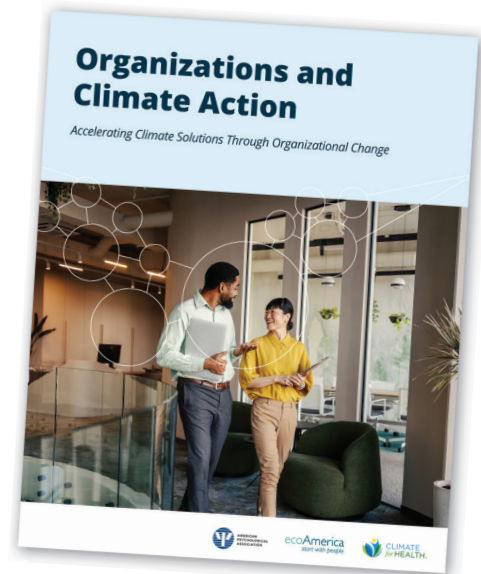


ORGANIZATIONS AND CLIMATE ACTION

Accelerating Climate Solutions Through Organizational Change

The 5th report from ecoAmerica and the American Psychological Association

Climate concern is widespread, but action has not kept pace. Organizations, from businesses and nonprofits to associations, schools, and faith groups, represent one of the largest untapped opportunities for climate solutions. Drawing on peer-reviewed research, this report shows how culture, leadership, and motivation can foster durable collective action at scale. It offers practical guidance for advancing climate action, showing how everyone has a role, from early-career employees and managers to senior leaders and boards.



Why organizations matter

Individual action alone isn't enough. Structural barriers and social-psychological dynamics, including pluralistic ignorance, in which people underestimate how many others share their concern, limit personal action. Climate action requires coordinated, collective action that reshapes norms, systems, and incentives.

Organizations multiply impact. With more than 170 million Americans in the workforce and most adults spending much of their waking lives in organizations, these settings have enormous power to shape beliefs, norms, and behavior at scale. Their influence also ripples outward through supply chains, partners, and communities.

Organizations offer a durable path forward. With federal climate priorities shifting across administrations, organizations of all kinds can provide steady, trusted climate leadership that outlasts any single election cycle.

Organizational culture shapes action

Organizational culture shapes what people think and do. It's reflected in what an organization rewards, discusses, and treats as normal, and it determines whether climate concern turns into action.

Organizational values, norms, and symbols form the foundation of culture. Climate action sticks when it connects to values people already hold, such as integrity or innovation, and is reinforced through everyday norms, visible symbols, and shared practices.

Visibility counters silence. Public commitments, stories, mission and vision statements, and other physical symbols signal that concern is widespread and action is expected. Normalizing climate-protective behavior breaks the cycle of pluralistic ignorance.

Culture change requires behavioral change

Lasting change follows a clear plan. It starts with gathering data, engaging diverse stakeholders, communicating consistently, making sustainable choices the easy default, and embedding progress into formal policies and performance systems so it outlasts any one champion.

Leadership, formal and informal, drives transformation. Transformational leaders who build trust, share a compelling vision, and lead with empathy are most effective, and these skills can be developed by anyone, regardless of title.

Motivation needs to be nurtured. Sustained engagement comes from meeting people's needs for competence, connection, and autonomy, paired with practical supports like incentives, feedback, and progress tracking — tailored to where each person starts.

Climate action benefits both people and organizations. It can ease climate-related distress and support well-being, while organizations that align with employees' climate values see stronger recruitment, retention, and engagement.

Everyone can lead

Anyone can become a climate leader. Early-career employees can shift norms and build networks; managers can model behavior and integrate climate into daily work; senior leaders and boards can set strategy, allocate resources, and back commitments with accountability.

HR and administrative functions are especially powerful. Embedding climate competencies into hiring, training, and performance management — and creating psychological safety for employees to speak up — helps sustainability take root across the whole organization.

Change is driven from both the inside and the outside. Internal actors can model and promote effective ways to think about and respond to climate challenges, while external actors can create visibility and public pressure. Of note: external pressure is most effective when organizational insiders can translate it into meaningful action.

Resilience sustains the work. Because driving change can be demanding, protecting mental health, building social connections, and practices like mindfulness and time in nature help change agents sustain their impact over the long term.



**Discover how your organization can help
turn climate concern into collective action.**

Read the Full Report

ecoAmerica.org/organizations-and-climate-action