



Path to Positive
Utah
Local Climate Leadership

Declaration

Utah is a pioneering state — strong, capable and innovative — with a firm connection to our values. As visionary leaders in business, government, higher education, faith and community organizations, we take shared responsibility for protecting our economy, air quality and environment. This includes climate change and its impact on our economic well-being, quality of life. We will inspire communities and smart growth to address climate change and lead others by demonstration and leadership.

Launched this

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MOVING FORWARD

A Guide to Building Momentum on Climate Solutions in Your Community



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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This guide is brought to you by the Local Government Commission, National League of Cities, Urban Sustainability Directors Network, and ecoAmerica. We'd like to thank our partners and advisors for their contributions to this guide.

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SUGGESTED CITATION

Barry, Daniel and Perkowitz, Robert
ecoAmerica (2018).
Moving Forward: A Guide to Building Momentum on Climate Solutions
ecoAmerica Washington, D.C.

Cover: Salt Lake City Mayor Jackie Biskupski at the Path to Positive Utah launch.
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WELCOME CIVIC LEADERS

No one ever ran for city council, county commissioner, or mayor to solve climate change, but its challenges are now present in our communities – along with opportunities to solve them.

Meaningful local climate solutions are within reach. **This guide will provide you with the ideas and resources to act.** By embedding local solutions in your planning and management activities, you can achieve financial benefits with little or no incremental costs. Reinvesting savings in additional climate action steps can help build the momentum further. Addressing climate change at the local level provides many benefits, including:

- **Creating healthier communities for all residents**
- **Protecting vulnerable residents and communities**
- **Saving money by cutting waste and promoting local renewables**
- **Spurring economic vitality and business investments**
- **Building property values and improving public safety**
- **Restoring natural assets that can protect from climate impacts**

This guide is for civic leaders in smaller and mid-size communities that want to lead on climate and sustainability but may lack full-time sustainability staff. We are teaming up to provide you with these resources, including guidance on how to best engage your residents using clear, positive, inclusive and relevant messages.

This is just the start. **Sign up for the monthly newsletter at PathToPositive.org to get fresh ideas and resources regularly, including webinars and more detailed guides.** And please share your thoughts and ideas with any of us so we can improve these resources.

Sincerely,



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WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW



Despite lingering disagreement about the causes of climate change, its impacts have reached cities and towns across America. That is why thousands of local leaders have already started working to cut energy use, use more renewables, improve transportation systems, reduce waste, and prepare their communities. Through local climate and sustainability action, cities and towns are creating jobs, adding transportation options, and spurring green energy investments that cut utility bills, provide energy choices, and increase livability. These actions give healthy and resilient communities a competitive edge in attracting businesses, residents, and workers.

Chances are, your community can already boast about having made some of these positive changes, but more are needed. For solutions to scale up, local leaders also need the active support and participation of residents and stakeholders. Here's what you need to know:

Climate Change and Communities: Local leaders are at the forefront of solving problems in their communities — and climate change is no different. Protecting citizen health and safety and building robust communities is a top priority. Beneficial solutions are within reach, so local leaders can act today to boost economic prosperity, improve sustainability and resilience, and move to energy independence.

Climate Justice and Just Transition: Climate change is a social and ethical issue. The people in our communities who can least afford to absorb the costs and impacts — the underserved, communities of color, the elderly, the ill, our children and future generations — will bear the brunt of climate pollution and increasingly frequent and intense impacts. And as the trend towards sustainable practices accelerates, economic practices that support workers' security and livelihoods are needed to ensure that the benefits of sustainable economies are shared broadly throughout your community.

The Politics of Climate Change: More and more local leaders have concluded that the risks and impacts of climate change transcend politics. The solutions and the opportunities that they can create for local businesses, economies, and residents are also bipartisan. There is always a place for debate on specific policies and programs, but the costs of inaction are becoming too dire for local leaders to ignore.

