

COUNTY CLIMATE COALITION

Campaign Toolkit

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INTRODUCTION



The Earth is facing a climate crisis, driven by fossil fuels.¹ Emissions from coal, oil, and gas are not only raising temperatures, but leading to stronger storms, deadlier heatwaves, and increasingly devastating wildfires. If we want to avert the worst and see a future we can live with, we have to leave fossil fuels behind – and fast.

Against this backdrop, in 2015, 195 countries and governments agreed to the United Nations Paris Climate Agreement, a historic international agreement to limit global warming to 2 degrees Celsius (with best efforts to limit warming to 1.5 degrees).

Each party to the agreement pledged to cut fossil fuel emissions and embrace practical solutions at home to help the world reach this goal. As one of these parties, the US committed to its own target of reducing carbon emissions by 26 to 28 percent below 2005 levels by 2025.²

¹ <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2018/oct/09/tipping-points-could-exacerbate-climate-crisis-scientists-fear>

² <https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/blog/2016/09/03/president-obama-united-states-formally-enters-paris-agreement>

Then, in June 2017, President Trump announced his intention to withdraw the United States from the Paris Agreement despite the dire consequences of the planet's rising temperatures and widespread opposition across the country and around the world.

The decision could have profound consequences. US withdrawal could result in an additional 3 billion tons of carbon dioxide released into the atmosphere each year through 2030, and global temperatures rising up to an additional 0.3 degrees Celsius by 2100.³

It was a dark day for the climate movement. But what happened next was a shining moment of hope and inspiration. Because, almost immediately, local communities, states, businesses, and more stepped up to pledge that if the federal government wouldn't act to fulfill our Paris Agreement commitments, they would.

In the year and more since the president's announcement, local commitments to climate action have only strengthened with more and more communities embracing practical climate solutions in every aspect of business and life.

The result is a growing movement of communities working to solve the climate crisis and create a healthy, sustainable future for us all. If you're ready to join them, read on.

Before moving forward with any work or communication associated with the County Climate Coalition, including contacting county officials, we ask that you contact our dedicated campaign organizers through chapters@climatereality.com. It is essential that we are aware of any county communication as we must ensure that we are in compliance with the laws in those counties and/or states. Additionally, we always ask that you thoroughly research your county, state, and city lobbying laws. It is important that you are certain you understand what constitutes lobbying in your jurisdiction. You should never attempt to register or report yourself, your chapter, or Climate Reality's lobbying activity. Email chapters@climatereality.com if you have any questions about your city, county, and state laws.

³ https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/monkey-cage/wp/2017/11/21/trumps-noncooperation-threatens-climate-finance-under-the-paris-agreement/?utm_term=.42ed5b207a24

⁴ <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/what-happens-if-the-u-s-withdraws-from-the-paris-climate-change-agreement/>; <https://inside-climateneeds.org/news/01062017/donald-trump-paris-climate-change-agreement-decided>

THE COUNTY CLIMATE COALITION



In response to the president’s announcement, the County of Santa Clara passed a resolution reaffirming its commitment to the Paris Agreement and urging the federal government to fulfill its pledges.

This resolution committed the county to enact results-oriented strategies for reducing emissions at a local level. The County of Santa Clara then created the County Climate Coalition to bring together other counties from across the United States committed to upholding the Paris Agreement.

By joining the coalition, counties agree to combat climate change through a range of practical steps, including:

- Developing renewable energy.
- Supporting alternative community energy providers.
- Enhanced waste diversion.
- Environmentally friendly vehicles.

- Reducing water use.
- Other local solutions

Through these actions, local governments can not only help limit global temperature rise, but also advance environmental sustainability, protect public health, and foster innovation.

Your county can be a part of this growing movement by joining the County Climate Coalition and committing to uphold our Paris Agreement commitments. But for counties to act and join the coalition, they need to hear from their constituents.

This is where you come in. By speaking to your neighbors, colleagues, and others in your community and personally meeting with county officials, you can help build the public support and political will for your county to act on climate.

But in order to get your county on board, you need to know the lay of the land and start taking local action. Then, you'll build your campaign plan, recruit volunteers and chapter members, and finally, get to work!

HOW TO BUILD YOUR CAMPAIGN



All the information you need to start, plan, launch, and celebrate your campaign can be found in this *County Climate Coalition Campaign Toolkit*.

Please let us know if you and your chapter are interested in starting a County Climate Coalition campaign in your area so we can give you guidance on your campaign plan, facilitate connections with other leaders, and answer any questions you may have. We want to help!

There are a number of resources that will be useful to you as you run your campaign. Before you begin, we recommend that you familiarize yourself with the following:

- [Campaign Planning Chapter Training Series Webinar](#)

Be sure to follow the steps detailed in this kit and let Climate Reality know when you start planning and running your campaign. Please reach out to the Climate Reality Campaigns Team with any questions and to keep us up-to-date with how you are doing at chapters@climatereality.com.

DO YOUR RESEARCH, KNOW YOUR COMMUNITY

This section focuses on researching your county and running a County Climate Coalition Campaign. Some of the key areas to research include:

- Any existing climate resolution proposals and/or successes.
- The processes for approving new resolutions.
- The process for meeting with public officials.

You will also research how your county has addressed climate change and the environment so far, and the public perception of climate action in your community. Counties are structured differently so it's important to familiarize yourself with what makes yours unique.

