



AMERICAN CLIMATE  
LEADERSHIP AWARDS

# Young Evangelicals for Climate Action (YECA)

[yecaction.org/fellows](http://yecaction.org/fellows)

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

The Climate Leadership Fellows Program equips young leaders to create projects that address unique needs in their communities. Since 2014, Christian fellows have spurred cultural, social, and institutional changes on college campuses by starting recycling and composting, hosting educational events, installing solar panels, creating clubs, and meeting with school administrators. Replicating this model will help organizations train the next generation of leaders to effectively act on climate in their particular communities.

## STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE

- 1. Determine program goals, audience, and objectives.** This program can be redesigned to fit the unique needs and goals of any organization looking to empower new leaders. To begin, map out your goals for a fellowship program and define your target audience.
- 2. Establish a leadership team.** Now that you have created some goals and narrowed in on an audience, it is time to create a leadership team that will manage your program. At YECA, this includes staff and a committee of volunteers who advise and serve as guest speakers. Figure out who will be needed to plan the program, promote it, create training, and manage the day to day tasks, including ongoing mentorship.
- 3. Set a timeline.** YECA's College Fellowship runs from August-May (the school year), and the Community Fellowship runs for 9 months. This allows for rest and planning and works well for project implementation. With your team, determine the timeline for the fellowship period itself, recruitment (see 5), training, and regular check-ins.



4. **Raise funds.** YECA utilizes funds to pay stipends, provide project support, and send honorariums to guest speakers. Raising money will be key to providing necessary support and determining the size of your program. To raise funds, YECA has a leadership development fund on our donation page. We also seek out grants to help fund the program. Include this program in your existing development work by seeking relevant grants, promoting during individual outreach, and seeking partners.
5. **Recruit and select cohort.** Now it is time to find your inaugural cohort! Create an application that asks basic questions and questions tailored to your organization and goals. You should consider individual interviews or group info sessions as part of the process. You can determine how many applicants to accept by referring to your fundraising accomplishments and calculating how many fellows you can afford. Please consider equity, diversity, and inclusion when selecting your cohort.
6. **Plan training.** This online or in-person retreat is your chance to provide the tools and resources for effective activism. Figure out what you want to teach and who the best instructor for that topic may be. Invite guest speakers early and remember to offer honorariums for equity. As time allows, add bonding activities and journaling time. For essential learning topics, we recommend anti-racism, climate science 101, effective climate communication, and developing SMART (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant, and Time-bound) goals/project plans.
7. **Collect project proposals.** Required project proposals are a crucial way to ensure that fellows have a solid plan in place and to enable your team to provide the best support possible. A few weeks after training, depending on your timeline, collect these proposals and review them. YECA does not have a required template and encourages folks to use a system that works for them. We do provide numerous samples for fellows to choose from.
8. **Begin regular guidance/mentorship.** The most challenging part is over! You've recruited and trained your first cohort, congratulations! Now, it is time to schedule regular check-ins to provide feedback, accountability, and community for your fellows. Utilize a polling software to determine the best time to meet. YECA Fellows meet bi-weekly on Zoom, and your timeline can help to determine your meeting frequency. We require these calls and find it is instrumental for fellowship success.
9. **Collect reports and track metrics.** YECA requires two reports during the fellowships- a mid-year and final report. We encourage you to develop a report template and timeline to gather key metrics and to help fellows plan for the coming months. Be sure to include questions about what additional training or feedback would be helpful! Compile key metrics, such as number of events, as this will serve you well with fundraising.

- 10. Plan and provide new opportunities as an offramp.** The climate movement needs as many people as possible, so we recommend providing an offramp for fellows as they conclude their time in the program. YECA encourages people to join our Climate Advocates Program to stay plugged in. Consider what programs or teams may benefit from fellows graduates and encourage them to join! Make sure they are signed up for email updates and offer to provide references.

Young Evangelicals for Climate Action is an ACLA 2022 Finalist. For more information and replication guides, go to [ecoAmerica.org](https://ecoAmerica.org).