Climate Mitigation for Cleaner Communities: By reducing fossil fuel use, local governments will save money, cut pollution, and promote healthier communities. Increasing efficiency and renewable power, promoting cleaner local transportation, reducing waste, incorporating sustainable purchasing policies, and restoring the local environment are key steps towards climate mitigation.

Climate Resilience and Restoration for Safer Communities: In recent years there has been a dramatic increase in the frequency and severity of weather-related disasters in every region of America. Mounting evidence indicates that changes to our climate are exacerbating these disasters, bringing new threats to community health and safety. Local leaders are expected to anticipate risks to their communities and put policies and programs in place to reduce those risks.

Local Leadership for Engaged Communities: Local government accounts for just a fraction of their community's total energy use, transportation, purchasing, and waste. Local civic leaders are critical voices in providing solutions, but they need an engaged community to get the work done. Leaders can support and extend local efforts by incorporating positive messages about how progress toward energy and climate solutions makes communities more sustainable, prosperous, healthy, resilient, and safe.

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WHAT YOU NEED TO DO



As a local elected leader, your job is to solve local problems. As climate change impacts are felt in every city and town, leadership begins by making a statement, advancing solutions, and strengthening your community. The keys to success are executive leadership, an informed and motivated staff, consistent support, and participation from community leaders and institutions.

Make a Commitment: Inspire change by making a public commitment that signals members in your community to get involved. Your declaration on local solutions — featured on your website, social media, and in public comments — will inspire others to support your efforts. Focus on the benefits and cost savings that people in your community will realize with the shift to positive solutions like clean energy and greater efficiency, and how investing today will make your community stronger tomorrow.

Take Stock and Aim for Quick Successes: Local communities have taken thousands of concrete steps to reduce energy use and waste, promote conservation and savings, and provide healthier air and water. Take stock of what you are already doing, catalog your options for action, and increase your momentum with easily achievable and affordable steps that can be put in place quickly. Borrow successful ideas from other communities and seek out policy and program ideas from the resources included in this guide.

Establish Priorities and Make Informed Plans: A good plan need not be complicated or difficult. For smaller communities without the staffing and resources to develop a complex plan, a “getting started” effort as described in this guide is an effective way to motivate progress by revealing current solutions and setting specific goals and priorities.

Engage Your Community: Leaders in important sectors like business, higher education, health care, and faith are already making commitments to lead towards climate solutions. Local government can leverage this growing awareness and action by working with these leaders to broaden and deepen the call to action by engaging their congregants,

clients, customers, patients, members, and employees in supporting solutions.

Embed Solution and Recycle the Savings: Climate and sustainability solutions should be embedded into the ongoing business of local governance — not be a separate project. Initial savings from reducing energy and water use, sustainable purchasing and waste reduction can be used to support next steps. Set up a revolving fund to track savings and strategically reinvest them in additional efficiencies. Prioritizing efficiency and waste reduction will help sustainability efforts and engage your staff in achieving solutions.

Build from Success, and Keep Going: Climate impacts and solutions will continue to unfold over time, so think of these steps as a long-term investment in your community. As new technologies, policies, and opportunities arise, fit them into your community as you are able. A good climate solutions plan will be adjustable, scalable, and easy to improve upon in order to take advantage of new needs and opportunities.

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MITIGATION MATTERS



Government facilities and operations contribute only a small share of a community's pollution. Because the majority comes from non-governmental sectors (homes, businesses, churches, schools, hospitals, etc.), sustainable climate solutions require government leadership that activates broad community participation.

Don't Let Measurement Hold Back Action: Many communities measure their energy use, transportation systems, waste, and other sources of greenhouse gas emissions to establish a baseline against which to set goals and measure reductions. While detailed measurement is helpful, it is not a required first step. Don't hesitate to implement solutions — conserve energy and water, use renewable energy, provide transportation options, reduce waste, and institute sustainable purchasing practices — right away. The sooner you start, the sooner your community benefits.

