ACLA 2022

AMERICAN CLIMATE LEADERSHIP AWARDS

Climate Mobilization Project

climatemobilizationproject.org/

This guide offers a successful and stepwise model for you to replicate in your community. It is part of a series featuring the award-winning programs from the finalists of the American Climate Leadership Awards 2022 by ecoAmerica.

OVERVIEW

To multiply the impact of policy victories at the city and county level, we must resource and support climate organizers who hold the necessary passion, commitment and lived experience to change communities. The Climate Mobilization Network leverages proven coaching, training and peer-sharing strategies, unlocking organizers' power to: build broader, more effective movements; replicate learning from successful city- and county-level innovations; and center the most ambitious climate justice policies, building momentum for a collective climate movement.

STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE

1. Identify the target audience for your network, which might include climate movement organizations or others with intersecting goals that need and will benefit from a support network. Reflect upon your audience. Will they have enough alignment with each other, and with you as a convening organization, to learn together? Are their theories of change the same, or different? Does your choice of audience allow you to direct resources toward organizations rooted in frontline communities?

2. Begin assessing the needs of organizations in your target audience. What are they struggling with? What patterns do you see emerging? Are there common struggles, shared needs, or challenges that you hear about over and over? Similarly, what successes and community assets do you see? Are there consistent patterns? These observations may point to successful strategies or approaches to elevate and, similarly, to challenges or issues that need to be addressed.

3. Develop an initial proposal for a network, including details such as meeting frequency, meeting content, and additional support (toolkits, training, coaching, etc) and expertise that the network would offer. Establish shared values (commitments to anti-racism, equity and decentralizing power). Gather feedback from the organizations currently using your resources about what they want out of a network, and how your ideas do or do not meet their needs. Adjust your work accordingly.

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4. Gather confirmed/potential member organizations for a network kickoff call. Share what the network's purpose is and the support it will provide, based on feedback collected to date. Support network members in creating agreements about how they will work together, as well as a process for making decisions, fostering communication and addressing grievances. Make clear the process for formally committing to the network and recruiting/onboarding new members (even if commitment is not yet required).

5. Set goals for your network and work collaboratively with your initial members. Are you working to help organizations overcome a specific challenge, adopt best practices, or apply a certain theory of change? When sensible, consider ways to make your goals measurable, specific/tangible, timebound and also consider goals that may be difficult to measure but are essential to the kind of culture and commitment to equity and justice you aim to foster. Establish evaluation process.

6. Choose one or two key challenges, and begin piloting resources — toolkits, trainings, discussion groups — that address those challenges in a way that is tailored to your audience's expressed needs. Remember that this will be a living and growing library of resources and is a starting point for evolution and expansion.

7. Start gathering feedback about resources/supports that are more/less useful to members, and how. Pay attention to similarities, differences and common themes. Where are their theories of change the same or different? What best practices are being used, or are lacking? What lessons are you learning? Reflect back on the goals shaped in #5. Consider if you are making progress and what shifts will ensure improvement and growth in shared values.

8. Based on the answers to #7, reassess the resources you are offering and opportunities to improve network operations. Continue gathering and documenting feedback. Be sure to be intentional about scheduling focused time with your team to reflect and organize what you are learning and arrive at a consensus about how your approach might change. Share these results back with your network to ensure transparency.

9. As you learn more about organizations' needs, consider offering coaching. Coaching is a proven tool for accelerating the development of people who are leading social change organizations. Organizations can benefit greatly when their leaders spend 1-2 hours a month with coaches who are experts in the type of work they are trying to do. Seek out your peers for vetted coach recommendations and ensure your coaches are also trained in your goals and approach.

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10. Nurture network members' leadership by providing time to problem-solve and share feedback on each others' work; making network meetings a platform where organizations can examine and uplift excellent work and share lessons learned. Document key findings in ways that support future learning and replication by other network members, and that will inform the creation of new tools and resources.

Climate Mobilization Project - Climate Mobilization Network is an ACLA 2022 Finalist. For more information and replication guides, go to ecoAmerica.org.