

Speaking Out for Climate Justice Project

General Workplan for Phase I

2022-2023

Goals

This project will deploy the tools of strategic communications to integrate equity and justice into an aggressive approach to decarbonization so that low-wealth people of color are better able to *benefit* from our energy transformation, rather than assume most of its burdens. The fund will help us:

1. Support the Center's partners and frontline communities, elevate their stories, and connect them with key decision-makers as they advocate for policies that will improve their lives;
2. Advance key climate justice policy goals and communicate the successes and failures of specific policy actions in a way that centers justice and equity; and
3. Strengthen CPR's name recognition and visibility, especially with the media, which will help us grow our audience, partnerships, revenue, and influence in measurable ways.

Regions of Focus

- **Begin with where we are currently working:**
 - **California:** With support from ClimateWorks, CPR is currently engaged in an ambitious climate justice project in California. Communications opportunities arising from this project will include potential op-eds, letters to the editor, issue papers, reports, and a visual-driven policy index and map.
 - **Louisiana:** In December 2021, CPR published a policy brief on the risks and shortcomings of relying on carbon capture and storage to address climate change with support from the 2030 Fund. On the climate justice front, this includes the danger of even more pollution dumped on already overburdened and underserved communities in Cancer Alley and other parts of the state. We've already leveraged several key communications opportunities related to this publication and ongoing advocacy effort, including a well-attended webinar in March 2022, several media mentions at the end of 2021 and into this year, and some emerging materials underway with Senior Policy Analyst Katlyn Schmitt.
 - **Maryland:** Maryland recently passed an ambitious climate change bill with key climate justice provisions included. CPR will communicate on the victory through blog posts and other channels; will explore lessons learned from the 2022 legislative session; and will communicate on implementation of the new law and look for additional legislative communications opportunities in the 2023 legislative session and beyond.
 - **North Carolina:** CPR is poised to launch a significant climate and energy policy project in North Carolina with Board Member Ajulo Othow and Vice President

Sid Shapiro. The project, supported by the Hive Fund, will generate numerous communications opportunities, including potential op-eds, letters to the editor, issue papers, and reports. ***This project/state probably offers the best opportunity for advocacy communications.***

- After gauging and evaluating success/failure of climate justice communications efforts in these states and/or new funding and staff capacity, **look for opportunities in other states and/or for expanding communications efforts** on a regional basis (West Coast, East Coast, Mid-Atlantic, Gulf Coast, Great Lakes, etc.)

Priority Activities for Year 1

We envision that the priority activities listed in this section will be both connected with the regions of focus listed above and take advantage of federal/national-level opportunities for communicating our values, frames, messages, and policy recommendations.

- **Op-eds**
 - Spin off a set of op-eds from the 20th anniversary roundtables after the Sept. 16, 2022, Washington, DC, event (see “Roundtable” below) (Fall 2022)
 - We will engage scholars, staff, Board members, allies, and partners in target states to pitch a set of op-eds in local and state outlets-of-record. These op-eds will largely draw from our existing and upcoming work on climate justice, energy justice, and environmental justice (see Regions of Focus above), but we will also be opportunistic by tapping into timely issues and hot topics that are related to but not directly included in existing work. (Throughout 2023)
 - We will make every attempt to ensure that CPR Board members, scholars, and/or staff members are at least co-authors of these op-eds, but we also recognize that there may be strategic reasons for helping place pieces with no CPR-affiliated author. We will still include successful placement of such pieces for evaluation purposes.
- **Enhance the climate justice section of CPR’s website** so that it is continually updated, more visual, more interactive, and easier to measure viewers. (Fall 2022 and beyond)
 - Videos
 - Infographics
 - Audio snippets from podcast episodes and more
 - Actions that people can take (some of this may require CPR reexamining its role and involvement in the policy advocacy space); partnerships with other organizations that currently run action alerts
- **Roundtable** (Fall 2022)
 - Host a climate justice roundtable at the Sept. 16, 2022, 20th anniversary event

- **Webinar(s)**
 - Hold at least one climate justice webinar (early 2023)
 - Others

- **One-on-one online chat event(s)**
 - Rob Verchick *Octopus in the Parking Garage* book launch event (April 2023)
 - Others