Your County and Climate Science

When you're doing your research, start with the big picture:

- How does your county experience the impacts of climate change?
- How do the community members feel about climate change and action?
- Consider the ways your community could take climate action.
 - How will your community benefit from these actions?
- Are there climate solutions already in place in your county?
 - If so, when were they updated?
 - If you find that your county already has a resolution in place committing to uphold the Paris Agreement, you may be able to get your county signed on with just a few steps
 - If this is the case, let us know by emailing chapters@climatereality.com.

Know Your Community

Learn about your community. Who are the key groups or actors? Have cities or towns within the county taken climate action? Local businesses?

Where Are We Now?

Once you know the context of climate action infrastructure in your area, you'll want to learn about other climate action campaigns already happening in your county. Are there other organizations working towards county-level climate action? You'll want to find out who is leading and involved in those campaigns.

After you've done your preliminary research, familiarize yourself with the opportunities to take local action and educate others, whether that means giving a presentation, tabling at a festival or farmers market, phone banking or writing a letter to the editor.



Map It Out

What is the problem? Campaigns aim to solve clear problems. The most likely problem your campaign wants to solve is county inaction to decrease greenhouse gas emissions. Or – even if the county has begun cutting emissions – it would still benefit from joining the Coalition and teaming up with other counties.

Learn about your community. People in the community are more likely to respond positively if they understand what having the county join the County Climate Coalition means for them. Consider who you're targeting, their interests, and what's at stake for them. What issues do they respond well to?

Identify why the problem is urgent. Why is climate change an urgent problem your community needs to address now? Why is it important for your county to take action now?

Discover the solution to the problem. Your goal is to get your county to join the County Climate Coalition. Your solution is to get your county to pass a resolution reaffirming the Paris Agreement and taking climate action. Consider:

- How can you do that?
- What can the public do to express their disinterest in having this new infrastructure in their backyard?
- What opportunities are there for public input?
- What steps has your county already taken to reach this goal?

<u>What is the problem?</u>	<u>Who is the community?</u>
<u>Why is this urgent?</u>	<u>What is the solution?</u>

IDENTIFY YOUR GOAL

Now that you know the lay of the land in your state, you need to set your campaign goal. This goal needs to be specific, measurable, achievable, and time-bound.

Specific: What exactly is the victory you want to achieve? Not just to solve the climate crisis, but to get your county to take local action to meet the requirements and officially join the County Climate Coalition?

Make sure to also define the specific short-term and intermediate goals that you need to hit in order to reach your overall campaign goal.

Measurable: You should know up front what success will look like and what metrics you'll use to measure it. For this campaign, your goals should be measured by the passage of a climate resolution by your county officials and your county joining the County Climate Coalition.

For your short-term and intermediate goals, success may look different. Maybe you can measure short-term success by bringing 20 chapter members to a county meeting or maybe by giving a presentation to your county officials or community members to raise awareness and get additional support. Maybe you can measure intermediate success if you can get your county decision-makers to vote on a resolution.

Achievable: Your goals shouldn't be so easy to achieve that it doesn't take any work to get done, but they should be realistic things that can, given your campaign plan and strategy, be achieved within a time frame you determine.

Time-bound: Your goal needs an achievable timeline. This may change as context shifts, but you want to start out with an ambitious, but realistic, set period of time to reach your goal. (For example, you may want to get your county to vote on a resolution at a county meeting in April of 2019).

SCENARIO: Your county has not taken climate action, passed a climate resolution, or established a climate action plan. Climate change is affecting your county in distinguishable ways and its residents and communities would benefit from joining the County Climate Coalition and supporting the Paris Agreement.

CAMPAIGN GOAL: To have your county join the County Climate Coalition.

INTERMEDIATE GOAL: To get your county to pass a resolution reaffirming the Paris Agreement and reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

SHORT-TERM GOAL: To have chapter members hold 50 presentations with various community groups and/or hold an event that includes a press briefing on the impact of climate change in your county and why it is important to take local action.

IDENTIFY YOUR TARGET AND AUDIENCE

In this section, you'll learn how to choose a target based on who has the most influence in your county or makes final, actionable decisions and what will influence them to make a decision.

Research the people and places that are key to achieving your goal. Who is the ultimate decision-maker and who can influence them?

Since you are dealing with a county as a whole, the decision-maker is likely a board of county officials, not a single official. While you may target one individual, ultimately the whole board will have to vote. The collective group of officials is your primary target. Research their position and possible avenues to get them on board with combatting climate change.

Who is your target and/or audience? _____

Your target/audience will be a critical factor in conveying the region's interest in upholding the agreed upon-measure in the Paris Agreement. Identifying who this is will take a bit of research. Keep your goal in mind, and make sure to map out the best route to reaching your elected county officials, be it through increased education or public outreach, advocacy, or meetings with county officials.