Remember, It's for Your Community: Every community faces unique challenges and opportunities. Hundreds of sustainability solutions are available and virtually every community is already applying them at some level or scale. A useful first step for local leaders is to identify policies, programs, and practices that are already in place and evaluate whether they can be improved or scaled-up. These solutions can inspire actions that save money, improve health, and strengthen communities now. **Here are the broad categories of local solutions:**

Be Wise About Saving Energy: Local leaders can achieve cost-saving conservation goals by reducing energy use. Efficiency in buildings and vehicle fleets will gain the most savings.

- Save energy through facilities energy systems commissioning, weatherization, shading, lighting, appliances, and HVAC and water heating equipment upgrades
- Adopt green building standards that improve building design and efficiency for new construction and renovations
- Replace fossil fuel vehicles with hybrid or electric

Purchase or Produce Local Renewable Energy:

As major buyers of electricity and as opinion leaders, local governments can help nudge utilities towards a more renewable mix of power. Adding renewable energy to the grid is the most significant improvement communities can make to solving climate pollution issues.

- Set goals for purchasing green power from renewable sources — get to 100%
- Recruit leaders in surrounding communities to leverage green purchasing power
- Work with local utilities to make green power widely available to all
- Install solar or wind generation on local facilities and properties where possible

Savings Start at Home (and at Work): The [U.S. Green Building Council](#) estimates that 39% of climate emissions come from building energy use, mostly for heating and cooling. Greening the energy used in local homes and businesses can achieve dramatic cuts in climate pollution.

- Offer businesses and homeowners energy audits, free LED light bulbs, and appliance rebates
- Provide efficiency incentives and challenges to local businesses and homeowners

Most communities need more affordable housing. Invest in housing that saves energy and costs less through efficient construction, lighting and appliances, and by building new units in dense neighborhoods near public transportation and vital services.

- Provide energy efficiency incentives to housing developers and operators
- Strengthen building codes for affordable housing
- Develop a plan for “location efficiency” of affordable housing

Don't hesitate to implement solutions — conserve energy and water, use renewable energy, provide transportation options, reduce waste, and institute sustainable purchasing practices — right away. The sooner you start, the sooner your community benefits.

Mitigation Opportunities

A healthy natural environment in your community mitigates pollution, increases livability and property values, provides storm defenses, saves energy, and increases resiliency that artificial systems cannot match — and for less money.

Reroute Transportation Opportunities: Advances in community design, transportation technology, and shared and active transportation options are improving local transit. Reducing petroleum use and adding active transportation cuts pollution and makes communities healthier.

- Employ [Complete Streets](#) design policies locally and regionally
- Promote active transportation modes such as walking and biking
- Prioritize and invest in sustainable public transit options, including electric buses
- Add car sharing, bike sharing, and autonomous vehicle systems
- Promote dense, local development around transit systems
- Add electric vehicle charging facilities in public spaces

Waste Is Waste: Reducing waste throughout the supply chain will result in cost and energy savings and will lessen the impacts from the disposal of materials.

- Cut waste through packaging reduction, reuse and recycling, and composting within municipal operations, local businesses, and households
- Promote double sided copying, reusable water bottles, and recyclable materials
- Publish newsletters, bulletins, and guides online

Smart Purchasing Is Right on the Money: We can do more — and better — with the money we spend. Government purchasing power can leverage best practices that cut pollution, waste, and the use of toxic materials, and promote sustainability while saving money.

- Institute Environmentally Preferable Purchasing policies in government contracts
- Include green purchasing requirements for suppliers and contractors, like reusable or recyclable packaging, less toxic cleaning and office

supplies, and efficient electronics and appliances

- Elevate suppliers' and contractors' sustainability commitments and practices

Embed Solutions and Re-Invest Savings: Cost savings from reducing energy use and waste can be dedicated to other sustainability programs.

