

# L'ANCLA REPORT

## Executive Summary



This Executive Summary is the result of many months of listening to our Eagle River Valley (ERV) and Roaring Fork Valley (RFV) communities, in the beautiful mountains of the state of Colorado.



In September 2021 Holy Cross Energy launched a process to learn more about ways the organization could support the unmet needs of area residents who need and/or want a different level of engagement with HCE, including asking HCE to provide financial assistance with their energy bills, or learning more about how to reduce their energy use and their impacts on the environment, or who want to request information, services and support in Spanish.

After reflecting on those needs and ways to address them, HCE partnered with L'Ancla and together they asked HCE stakeholders to share their needs and their future vision of HCE as a nonprofit cooperative committed to improving the lives and well-being of all its members.





## WHAT DID OUR COMMUNITY MEMBERS SAY REALLY MATTERS TO THEM?

### MEMBERSHIP IS IMPORTANT

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And changes the way area residents understand HCE's work in the community. More than 90% of Spanish-speaking area residents who participated in interviews with L'Ancla said they don't know HCE.

They also expressed increased interest in HCE, and an increased sense of commitment to the interview's outcomes and process when they learned about HCE's member-owned coop model, asserting that members have the power to make decisions to guide the organization.

### ENERGY COSTS HAVE SIGNIFICANT IMPACTS ON THE LIVES OF RESIDENTS LIVING IN OUR REGION

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At least 68% of persons interviewed by L'Ancla reported having had significant difficulty paying their electricity bill at least once while living in HCE's service region. Participants who experienced extreme financial hardship described energy costs as a principal life stressor.

All of them said they had never heard of energy assistance programs. Even when energy costs weren't life-threatening, most individuals who reported financial need said they often had to choose between paying their energy bill and other basic needs, including childcare. Interview participants also said they know at least one other person who has experienced similar hardship, and all wanted to know ways to help their friends, family, and neighbors experiencing difficulty paying their energy bills.



More than 65% of the residents who participated in our activities shared with us that they are concerned about their children leaving the area due to limited educational and/or employment opportunities, and they wonder if HCE can have a positive impact on young people getting educated and finding gainful employment with HCE's support.

**PARENTS OF YOUTH GROWING UP IN THE REGION WANT THEIR CHILDREN TO STUDY AND SECURE EXCELLENT JOBS RIGHT HERE!**



## WHAT DID OUR COMMUNITY MEMBERS SAY REALLY MATTERS TO THEM?

### RESIDENTS ARE COMMITTED TO ENERGY CONSERVATION EFFORTS

So much so that 57% of residents who participated in this learning process expressed concern about environment and "the planet we will leave to our children" (Eagle County resident, May 2022).

Approximately 40% of people interviewed worry about the use of propane fuel, while others want access to information and support with installing solar in their homes. Even when participants said their priority was lower energy bills, they also connected those needs with concerns about the region's environmental wellbeing.

## WHAT DID OUR COMMUNITY ASK FOR?

- ✓ Organize dialogues and disseminate information about how to access financial assistance with high energy bills, especially at times of increased financial stress, and invite family, friends and neighbors so that they can support others in need.
- ✓ Introduce yourself to communities who don't know HCE, tell them about what a member-owned community cooperative is all about, and consider inviting community members to tour facilities.
- ✓ Provide information and support that affirms our unique and diverse cultural backgrounds. Present information in Spanish and include ways Spanish-speaking persons can connect with HCE, and with other Spanish-speaking HCE members on social media.
- ✓ Invite HCE members who want to participate in HCE's community-led work to share their stories about what works!
- ✓ Invite members and youth to participate in capacity building opportunities about how to reduce energy bills, conserve energy, and protect the environment.
- ✓ Support efforts that help youth and young adults in our region enroll in educational programs, and which generate excellent jobs that keep youth close to their families.

## HOW WELL DOES OUR COMMUNITY KNOW US?



### MANY

of our members who need our support do not know us.



### MOST

of the Spanish-speaking residents who spoke with us did not know that we are a not-for-profit cooperative owned by our members!



### MORE THAN 75%

of the persons interviewed by L'Ancla had never heard of HCE.

Disclaimer: The information you see here is but a brief overview of some of the ways residents living in HCE's service regions are asking us to work collaboratively to build better energy futures with our neighbors, friends and their families.

Please know that at this time, HCE's staff and Board of Directors are considering and planning how best to meet these critical requests and needs expressed by our members and stakeholders. In the coming months, we will provide updates on our progress and community efforts.

Your comments and contributions are always welcome at HCE! If you would like to contact us and/or continue to participate in this important effort to co-design the thriving energy landscape of our regions, please contact:

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