Key questions to consider include:

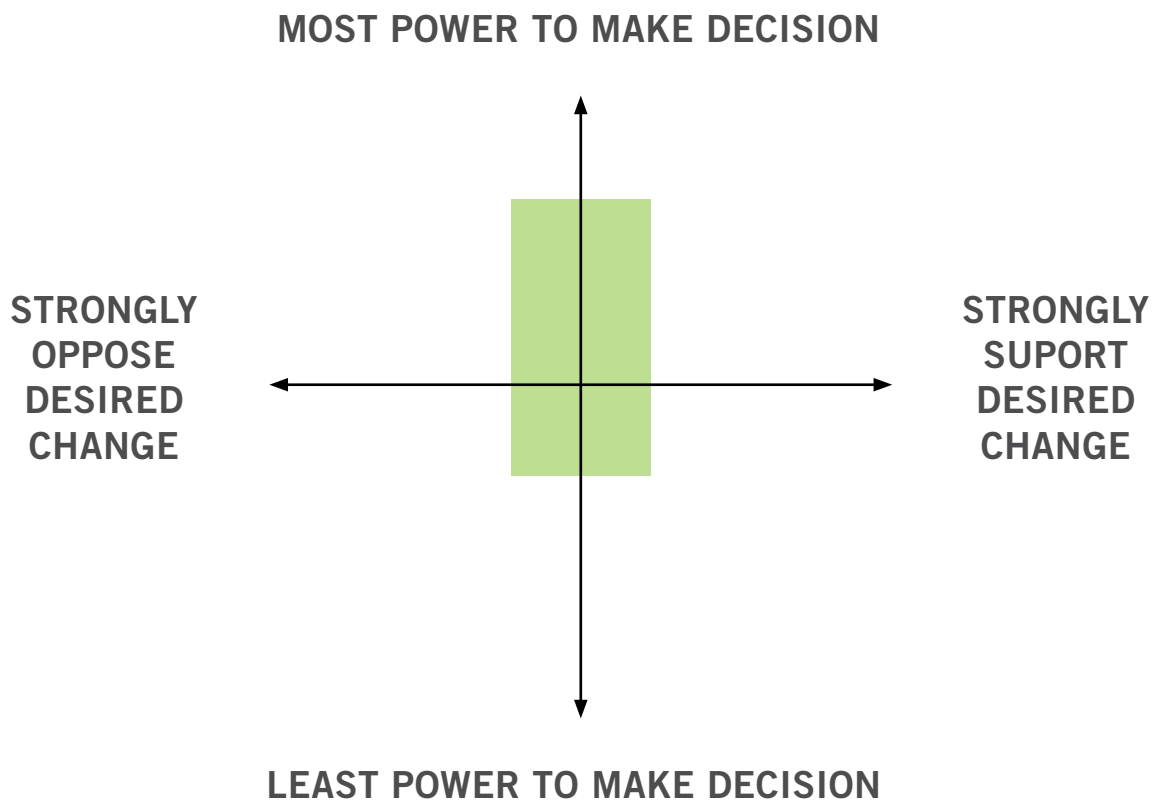
- What is your target/audiences record on climate issues?
- Renewable energy issues?
- Environmental sustainability?
- What influences them?

Factors that may motivate your target:

- **Recognition:** Having their work appreciated by the community, the global community at larger, etc.
- **Moral and ethical arguments:** Caring deeply about the impacts of the climate crisis on their community and wanting to protect what they have.
- **Relevance:** The more we escalate commitments, the more pressure communities/businesses of similar size and stature will be motivated to keep up.
- **Future planning:** Emphasize the long-term economic interests of environmental sustainability.

What parallel issues does your target care about?

- Community or economic development?
- Tourism?
- Clean air and water?
- Competitive admissions/stature?
- Volatile fuel prices?
- Others?