- Prioritize efficiency, waste reduction, and cost savings government-wide with a goal to reinforce the role all staff play in achieving these solutions
- Track your cost savings and reinvest them in more energy efficiencies

Nature Is Your Ally: A healthy natural environment in your community mitigates pollution, increases livability and property values, provides storm defenses, saves energy, and increases resiliency that artificial systems cannot match — and for less money.

- Increase the tree canopy for shade, beauty, clean air, storm water control, and habitat
- Repurpose underutilized open parcels for green space, parks, and gardens
- Use plants and landscaping to reduce energy use and control storm water flow
- Capture and use stormwater for irrigation

SELECTED MITIGATION RESOURCES

The Climate Registry: Local Governments Operation Protocol: Generate data to set greenhouse gas targets to reduce emissions, save money, and report progress.

EPA: EnergyStar Portfolio Manager: Save money and energy through planning and monitoring building efficiency, featuring efficient products and energy strategies for a range of buildings and facilities.

Urban Sustainability Directors Network: Sustainable Consumption Toolkit: Showcases how to fit

sustainable consumption and where communities can take action on food, housing, and purchasing.

The World Bank: CURB Tool - Climate Action for Urban Sustainability: Designed to help cities take action on climate by allowing them to map and measure different action plans. See also: C40 Cities

U.S. Communities Government Purchasing Alliance: Go Green Program: Helps cities identify and purchase certified green products.

NLC's Sustainable Cities Institute provides convening opportunities, technical assistance and leadership training for cities to mitigate and adapt to the effects of a changing climate. SCI helps cities implement proven strategies.

Smart Cities for Sustainability (USDN and ISC) is designed for use by sustainability directors to delve more deeply into smart city approaches, technologies, and uses of data to advance their local sustainability goals.

RESILIENCE MATTERS



In more and more communities, what were once potential risks of climate change are becoming real — with damaging consequences. Communities need to move beyond discussions about blame and seek solutions that will improve local safety, health, and property. It's time — our changing climate is impacting people, businesses, and our communities.

Primary Risks and Threats: Resilience is the ability to predict, prepare for, and recover from climate impacts when they happen. Climate risks and resilience are different for each community, so local leaders must assess and plan around their unique risk profile. Craft plans to cut the pollution that is damaging our climate while also preparing for the anticipated risks and impacts across three primary risk and impact phenomena:

1. Flooding from sea level rise and intense and frequent precipitation
2. Weather variability and extremes, including wind, precipitation and drought
3. Temperature extremes such as intense and/or prolonged heat and cold

Who Bears the Brunt: These major climate risk phenomena affect local cities and towns across three primary community systems, resulting in impacts such as those sampled below:

- **People and Communities:** Impacts to health and safety; social and psychological harm and disruption; economic or job instability; dislocation and social disruption
- **Built Systems:** Damage to public and private property and buildings; damage to and disruption of public energy, sanitary, communications, and transportation infrastructure
- **Natural Systems:** Reduction in air and water quality and availability; loss of food security; species migration; damage to local green spaces, trees and animals; variation and increase in vector diseases and invasive species

Key Considerations for Planning and Action:

Evaluation and planning are critical to local preparations for anticipated climate risks. Develop a clear understanding of potential risks and how to minimize them to better engage your community. The checklist below draws from [NOAA's U.S. Climate Resilience Toolkit](#) and guiding principles from The White House Council on Environmental Quality:

Climate risks and resilience are different for each community, so local leaders must assess and plan around their unique risk profile.

