



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

360 Acoma Street  
Denver, CO 80223  
[www.MiCasaResourceCenter.org](http://www.MiCasaResourceCenter.org)

**Contact:** Kate Brenton, Communications/Grants Manager  
303-539-5603 (office) 303-746-0909 (cell)  
kbrenton@MiCasaResourceCenter.org

### **40.5kW Solar Energy Array Being Installed on Mi Casa's Roof**

*Grads of Mi Casa's Green Construction & Energy training program are labor for ARRA-funded project*

**March 9, 2011 (DENVER):** The cash flow from the federal economic stimulus may be drying up. But the solar array being installed at Mi Casa - funded through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) - will have an enduring positive impact in the form of hands-on experience and employment for jobless individuals and cost savings for the organization dedicated to training disadvantaged workers to participate in Colorado's new energy economy.

The 40.5kW photovoltaic array at Mi Casa is the result of a close collaboration between public, private and nonprofit resources with the support of the Governor's Energy Office.

- **What:** Solar panels installed at Mi Casa Resource Center with funds from American Recovery and Reinvestment Act as well as private investment. Cost savings from solar array will be reinvested in green job training for disadvantaged workers.
- **Who:** Graduates of Mi Casa's Green Construction & Energy career training program will help install the solar panels, including Geronimo Adams, a single father who has been unemployed for over a year.
- **When:** Racking has been installed; solar panels were delivered to Mi Casa on Monday, March 7. Installation of solar panels will take place Thursday and Friday, March 10-11.
- **Where:** Mi Casa Resource Center, 360 Acoma Street, Denver, CO 80223
- **Video and Interview opportunity:** There will be great visuals of the solar panels being installed. Reporters can also interview a Mi Casa graduate about how training in green energy and energy efficiency has provided the opportunity to improve skills and find employment at a time when the economy is still struggling.

“This project is a perfect example of public-private partnership where multiple goals are accomplished - carbon emissions and fossil fuel consumption are offset by electricity generated from renewable sources,

private investors supply capital to jump start projects that would otherwise be delayed or never happen; and local jobs are supported for installation labor, engineering and design,” says Doug Wells, President of Renewable Energy Ventures, the private firm investing in Mi Casa’s solar array as part of a power purchase agreement.

One of the jobs supported by this project belongs to Geronimo Adams, a Mi Casa graduate who will be working to install the solar array. Geronimo, a single father who shares custody of his six children, completed Mi Casa’s Green Construction & Energy training program in December and is looking for full-time work; he was laid off from his job as a commercial plumber in January 2010. The installation job at Mi Casa is temporary, but Geronimo hopes to leverage the on-the-job training experience into a full-time permanent position. “Mi Casa has provided me with a lot of support as I work to advance my situation,” Geronimo says. “I am honored to be a part of this project because ultimately it will create opportunities for other people who need training to make a career change.”

Christine Marquez-Hudson, CEO/Executive Director of Mi Casa, adds: “Mi Casa’s solar energy – as well as energy efficiency upgrades performed in anticipation of solar – offset increasing energy bills, and the cash savings will help sustain Mi Casa’s career training programs that assist workers with limited skills and education to launch promising careers in growth industries, including jobs in energy efficiency and renewable energy.”

“We believe that Mi Casa’s solar array, which will be visible from the street, will be a powerful symbol of our commitment to green jobs training and helping *all* Coloradans participate in the new energy economy,” says Marquez-Hudson.

Mi Casa’s 40.5kW solar array will produce an estimated 53,330 kWh per year, which will offset roughly 24% of Mi Casa’s total energy consumption. Mi Casa also invested in wide-ranging energy efficiency performance upgrades to maximize the savings from solar energy. Through Energy Outreach Colorado, Mi Casa wrapped the hot water heater, installed a direct digital control system, replaced six old AC units with Energy Star units, insulated HVAC equipment, and replaced 112 light fixtures and ballasts with CFL bulbs and energy efficient ballasts at the agency’s headquarters at 360 Acoma Street.

The partnership with Renewable Energy Ventures, which allowed Mi Casa to take advantage of both the federal tax credit for renewable energy, as well as the Xcel Energy Solar Rewards Rebate, which was recently scaled back. Renewable Energy Ventures will own, operate and maintain the solar array; Mi Casa will pay a subsidized rate for the energy it produces.

###

**About Mi Casa Resource Center:** Mi Casa is among the oldest and largest Latino-serving organizations in Colorado, founded in 1976 by eight Head Start mothers in west Denver. Mi Casa creates new opportunities through career education to help workers with limited skills and education get a job launch promising careers; business education to help underserved entrepreneurs forge a path to prosperity through self-employment; and out-of-school enrichment programs for youth focused on academic success. 35 years, Mi Casa has been committed to advancing the economic success of Latino and low-income families.

Mi Casa’s **Green Construction & Energy** career training program is a nine-week course to help workers launch careers in the renewable energy, energy efficiency and green construction sectors. Core

curriculum focuses on sustainable construction, safety, efficiency and performance upgrades, solar energy technology, as well as soft skills and work readiness training. Mi Casa's approach to workforce development is based on best practices for putting disadvantaged individuals back to work. Mi Casa utilizes a *sector-focused* approach to career training, which relies heavily on the input of industry experts and employers, from the design and implementation of the curriculum through the placement of graduates in full-time jobs.

A **power purchase agreement (PPA)** is an operating agreement whereby a third party entity can own and operate a solar array located on a host property. In other words, the building owner provides the location and the system provider installs, owns and operates the array. The electricity generated by the array is then sold back to the property owner. This type of arrangement allows renewable energy through solar to be implemented with reduced or no capital expense on the part of the property owner. Capital costs are recovered over time with the electricity generated.