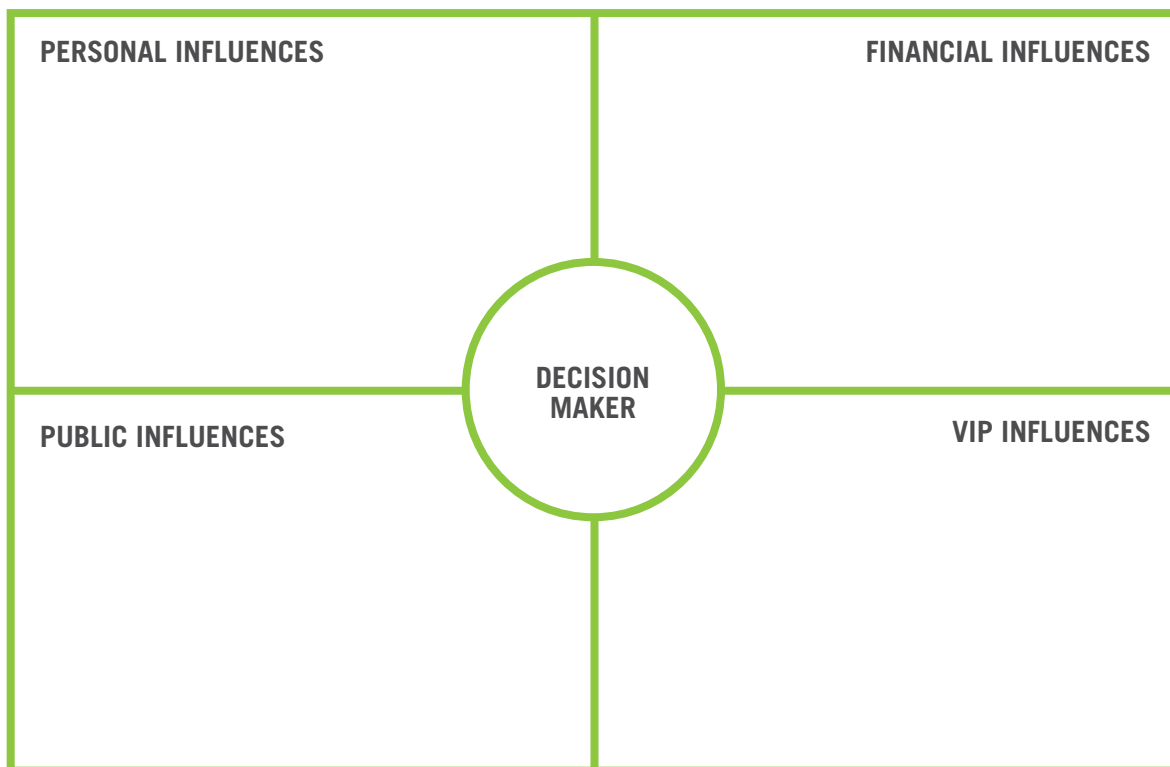
CREATE YOUR POWER MAP

In this section, you'll learn about how to work with other people who have relationships with or influence on your audience to advance your goal.

Power mapping is a way to visually understand the relationships in your community and how they can influence your audience. Then, you can start moving those relationships in favor of your goal.

There are several ways to power map. The first is a box in which you can categorize each of these people into four types of influences: public, VIP, personal, and financial.

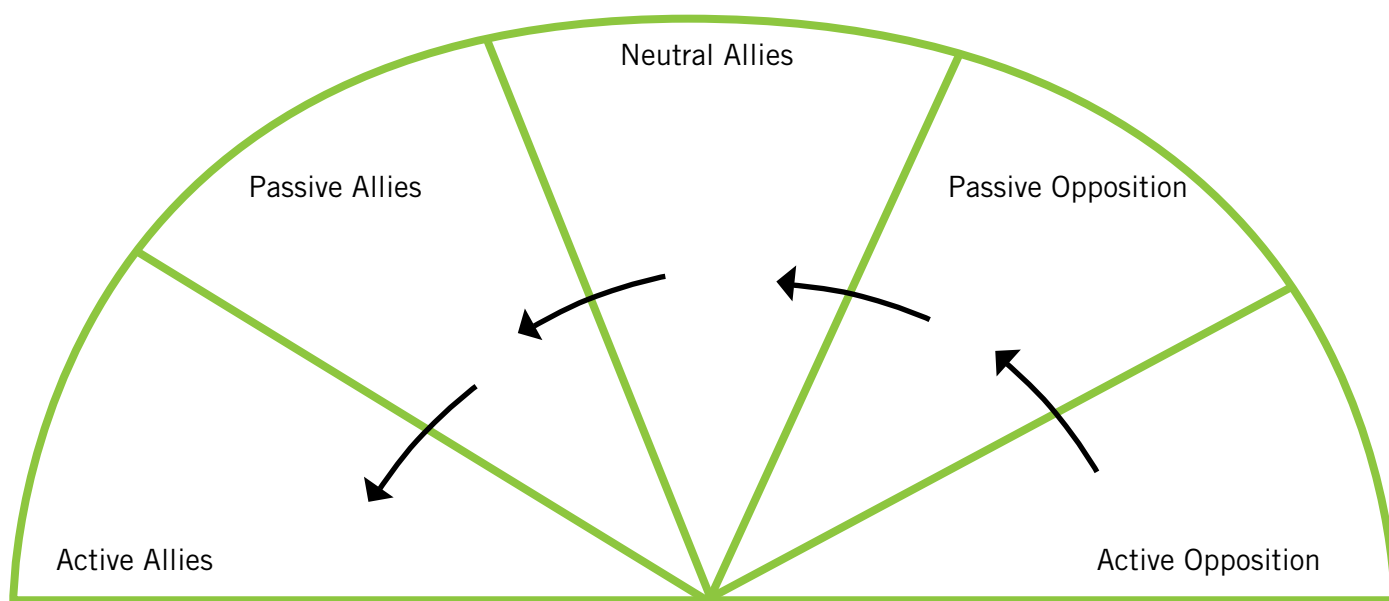
- **Public influences:** media, majority of community members, and powerful regional organizations.
- **VIP influences:** experts, respected businesses, respected faculty, established organizations, athletes, and celebrities.
- **Personal influences:** family, friends, community, and churches.
- **Financial influences:** community investors, prominent businesses or industries, community leadership members, and patrons.



Another tool that is helpful is the Spectrum of Allies. While running a campaign, sometimes we speak of people in two groups: those who are with us on the issue and those who are not.

The fact is, people often lay along a spectrum between support and opposition. We can break down our communities or specific groups of people into categories along this spectrum. We can visualize the community as a range from active allies and passive allies to passive opposition and active opposition.

The Spectrum of Allies also provides insight into how we can move people (our audience included) along the spectrum, with the goal of making them active allies. We know it is unlikely that we will be able to move someone who is in active opposition to our goal all the way to active ally in one jump. However, we could move someone who is neutral to passive ally through strategic tactics and actions. Eventually, they may become a very active ally.



Use this campaign research worksheet to make sure you've done all your homework and are ready to get started building your campaign plan.

GET TO KNOW YOUR OPPONENTS

This section will explore how to identify your opponents' strengths, weaknesses, arguments, and constituencies. This is especially critical in campaigns addressing climate change as a public opinion differs very widely.