Assess Local Hazards, Vulnerabilities, and Risks:

- Assess likely local impacts using historical records and climate models
- Evaluate the location and condition of critical safety, energy, water, transportation and communications infrastructure
- Apply risk-management methods, tools, and resources to identify options that limit vulnerability and build resilience

Investigate Options, Prioritize, Plan and Revise:

- Assess efficacy, costs, and benefits of risk mitigation and best practices
- Implement plans that prioritize short, medium, and long-term actions
- Incorporate plans into core policies, and programs across all departments of local government, and ask local institutions to do the same
- Evaluate performance and revise plans regularly

Take Action Through Strong Partnerships:

- Prioritize people, places, and infrastructure that are most vulnerable, especially vulnerable communities and the institutions that serve them
- Garner diverse community and institutional support for planning and implementation
- Coordinate plans across multiple sectors
- Refresh plans through regular communications and response integration

Resilience Opportunities



Maximize Mutual and Ecosystem-Based Benefits

- Adopt measures supporting energy, climate and sustainability goals
- Integrate goals for preparedness, resource management, and costs savings
- Improve ecosystem resilience, and protect critical ecosystem services to reduce human and natural vulnerabilities and promote restoration

6 Ways to Prepare People and Restore Communities

Assessing your community's risk and the range of available solutions will provide you with the framework for taking action. Every community will require some mix of measures that protect and restore people, places, and nature. Here are some ideas that apply to all communities:

1. **Start with People:** Assess anticipated climate impacts in your community based on vulnerability levels. Prepare at-risk communities (elderly, youth, underserved, communities of color, and those who are exposed to natural threats) and increase their resiliency. Provide dedicated communications and resources to these affected communities.
2. **Understand the Range of Human Impacts:** Climate damage and disruption can have a broad range of human impacts: loss of property and security; reduced mobility; loss of energy, water, and communications services; loss of jobs and resources; illness, injury, social disruption; and psychological stress and anxiety. Build awareness of the risks and likely impacts and prepare your community to address them — both proactively and in response to climate events. Resilient community systems strengthen people as well as infrastructure.
3. **Prepare Comprehensively:** Include climate impacts throughout emergency plans and preparation activities, including a broad community-wide emergency notification system. Promote community preparedness through businesses, schools, health care providers, and churches. Identify and activate shelters in extreme weather events. Urge municipal

employees and concerned residents to enroll in emergency preparedness and response training.

4. **Make Nature Your Ally:** Green infrastructure can temper weather extremes. Plant climate-resistant shade trees that are resilient in severe weather. Install flood tolerant plants in rain gardens and bioswales to capture stormwater. Use berms, swales and other natural barriers to control water. Limit construction in low-lying areas or wetlands.
5. **Plan and Build with Impacts in Mind:** Implement zoning and building requirements that account for weather-related risks like wind, water, and heat. Reduce energy and water use and waste. Limit impervious surface area to allow for the absorption of storm water. Consider set-backs to avoid building in flood zones. Elevate critical building systems that are vulnerable to high water events.
6. **Beat the Heat:** Institute a long-term tree canopy care and restoration plan. Create green, solar, and cool roof programs to mitigate urban heat. Provide shade structures in urban heat islands. Activate cooling centers in public buildings during extreme heat. Provide free public transportation on “bad air” or extreme heat days.

Every community will require some mix of measures that protect and restore people, places, and nature.

SELECTED RESILIENCE RESOURCES

U.S. Climate Resilience Toolkit:

Tools to help manage climate-related risks and opportunities, and guide in building resilience to extreme events.

CAKE: Climate Resilience Toolkit:

Provides a practical, flexible approach to help communities improve resilience by setting priorities to manage risks.

National Institute of Standards and Technology: Community Resilience: 200 tools to help you take steps to build resilience.

Georgetown Climate Center:

Adaptation Clearinghouse: A database and networking site that serves policymakers and others who are working to help communities adapt to climate change.

The Institute for Sustainable Communities' **Regional Resilience Primer** shares promising practices about regional climate change adaptation across the U.S.

The American Association for the Advancement of Science project, “What We Know,” is dedicated

to ensuring that the three R's of climate are communicated to the public: Reality, Risk, and Response.

Alliance of Regional Collaboratives for Climate Adaption (ARCCA):

Tools for developing adaption policy, forming regional collaboratives, ICARP clearinghouse, Cal-Adapt, and other maps of risks.

