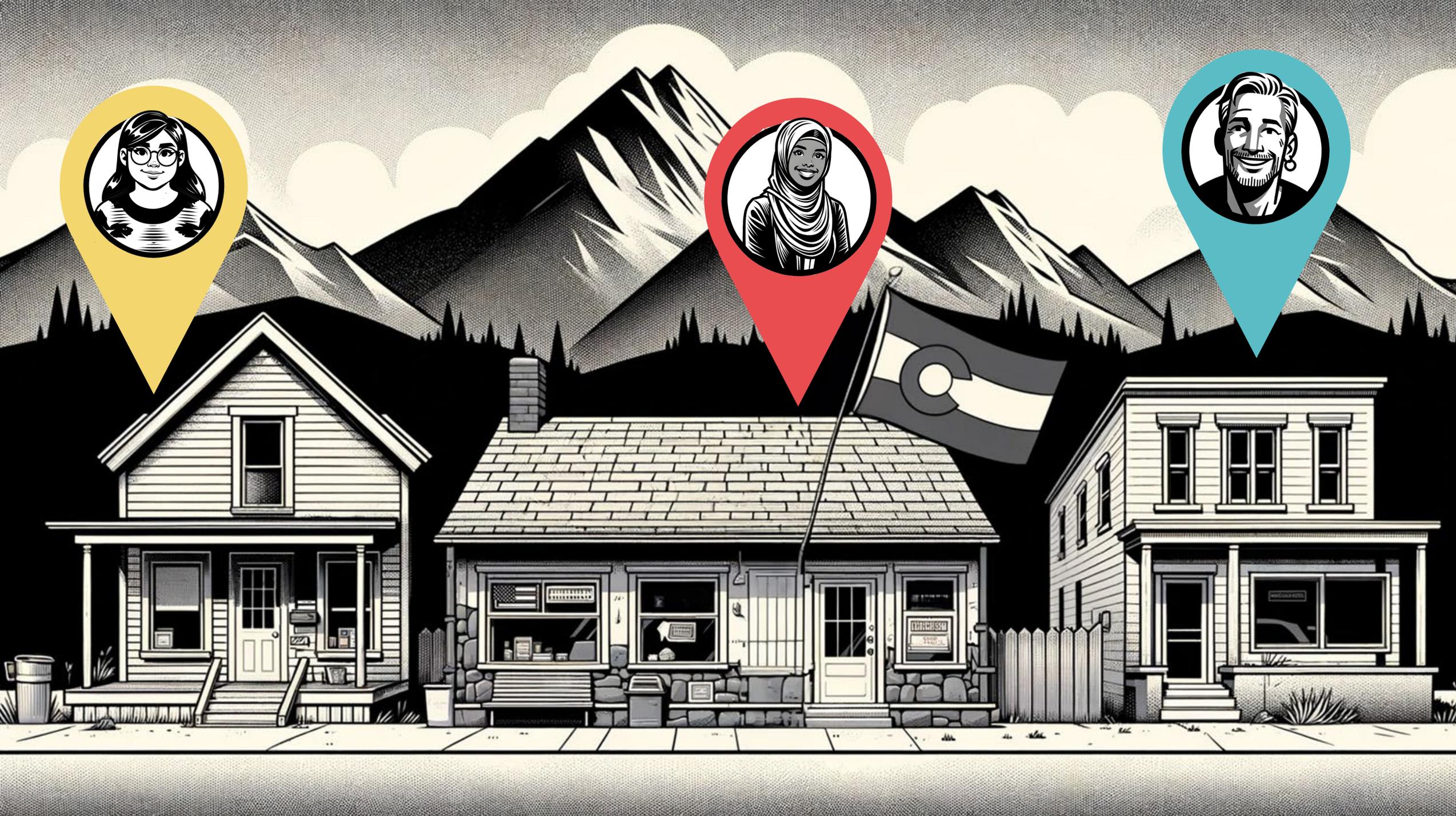
Be the model

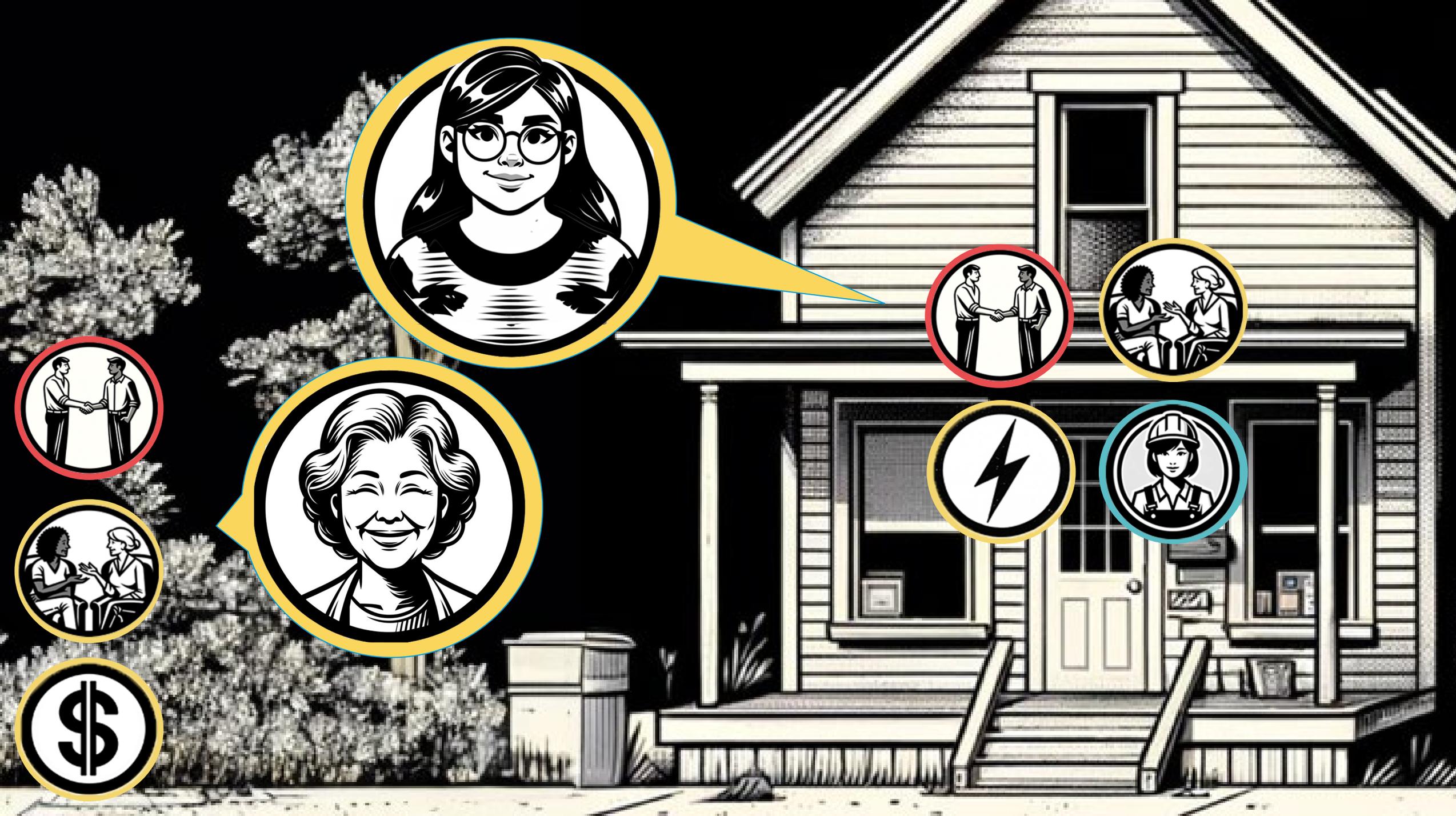
We will demonstrate to the entire world that wide-ranging building decarbonization is possible.