When constructing your campaign plan, it's easy to view the people and groups actively or passively opposing your goal as the enemy. It's crucial that we don't see the people who support the fossil fuel industry, for example, as the enemy. You will want to understand *their* goals, motivations, and arguments.

BUILD YOUR CAMPAIGN PLAN

This section takes a look at building a campaign from the ground up. Once you've identified your goal, chosen your audience, and learned about that audience, you're ready to build your campaign plan and move forward to victory!

We build campaign plans to make our objectives clear, create an ideal timeline, and assess the resources we need to make it happen. By having a written plan, you can make sure the tactics you're using will influence your audience and help you achieve your goal.

Set a clear goal. What measurable objective are you trying to accomplish and by what date? What short- and medium-term goals do you need to achieve in order to get to your ultimate campaign goal?

Determine your strategy. Once you have a clearly defined target or audience and know where they are situated in their community, the next step is determining the right strategy for convincing them to commit to your goal. In picking the right strategy, you decide what measurable actions and tactics will be effective in order to win the campaign.

Determine your tactics. What are the actions you will take that support your strategy to win over your target? These actions will ultimately help you achieve your goal.

Tactics need to flow directly from your strategy and need to be thought of in terms of your audience's interests. Consider why they care and how will an action move them to the outcome they want. Some actions you might take could be:

- Give local presentations on the climate crisis to raise awareness and show how the County Climate Coalition can help solve it.

- Utilize the press and media
 - Hold a press conference during important campaign moments.
 - Write a letter to the editor (LTE) of a local newspaper.
 - Write an opinion editorial (op-ed) for a local newspaper.
- Collect petitions addressed to your decision-maker.
- Make phone calls with other volunteers to the decision-maker's office about the issue.
- Send letters, perhaps even handwritten ones, to the decision-maker. This is most effective when a large number are delivered all at once.
- Grass top meetings with a decision-maker. "Grass tops" are members of an organization or community who have a high professional or public profile and can raise public attention or influence decision-makers through established connections. They are the VIP influences from your power map.
- County meeting/panel discussions.

Plug tactics and actions into a timeline and assign roles. By creating a timeline, you can break down when you should perform each tactic to influence your target. Remember to mark down important dates like county decision-maker meetings, votes, and local events where you can gather petition signatures.

Tips:

- Write your campaign plan in pencil. Things will change! The plan is your best guess of what it will take to win, and you'll learn more as you go. What you learn may result in a change in timeline or tactic—and that's okay.
- Set clear goals for each tactic. How many petition signatures do you need to show broad public support? How many businesses should you have to sign on to influence the target? By when do you want to collect on all of that support? Keeping a timeline for goals is a critical piece for setting a good deal.
- Recruit people to help you! Campaign plans should be bigger than what one person can do. Recruit friends, family, neighbors, and other issue supporters to take on parts of the campaign to make it a true success.



RECRUIT AND ORGANIZE VOLUNTEERS

Now that you've built your campaign plan, you might be feeling overwhelmed about how you're going to get all of this done. Never fear! This section looks at how to recruit and organize volunteers to help you make this campaign a reality.

Some Best Practices:

- Reach out to as many different groups as possible, including environmental groups, religious groups, student groups, and more. You want to recruit as diverse a set of volunteers as possible.
- Have a clear campaign story and ask. When talking about combatting climate change, it can get complicated fast. Focus on the problem (the climate crisis), the solution (cutting emissions and shifting to clean energy), and what individuals can do to help.
- Follow up with interested volunteers as soon as possible and plug them into the campaign.
- Give people real leadership. As you find volunteers who want to take on more responsibility, give it to them. Have different volunteers act as leads on different tactics of the campaign.
- Continue to recruit new volunteers – the more the merrier! Never stop recruiting. There is always more to do and plenty of work for all.

Where Can I Find Volunteers?

You can find potential volunteers wherever there are people. Start with your friends, neighbors, classmates, and maybe coworkers. Here are a few additional places that are great for recruiting:

- Local farmers markets or fairs
- Community group meetings
- Church groups
- Community events
- Local grocery stores
- Campuses
- Social media

Don't forget that counties often span through several cities and towns—it will be beneficial for your campaign to recruit in towns countywide.

Keeping Volunteers Engaged for the Long Run

Move up the leadership ladder. Your top volunteers should be running their own piece of the campaign. They could run petitioning or coalition building, media outreach, etc. Take time to help them coordinate their section by setting clear goals, training them on the tactics, and following up to make sure they're doing it well.

Determine communication moving forward. Will the group meet once a week? Hop on a conference call every other week? Determine the means of communication and stick to it.

Build in short-term wins for the campaign. Getting a whole community to commit to environmental sustainability can take time, and the wait can be discouraging for new volunteers. Set short-term goals and celebrate them! (Ex. Getting 40 people to attend a county meeting is a big win.)

BEST PRACTICES TO HELP YOU WIN

BUILDING A COALITION OF SUPPORT

What is a Coalition?

A coalition can be simply defined as the people and/or organizations that are working together for a common goal. Coalitions come in different shapes and sizes with a variety of different outcomes or goals. One of the main purposes of building a coalition is creating intentional relationships that can strengthen your campaign and community through collaboration.

