

THE COOL BLOCK

HOW THE PROGRAM WORKS

The Cool Block program is built around a set of proven design principles and practices. Teams that followed these have a 95% completion rate with high levels of success in achieving their personal and collective goals. Take turns reading out loud ...

1. TIME, PLACE, AND TEAM

The Cool Block is a 4-1/2-month, nine-meeting, action-based program. It is self-directed by a team of five to eight households that live on our block. This is big enough to allow for dynamic sharing but not so big that people do not have enough time to get the support they need. Collaborating with other households strengthens your motivation to follow through with your commitments, enables the sharing and exchange of valuable ideas and resources for taking the actions, and provides support for more complex actions. Furthermore, it builds trust and relationships with people living nearby and therefore most helpful at the time of an emergency or natural disaster. This support system is the foundation on which this program is built.

2. PROGRAM TOPICS, ACTION RECIPES, AND MEETING GUIDES

The Cool Block program is hosted and led by a different team member in his or her home every two weeks with the support of a topic-meeting guide. The meetings last between 1.5 to 2 hours and focus on eight distinct topics. These topics include lowering your household's carbon footprint (your fuel consumption that contributes to climate change), water conserving practices, building household and block disaster resiliency, and increasing the safety, health and overall livability of the block. Each of these topics has been carefully designed to help you and our neighbors achieve *The Cool Block* program goals of becoming more planet friendly, disaster resilient, and community rich.

Each topic is divided into a menu of detailed action recipes that are contained in that chapter of the book. These actions are strengthened, whenever possible, by local resources to assist you in taking the action.



You select from the menu the individual actions that most address your needs and the collective actions that most address our block's needs. The action recipes have been designed to walk you and the team through all the steps necessary to take the action effectively, including why this action is important, the time and resources required, and the benefits you can expect.

The structured meeting guides enable people inexperienced in running meetings to lead effective, engaging, and productive meetings. The skills learned—visioning, coaching, team building, accountability, collective problem solving, and group facilitation— create a strong team that will continue to add value to the block and community at the completion of the program. Furthermore, these skills are transferrable to other parts of your life and work.

3. ACTION PLANNING AND RECOGNITION

The Cool Block website has an easy to use tool to help you plan your actions and keep track of your achievements. As part of your action planning you will set goals to achieve either the Cool Block competence or mastery level. If your city chooses to participate in this recognition program it will recognize each individual and your team according to the level achieved.

The website also allows you to see the overall impact the program is having in your community. Seeing your drops filling the bucket, rather than being “just a drop in the bucket”, empowers you to see you are making a difference, and also inspires others who are considering whether to join the program in the future.

4. CONTINUATION, MASTERY, AND DIFFUSION

When the program is completed, participants on our block are now connected and can continue to support one another in maintaining and further developing our new lifestyle practices and block level actions. If the team is interested, it can help form new teams among households on the block who did not originally participate and on other blocks in the community. Individuals are also invited to achieve greater personal mastery by learning how to coach new block leaders, developing new action resources, and developing strategies to grow *The Cool Block* movement in our community, and beyond.