CIVIC ENGAGEMENT MATTERS



Effective climate and sustainability solutions depend on robust and purposeful engagement of leaders throughout the community. Public engagement builds awareness and support for solutions across the private sector.

Why Engage the Community?

Public awareness and participation makes for good local public policy. Engaging the entire community on climate solutions magnifies local government action. Citizen and stakeholder participation in developing sustainable policies can be a rewarding process that leads to gains in the design, participation, and outcomes of local programs. Good engagement is both a process and an outcome — a journey and a destination.

Who Is Engaging Their Communities?

Leadership on climate solutions is coming from all walks of civic life, from elected leaders and governments to businesses, from faith leaders in every religious denomination to physicians and public health officials. This broad-based leadership has little to do with the science or politics of climate change, and everything to do with a growing sense that the problems are becoming acute and the time for broad and inclusive action has arrived. A hallmark of success occurs when local leaders grasp the urgent need for action and take it upon themselves to lead their community towards solutions. **Examples of local leadership initiatives include:**

The [National League of Cities](#) has taken an assertive stance in promoting resilience among its member communities. Since 2015, NLC has hosted annual Resilient Cities Summits including more than 50 communities, and also convenes a cohort of 7 to 10 communities for a year-long Leadership in Community Resilience program. In addition to advocating for visionary policy perspectives and innovative funding for resiliency, NLC emphasizes the role of inclusive outreach and community engagement in building stronger communities. Prioritizing the needs of vulnerable residents and neighborhoods and involving

those communities in the planning process is central to crafting comprehensive and equitable resilience plans. More importantly, building collaborative relationships with all sectors and communities can ensure that resilience programs grow more effective over time.

Since setting a goal to be the most livable city in America, [Evanston](#) has emphasized employee and community engagement as major components of reaching that goal. In addition to launching community partnerships and workforce development programs, Evanston also initiated a training program to educate public employees about the rationale, goals, and elements of the city's livability program. Each year, all 800 city employees attend the Evanston Livability Academy, a half-day session designed to elevate their role in making the community more livable and sustainable. Led by the city manager and senior staff representing all city departments, the Livability Academy has established partnerships and collaboration across city departments while showing employees how their work supports the community's quality of life.

Los Angeles, a city many people associate with traffic congestion, air pollution, and waste, has emerged as a global leader in applying positive solutions to local climate impacts. Launched in 2014, [Path to Positive Los Angeles](#) (P2PLA) supports this success by bringing inspired new leaders to the fore and by equipping them to assert and achieve commitments to local solutions. P2PLA fosters supportive connections between local political and community leaders and grows relationships that generate public support for policy work. P2PLA is a vital voice for regional climate solutions with a Leadership Circle of more than 250 prominent local leaders supported by sector and city-wide gatherings. In 2017, Climate Day LA brought 1,200 Angelenos together and featured Mayor Eric Garcetti, youth and civic groups, and national faith leader Jackie DuPont-Walker of the AME Church.

Originally launched in Salt Lake City, [Path to Positive Utah](#) quickly gained interest across the state. In SLC, Mayor Jackie Biskupski has shown continuing local

Citizen and stakeholder participation in developing sustainable policies can be a rewarding process that leads to gains in the design, participation, and outcomes of local programs.



leadership by creating a Clean Energy Implementation Plan which will provide the city with 100% renewable energy by 2032. In a politically conservative state that faces risks to its communities and economy from climate change, generating broad participation meant learning how to support moderate, respected voices willing to discuss these risks and explore state and local solutions. Launching a strong program hinged on recruiting mainstream leaders from the business, political, faith, and civic sectors who would provide a call to action that resonates in Utah communities.