Building a coalition can increase your message's reach and connection across other issues facing your community. You might even discover that other groups are already working on a similar campaign or have some expertise that could add value to the work you're doing. Additionally, other organizations can give you a new perspective on your campaign and issue. Coalitions can be made up of unlikely partners and include civic organizations, farmers, sportsmen, and religious groups for instance.

Why are Coalitions Important?

When you are campaigning to have your county join the County Climate Coalition, you want that commitment to be representative and meaningful for your entire community. Bringing together voices from all parts of the community will help you make sure you are addressing everyone's needs.

Sometimes, environmental issues and campaigns become independent silos and operate without collaboration or communication. This is not only an inefficient use of resources like time, volunteers, and funding, but also does not create meaningful and long-lasting change.

Winning your campaign and creating meaningful change can take time and be frustrating. But in the end, your community will be stronger for it. The same concept applies to coalition building. It can take time and might be challenging, but it also can be one of the most effective tools for organizing your community.

Four Types of Coalitions

Endorsement Coalitions: This type of coalition is born when different organizations or businesses endorse your campaign. This coalition can demonstrate broad support for your campaign and lend credibility to your cause. The groups you bring together can be used effectively when they are able to bring in other influential members and show public support.

Though endorsement coalitions can be made quickly, they are not easy to turn into long-term relationships. Endorsement coalitions are given a specific ask, and nothing more, typically.

Nominal Coalitions: This type of coalition is made of different groups working on similar issues, communicating regularly about similar campaigns. The primary goal of this coalition is to serve as a network of communication about ongoing activities, events, and mobilization. Consider putting your events or announcements into another organization's email lists or on their website.

Campaign Coalitions: This type of coalition forms when groups working on similar issues adopt specific goals to work on together. Campaign coalitions are good for sharing resources and can address issues of competition between campaigns on similar issues.

These coalitions set strategies, timelines, and targets together. Campaign coalitions can create deeply rooted, meaningful bonds as they come together on a shared and common goal.

Solidarity Coalitions: When groups working on different issues are united by shared analysis of the problem and vision, they form a solidarity coalition. These groups are in it for the long haul together, as building solidarity is inherently transformational and can create long-term, lasting change within the community.

Solidarity must be built on intentional relationships with space and time for relationship-building. These relationships are transformational over transactional. An example of this type of coalition is when an organization focused on labor issues partners with a renewable energy campaign since building onsite generation projects can create local sustainable jobs.

WORKING WITH DECISION-MAKERS

If you are starting a campaign to get your county to join the County Climate Coalition, you will need to meet with county officials. These meetings give you a chance to introduce yourself and the County Climate Coalition campaign before making the strong ask for the county to commit to the Coalition.

Meeting One-on-One with Government Officials and Decision-Makers

Step One: Research

Do your research. Learn everything you can about what your community has already done – and what it hasn't, and why. You will want to be fully informed about existing climate action plans, climate resolutions, and commitments to the Paris Climate Agreement. Consider questions like:

- Is there a current committee on energy, environmental sustainability, or climate change?
- Who might be sympathetic to the campaign?
- What are the county officials passionate about?
- Can you find something out about what they do in their free time?
- Where do they work?
- Are there county members who might be opposed to the County Climate Coalition?

Step Two: Meeting Preparation

Preparing for the meeting is one of the most important steps. This is where you combine your research and the campaign goal to plan for expected outcomes and set a draft agenda.

This is where you look into your local lobby laws BEFORE you make contact with any elected official. It doesn't take much effort, but it is critical to know the rules on lobbying in your area. In addition to federal Internal Revenue Service restrictions in the US, each state and some counties and municipalities has some form of lobbying disclose and registration requirements. *These laws may vary county-to-county so be sure to check before doing any lobbying.* If there are lobbying laws governing your work, make sure you notify us at chapters@climatereality.com.

As part of your preparation, ask yourself:

- What is the purpose of the meeting?
- Why are you meeting with this person?
- Why is this meeting important?

Step Three: Identify Desired Outcomes

What should the outcome of this meeting be?

Sample outcomes:

- To get the elected official's support for the County Climate Coalition.
- To present at the next county meeting.
- To form a new committee that will help you achieve your goal.

Note: In pursuit of these outcomes, be sure to make your asks strong and direct. If your first ask does not get a “yes,” make sure to have a backup ask. What is the next thing you can ask to move your campaign forward?

Testifying or Giving Public Comment

After meeting with a county official, you might be asked to present the campaign to the council at a committee meeting. You also can request to be put on the agenda for the next meeting. Again, as every county differs in procedure, be sure to do your research ahead of time.

Step One: Prepare to Tell the Story

Write out and practice what you are going to say at the meeting. We suggest...

- **Introduce yourself and what you are there to talk about.**
- **Define the problem in your community.** How exactly does the climate crisis affect your community? How will this affect your life and the lives of the people around you? This is a good opportunity to highlight and lead with your personal story, and then re-emphasize the facts.
- **Discuss solutions.** This is the opportunity to talk about the opportunities offered by taking climate action, reducing greenhouse gases, and joining the County

Climate Coalition, including support from other counties nationwide and economic and health improvements.

