



AMERICAN CLIMATE  
LEADERSHIP AWARDS

# Elected Officials to Protect America

[protectingamerica.net](http://protectingamerica.net)

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

Our mission is to inspire and create solutions to the climate crisis by mobilizing veterans who are policymakers in partnership with frontline leaders. The creation of a veteran-led Leadership Council nationally and in each state and territory will inspire governments at all levels to declare a climate emergency, and implement a climate emergency plan that protects our security and health, enacts urgent solutions, ensures environmental justice, and creates prosperity in our communities.

## STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE

1. Connect with Elected Officials to Protect America (EOPA) staff to receive and be trained on our Veterans Field Manual and Leadership Council Field Manual that provides detailed information on forming a State or Regional Leadership Council.
2. Map the community and national foundations, high net worth funders, and organizations who may support this effort financially in your state or territory. Connect with EOPA's development team to create a development plan.
3. Research and utilize the diverse list of veterans who are lawmakers and frontline lawmakers EOPA already has identified to create an outreach list. Map the advocates and advisories.
4. Set up meetings in person and over zoom with lawmakers and identify co-chairs of the Leadership Council. Ensure gender balance and diversity and 5-15 lawmakers. This is very time intensive to schedule and requires peer-to-peer relationships. Asking for lawmaker-to-lawmaker outreach is vital in setting up the next meeting. Utilize EOPA's existing network to gain credibility when starting.
5. Listen and ask questions about how the State Leadership Council and EOPA can support the lawmaker's policy initiatives. Do they need a social media video highlighting their plan to install a circular aquaponics system? Connect them with EOPA's media production arm. A major goal is to support their innovative ideas.

6. Mobilize the newly formed Leadership Council around the specific goal to bring them up the ladder of engagement. This usually starts with boosting the national sign on letter and a press conference. Make a plan with monthly goals, broken down weekly to achieve the 200 signatures, three social/digital media videos, op-eds, and an article in EOPA's ProtectEarth News magazine, lawmaker-to-lawmaker educational events, and press conferences within six months after establishment of the Leadership Council. Be flexible to their needs and political environment.
7. Bring the council members together in DC with EOPA and USF's Certificate in Public Leadership. Connecting over shared values and goals will inspire and motivate them to become more engaged. Continue peer-to-peer engagement, relationship building, and mutual support.
8. Work with EOPA's production team to create a produced short film that highlights the lawmakers "story of self" that illustrates why they are passionate about protecting our planet and people and bridge it to a policy solution that reinforces the need for urgent state and federal climate solutions. This will be used to educate fellow lawmakers, the media, and the public. A 45 second, 2 minute and 20 second version will also be produced.
9. Prepare the council for a National Climate Emergency Electric Bus Tour led by veteran elected officials. Identify those who want to join the tour and those who want to meet the tour at their Capitol.
10. Please remember to follow the detailed standard operating procedures in the field manuals. It is easy to take a short cut, but that will create more work later. Remember to ensure the lawmakers have ownership over the leadership council and that we are there as supporting and structural staff. Many lawmakers have innovative proven initiatives and policies that are working in their districts that can be modeled nationally.

Elected Officials to Protect America is an ACLA 2022 Finalist. For more information and replication guides, go to [ecoAmerica.org](https://ecoAmerica.org).