Sector-based programs like [Blessed Tomorrow](#) help local houses of worship integrate climate solutions and strengthen the moral connections between faith and climate. Guided by a diverse coalition of faith leaders, Blessed Tomorrow is committed to creating a positive future for families, communities, and the world by providing resources to reduce pollution, save energy and money, and support leaders and individuals in climate solutions and collective action.



[Climate for Health](#) is a national program that brings together leaders and institutions across the health sector committed to advancing climate solutions to protect the health of our patients and communities. Participants work to reduce their own climate impacts in hospitals, clinics, offices, and facilities throughout the country and to inspire their peers to do the same. The program also helps inform the American public about the health risks posed by a changing climate and clarifies the connection between their own health and the health of our environment.

CIVIC ENGAGEMENT BASICS

Leadership for Community Engagement

Like any leadership goal worth pursuing, good community engagement requires a focused effort that builds core skills and capacity, expands competency and confidence through practice and reflection, and incorporates learning from experience and new perspectives. What do you do?

Engage the community as deeply as possible through influential community leaders who support your goals.

Get Comfortable Talking and Leading on Climate Action

Look at the issues and the solutions from your constituents' perspectives. Understand your audience and "meet them where they live." Lead by example to show how local solutions save money, build a stronger community, and improve people's lives. Create leadership opportunities so your community can help you provide solutions. How you present your climate leadership matters, so use inspirational messages that resonate. Practice good communications, from broad framing to specific message content. Evaluate and update your materials to focus on local solutions that support people and their values.

Craft a Plan Together and Engage Everyone

Engage the community as deeply as possible through influential community leaders who support your goals. Work with the community to develop specific climate solutions that provide real benefits. Include residents and stakeholders so they can do their part through easy actions. Provide them with specific measures that will get them started. Track progress and showcase victories and benefits so people see themselves as part of the solution and are inspired to do more.

Become a Role Model in Local Climate Solutions

Addressing climate risks and opportunities in your community is similar to leading on other important community issues. As a local leader part of your job is to respond to problems by finding solutions and leading the community towards them. You are in a unique position to mobilize your community. The imperative to lead is on your side, the time is now, and you are not alone.



Learn About Climate Solutions and Their Co-benefits

Get advice and guidance from other local leaders and communities that are also enacting local climate and sustainability solutions. Look to replicate or adopt the work being done by businesses, schools, institutions and leaders within your own community. Learn from as many resources as possible, including from the resources included in this guide.

Approach Local Climate Solutions Like a Campaign

Campaign skills are familiar to most local elected officials and their staff. The perseverance and engagement that make campaigns successful will work as you advocate for support of your local climate and sustainability goals.

- Express a highly visible purpose and goal
- Develop a disciplined message and repeat it often through many platforms
- Garner broad, visible support from community leaders and institutions
- Challenge trusted leaders to involve their communities in the solutions
- Get members of the community to help in little and big ways
- Use local successes and savings, resiliency, and restoration stories to advance goals

Keep Going

Climate impacts and solutions will continue to unfold over time. New policy, technology and social solutions will continue to arise. Learn from success — and failure — and make adjustments. Refresh your solutions plan and engagement program to leverage opportunities. Raise the bar toward achieving higher goals.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

1. **Make a Commitment or Declaration:** People are more responsive to calls to action from trusted, local leaders. A visible commitment that declares the importance of addressing local climate change risks and opportunities will resonate within the community and will provide them with the signal that these issues are important to them.
2. **Engage Government:** Make sustainability and resiliency core missions of your government. Identify and assign staff leads across government agencies and departments to serve as the point persons for climate and resiliency work. Facilitate collaboration and communication between these agency staff leads. Elevate the call for solutions on these agencies' websites and public communications. The leadership you demonstrate will make it easier to ask, or require, local businesses and residents to pitch in.
3. **Empower Utilities:** The energy sources used to generate power are the most important factor in reducing climate pollution. Transitioning from fossil fuels (including coal and natural gas) towards renewable sources like solar and wind is essential to reducing climate pollution. Insist on clean sources of power to send a strong signal to utilities to transition away from fossil fuels. With the costs of renewables steadily falling, government, business, and consumer demand for green energy will help make the business case for utilities in transition.
4. **Recruit Community Sector Leaders:** Chances are you are already working with local elected and civic leaders to address climate change. Get them to publicly support your plans and solutions. Their visible public support will publicize and amplify the work you are doing. Ask these leaders to recruit their colleagues to speak up, and to include climate commitments in communications to their clients, customers, parishioners, members, associates, and constituents. Recruit these leaders as hosts and presenters at community forums and meetings, and to provide testimony at public hearings to promote climate solutions.