- **Highlight the urgency of addressing rising global temperatures and greenhouse gas emissions by answering the question, “Why now?”** Your county might be busy with with other items on the agenda, so you need to clearly tell them why they must act now. Ask yourself, what is it about this moment that is different from last month or last year that makes it vital for the council to act?
- **Make your ask.** Here is where you can launch into your pitch for joining the County Climate Coalition. Explain the story of The Climate Reality Project, the County Climate Coalition, and why your county can make the commitment.

Step Two: Before the Meeting

- **Practice your speech.** This could be by practicing in the mirror or inviting members of your chapter to come listen and provide feedback.
- **Do research on the other people who will be giving, or hearing testimony.** Who are they? What does social media tell you about them? Have they made speeches or been quoted in the media in a way that gives you insight into where they stand on this issue?
- **Invite your coalition partners, volunteers, and supporters to pack the room to show public support.** Think about creative ways they can show solidarity, like wearing the same color or carrying signs (if that’s allowed).

Step Three: At the Meeting

- **Dress professionally.**
- **Be there early** to introduce yourself to the elected county officials.
- **Do not let yourself get flustered or angry;** even if you are heckled or face an unresponsive or hostile audience.
- **Have materials to leave behind** with facts and figures referenced in your speech, including a one-pager explaining the campaign.
- **Make sure to provide you contact information** for further questions or concerns.

Step Four: After the Meeting

- **Follow up.** Connect with each county elected official respectfully thanking them and remind them of the next steps for the commitment.
- **Provide any requested information or answers as soon as possible.**
- **Send a digital version of the one-pager and other relevant links.**



WORKING WITH THE MEDIA

The media is a powerful tool when working to get a target to join the County Climate Coalition. This section will help you build the buzz for your campaign through targeted media work.

Ways to Work with the Media to Influence a Target

- **Letters to the Editor.** A short, concise response to an article in the paper, usually around 170 words. An easy way to get media coverage and attention for your campaign.
- **Op-eds.** An editorial piece in the opinion section of the paper that is typically a page long. An op-ed is a powerful way of highlighting a strong voice on the campaign. (Ex. A business owner explaining why businesses support the county joining the County Climate Coalition.)
- **Editorials.** A response to an issue written by the editorial board of the paper. By meeting with your local editorial board, you could secure an editorial supporting the County Climate Coalition.
- Writing a letter to the editor, an op-ed, or editorials is an Act of Leadership! Remember to make sure you report your Acts of Leadership on Reality Hub.

Why Write Op-Eds and Letters to the Editor?

- The opinion section is one of the most widely read sections in the newspaper.
- By writing about an issue that matters to you, your insights and opinions on the topic will be out there for hundreds or thousands of people to read. It's a great tool for reaching and educating the public.
- Influencers, including business leaders and elected officials, pay attention to opinion pieces, which function as a direct line to local voices.

Why You?

- Climate Reality Leaders are knowledgeable about the science of climate change and its solutions. Combine that with your own stories, influence, and commitment to the issue, and you are uniquely suited to speak out on issues related to climate change.
- If not you, then who? Raising your voice keeps the conversation from being dominated by incorrect or inadequate information.

How?

- Find an article in the paper you can respond to or craft your own specific message, then decide whether you're writing a letter to the editor (LTE) or an op-ed. An LTE is generally a short (100-200 words), to-the-point message written in response to an issue that has been in the paper recently or is otherwise current news; an op-ed is generally a longer (600-800 words), more in-depth argument.
- Write and edit your piece (see strategies, outline, and sample below).
- Submit!
 - For an LTE, look up your paper's letter submission process and follow the instructions.
 - For an op-ed, write a short pitch explaining why your piece is a good fit for the paper, include your piece, and then send in a single email.
- Follow up within one to three days by sending a short email or making a call to the paper.

Strategies to Improve the Likelihood of Publication

- Read the opinion section of the paper before writing to get a sense of what is published.
- Refer to something already printed in the paper.
- Keep it simple; keep it short.
- Make it personal. Tell a story or use an example from your own life.
- When pitching an op-ed, keep it short but be sure to cover why you're qualified to speak on the issue and why this topic is relevant for this particular paper. Include the text of your op-ed in the body of this email (avoid attachments).
- Follow the submission process.
- Only submit to one outlet at a time and only use previously unpublished work.
- Follow up after submitting, but be polite and understand that it is common for LTEs and op-eds to be rejected even when they are well-written and relevant.

Petitioning

Why we petition: It shows public support. Petitioning gives us a clear number of people who are with us on this issue.

- It is a great way to recruit volunteers and follow up with them to do more.
- It's a powerful tactic to move your target by either pressuring, supporting, or providing political cover.
- It's a great way to educate people in the community about what's happening and what they can do collectively.
- It trains people in activism skills.
- It builds community and a movement.

Tips:

- Have a friendly greeting.
- Stick to the script.
- Have a strong ask. Make sure everyone fills out the petition fully and see if they'd be interested in volunteering with the campaign.

Other Things to Keep in Mind:

- Not everyone will say yes, and that's all right!
- End each contact on a good note. Maybe they won't sign today, but maybe they will tomorrow because of their great interaction with you.
- Have more than one clipboard (especially in busy situations).

DEALING WITH SETBACKS

Meaningful social change almost always faces initial resistance and setbacks. These changes can be uncomfortable and involve upending the status quo. Overcoming obstacles isn't always easy and may require creative solutions. Here's a few ways you can overcome barriers you may meet during your campaign.