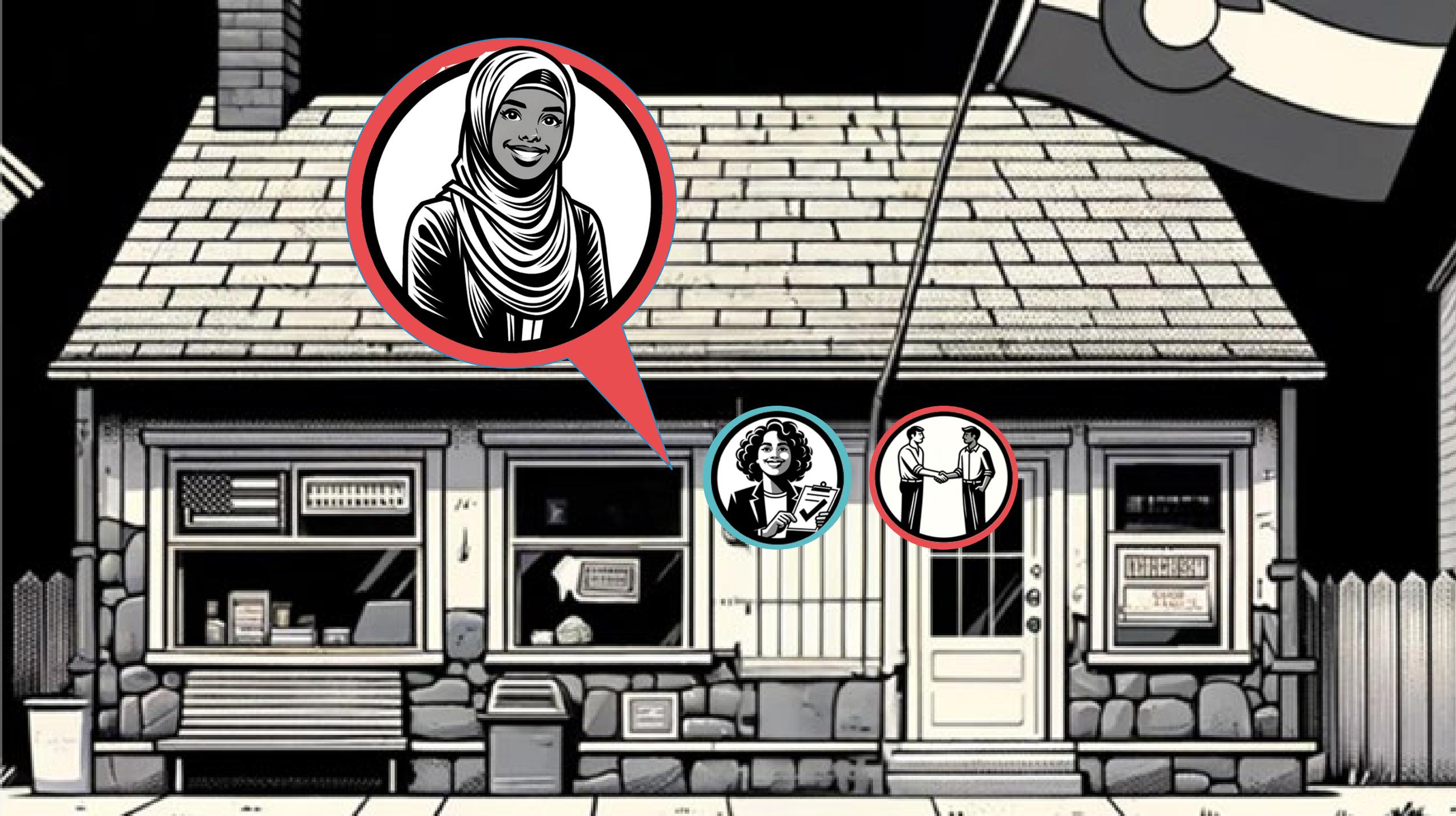




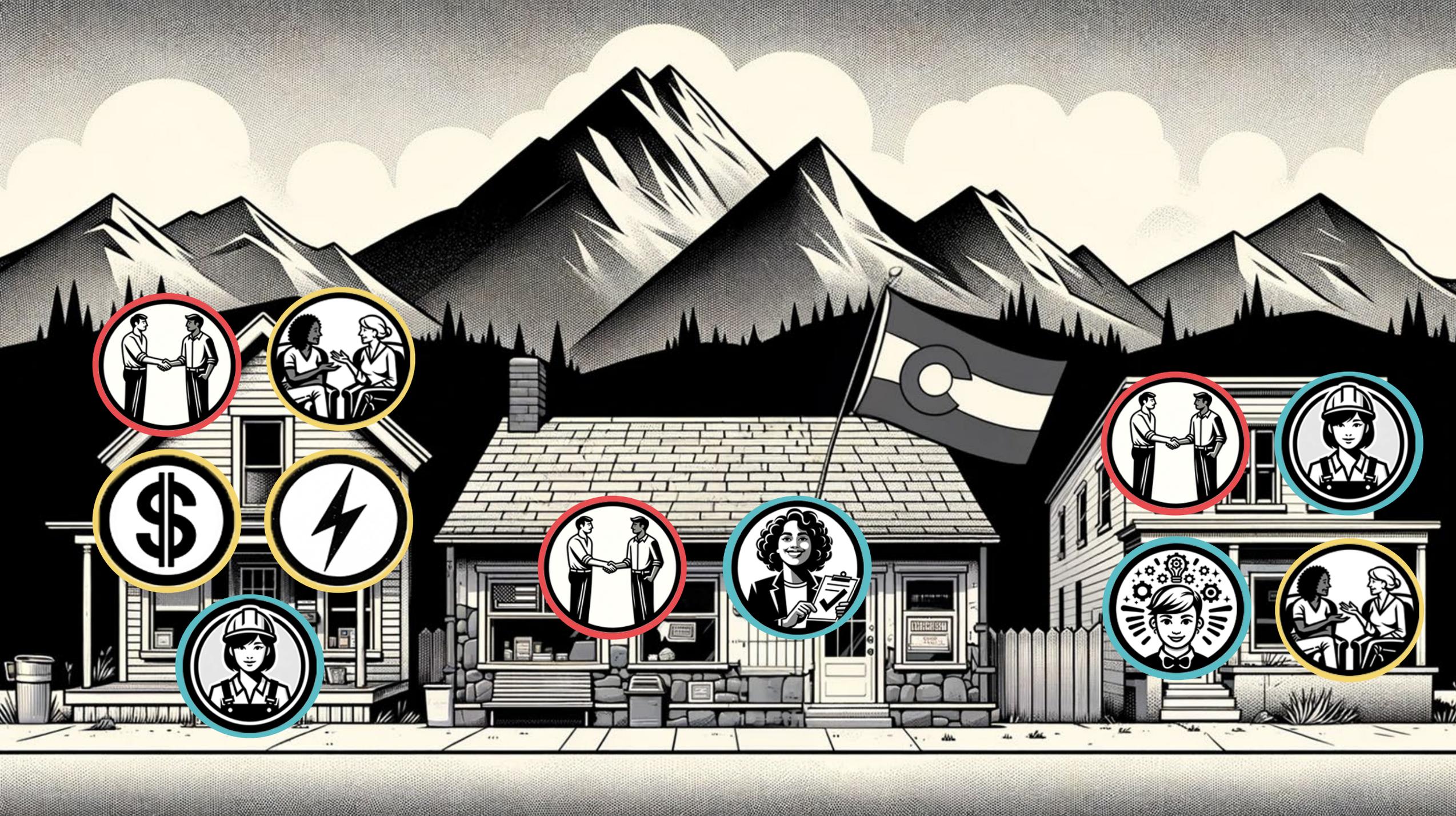
Our plan in action











Thank you!

Robert Spotts

Manager, Climate Pollution Reduction

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