Make sustainability and resiliency core missions of your government. Identify and assign staff leads across government agencies and departments to serve as the point persons for climate and resiliency work. Facilitate collaboration and communication between these agency staff leads.



- 5. Get into the Media:** “Owned” media (websites, bulletins, newsletters and social media) and “earned” media (newspaper, radio, and television coverage) provide local leaders with numerous pathways to engage the public in your climate work. Share stories that inspire hope and action. Keep it positive by framing the benefits of your local solutions. When “bad news” stories arise, acknowledge the seriousness of the challenges and then pivot to the positive impacts that local government, stakeholders, and residents are making on solutions. For every bad news story, offer three good news stories.
- 6. Engage Your Residents and Show Them Easy Solutions:** Real change will come when ordinary residents participate in climate solutions. Daily, personal choices — about energy purchasing and conservation, reducing waste, transportation options — are the keystones to accelerating sustainable, pro-climate action. Some of these choices come at a cost, but all of them come with tangible immediate and long-term benefits. Use engaged leaders to assure your residents that a positive, sustainable future is within their grasp. Once you have made the case for clean energy, efficiency, equity and healthy choices, it is critical to point people in the right direction. Provide a menu of easy choices, such as adjusting thermostats and switching to LED lights, purchasing renewable energy, taking public transit or buying a bike, eating seasonally and cutting back on meat. Start by offering easy and cheap solutions (that can save money), and gradually step up the options to include more complex choices that may require more of an investment (but will still save money).
- 7. Go Beyond Your Borders to Tell Your Neighbors, and the World:** Local leaders in America are accomplishing tremendous amounts of good in their communities — in climate solutions, fair and affordable housing, job creation and a host of other vital community issues — by borrowing the

best policies and practices of their peers. Employ ideas that work in your community and share any improvements that could benefit leaders in other communities. Most importantly, form alliances with leaders in towns and counties in your immediate area. The power of regional action to bolster local solutions, through energy and transit planning, purchasing and contracting agreements, and land use practices, will build momentum and provide tangible solutions across many more communities.

No one ever ran for city council, county commissioner, or mayor to solve climate change, but its challenges are now present in our communities — along with opportunities to solve them.

SELECTED ENGAGEMENT RESOURCES

Path to Positive Communities:

empowers local and regional leaders to maximize the opportunities climate solutions bring to the American people and their communities, and inspire their residents and other leaders to support solutions at local, regional, and national levels.

ecoAmerica:

ecoAmerica builds institutional leadership, public support, and political will for climate solutions in the United States. We help national mainstream organizations elevate their climate leadership, providing them strategy, tools, and resources

to demonstrate visible climate leadership, empower climate literacy, engage all residents, and build collective action and advocacy.

Climate for Health:

is a national initiative led by a diverse network of health leaders from across the health sector representing key health care, public health, clinical, and medical institutions and associations.

Blessed Tomorrow:

is a coalition of diverse religious partners united as faithful stewards of creation. Together, we inspire

our communities to take action today on one of the greatest moral challenges of our era — protecting our shared home.

Institute for Sustainable

Communities: Empowering Community Resilience shares ways to reinvent community engagement, build capacity for deeper engagement, and communicate with diverse stakeholders.

ecoAmerica

building climate leadership

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