Typical Barriers to Change Can Include:

- **Social Barriers:** Lack of community support, social norms, and group conformity.
- **Cultural Barriers:** Tradition, culture, customs, and religion.
- **Economic Barriers:** Lack of property rights, corruption, and fiscal infrastructure.
- **Political Barriers:** Ideology and values.

Name the Challenge

Be transparent with the people working with you on the campaign about the nature of the setback or challenge you're facing. Acknowledge that it exists and the impact it's having.

Regroup

Reach out to all of your coalition partners. Try to set up a time you can meet to talk about your next steps.

Include the entire community in the process. Be sure to include constituents from diverse communities, including communities of color, and low-income communities. Go out and solicit feedback from a range of community groups and people with a stake in the issue. Have coffee with community leaders and actively listen to their feedback.

Revisit the plan

Return to your campaign plan and see what needs to change. Review each part of the plan to keep what's still relevant, and scrap or rework what doesn't fit the new context of your campaign.

WINNING!

What Our Commitment Means

When your county joins the County Climate Coalition, they are joining a global movement of communities and businesses committed to climate action. By joining this movement, your triumph is no longer just a local victory—it's an international success that will connect communities across the world to provide support and celebration.

In order to join the County Climate Coalition, your county will need to pass a resolution on climate action that upholds the agreed-upon commitments under the Paris Agreement. Once this is done, your county is eligible to officially join the County Climate Coalition. Your county will join a growing national group of counties that have passed a similar resolution to uphold the Paris Agreement with or without federal action.

GETTING THE WIN

How to Get Across the Finish Line

Set a date. Once you have support from your target, ask when you can expect the county to vote on a resolution. (*If you don't have support, ask what it will take to get them on board and rework your plan accordingly).

- Build a buzz of support around the vote. Organize a flood of emails and calls into the county's office, hold a community event with a panel of experts to show how much support there is, and turn out big numbers to their next public event/meeting/vote.
- Count votes/supporters beforehand. Make sure you have the support to win! Never assume someone is going to vote yes unless they gave you a hard yes. A "maybe" tends to be a "no."
- Hold the target accountable. After the vote, hold the target accountable, no matter which way they vote. Celebrate if they vote your way—and if they don't, call attention to that fact.

Celebrating the Win

If your county joins, we want to celebrate them. Have your volunteer send thank you emails, post about it on social media, and host a press event with the target to announce the historic commitment.

Celebration press events are one of the best tools to thank your target and influence more counties to join the County Climate Coalition.

Here are tips to get started on planning your press conference and media outreach.

How to Organize a Press Conference

- **Set the logistics** – Time, day, and location.
- **Line up speakers** – Have them speak for two to five minutes. It's best to line these up at least two weeks in advance if possible.
- **Prep your materials** – Press advisory, press release, run of show, and any handouts for the media.
- **Make sure the media turns out by sending your advisory a week before and again the day before** – Make pitch calls and follow up with reporters.
- **Be prepared for the event** – Arrive early, have a greeter and sign-in sheet for reporters (this helps you remember who to follow-up with later to ensure your story gets published) and don't start more than five minutes late.
- **Follow up with reporters after the event** – Send the press release to everyone on your media list, both those who showed and those who didn't, and call all reporters to make sure they have all the information they need.

How to Pitch the Media

Reporters have a lot going on, so you need to follow-up with them to make sure they know your event is happening and have all logistical information.

Make pitch calls to the media immediately after sending the media advisory, the day before the event, and the morning of the event. Here are some tips on pitching:

- **Be friendly** – Ask if they have time or if they're on a deadline. (“Is now a good time?”)
- **Craft a strong pitch** – Include a local angle, impressive speakers, great backdrop or location.
- **Have a direct ask** – “Will you cover our event?”

YOU WON! NOW WHAT?

Congratulations! You've not only won your campaign, but you have also sent a signal that more actions need to be taken regarding climate change. You're standing up for the values you believe in and the planet we share. You're setting a model for communities around the world to follow. And it's time for the world to know.

Spread the Word

- **Get loud** – Once you've signed up your country with the County Climate Coalition, let your community know. Celebrate your commitment to the Paris Agreement and climate action in your social media and marketing. Because when word gets out, more and more people will want to be part of your success – potentially even other local counties.
- **We can help** – Talk to us at The Climate Reality Project about how we can help spread the word about your great work as a County Climate Coalition partner to millions of climate-conscious individuals worldwide.
- **Keep the conversation going** – Share reports on your progress with The Climate Reality Project and share details in social media updates to your community. When the world sees and hears about the real, verifiable progress you're making, others will want to follow your lead. And continue to check in on your partners. Hold them accountable to their commitment





Founded and chaired by former US Vice President and Nobel Laureate Al Gore, The Climate Reality Project is dedicated to catalyzing a global solution to the climate crisis by making urgent action a necessity across every level of society.

Today, climate change is standing in the way of a healthy tomorrow for all of us. But we know that practical solutions are right in front of us. We can create a healthy, sustainable, and prosperous future by making a planet-wide shift from dirty fossil fuels to clean, reliable, and affordable renewable energy. At Climate Reality, we combine digital media initiatives, global organizing events, and peer-to-peer outreach programs to share this good news with citizens everywhere and build overwhelming popular support for policies that accelerate the global transition to a clean energy economy.

To learn more, visit www.climaterealityproject.org