- **Launch Connect the Dots podcast Season 7 and connect with climate justice webpage (2023)**
 - Focus season on climate justice solutions, progress, and positive stories
 - Pay for ad space in other podcasts, radio (NPR, Pacifica Radio, others if they take them), and online outlets
 - Update the Connect the Dots logo
 - Possibly update podcast name to make it easier to find and more distinctive
 - Turn fodder from podcast into blog posts, social media stories, and possible op-eds

Other Activities for Year 1 and Beyond

- **Press releases and statements**
 - As needed/as opportunities arise.
- **Blog post series**
 - We will engage staff, scholars, Board members, and guest bloggers (from allies and partners) to write a series of blog posts focused on climate change, climate justice, connections to racial and social justice, connections to worker rights and justice, and more.
 - Specific topics may include California's climate justice scoping plan; our North Carolina climate, energy, and decarbonization equity project; lessons learned from the recent legislative push for climate justice in Maryland; Native American sovereignty and FEMA in the wake of natural disasters in Louisiana; and more.
 - Some of these could run on blogs other than *CPRBlog* and be cross-posted.
 - *The Regulatory Review* and *Legal Planet* are examples.
- **Reports, issue briefs, and other materials** (drawn from ongoing and upcoming projects and initiatives)
 - California climate justice materials and reports
 - Policy map/index
 - Report on the scoping plan
 - Report on climate justice funding decisions
 - Report on interagency work on climate justice
 - Carbon capture and storage literature review
 - North Carolina climate, energy, and decarbonization equity materials and reports
 - Initial policy and political landscape analysis report
 - Project website/hub
 - Online communications toolkit
 - Report on the clean energy transition and climate equity issues in the state
- **Enhance other social and digital media promotion** of our climate and climate justice work.
 - Always-on ads on social media platforms for Arlie Schardt Fund fundraising and climate justice more generally

- Turn non-podcast stories, initiatives, and innovations into blog posts and social media stories
- Ads in publications like *The American Prospect*, *The Nation*, Google AdWords, YouTube ads
 - These would highlight a variety of topics, work, actions, and “services” we offer

Possible Future Activities and Partnerships

Create a “speakers’ bureau” and actively pitch CPR staff and scholars to state and local environmental justice organizations and to media groups, nonprofit outlets, and journalists, such as members of the Society of Environmental Journalists (Year 2 and beyond).

Op-eds (ongoing beyond Fall 2022)

- Secure a series of op-eds at a publication
 - This series could serve to introduce/enhance the knowledge of climate justice for the publication’s readership. It could make the case for embedding justice into the climate response at all levels. Series topics could include tackling high energy costs for low-income ratepayers, exposure to toxic chemicals from climate-induced/worsened toxic floodwaters and chemical disasters, and more.
- This series could also be an opportunity to boost Minor’s public image and thought leadership. That said, it may be best to do that via co-authorship with Board members, scholars, and/or allies/grassroots partners.
 - Possible outlets: *Mother Jones*, *The Nation*, *The American Prospect*, *The Atlantic*, *The Washington Monthly*

Letters to the editor

- Policy and scientific developments, news, outside op-eds, and other timely opportunities for quick-hit commentary on climate justice will arise during this project. CPR will track these opportunities and reach out to scholars, Board members, staff, and allies/partners in relevant areas to propose letters to the editor in response to these developments and pieces.
- We will largely focus this letters campaign on states where we’re already active (see Regions of Focus above), but we will look for opportunities in other areas and publications, as well. See <https://www.mrss.com/toolshed/fast-lte-tool/> for a possible tool to use as part of this work.

Convenings

- *Roundtables*
 - North Carolina, Oregon, Washington State, and low-income ratepayers roundtables (with Just Solutions Collective)
 - Environmental journalism roundtables with organizations like the Society of Environmental Journalists (at their conferences, as separate events, etc.)
 - Climate justice roundtables with organizations like Climate Advocacy Lab (polling results, climate policy, climate comms, etc.)
 - Youth-focused roundtables with organizations like [Intersectional Environmentalists](#) and youth Climate Strike movement
- *Webinars*
 - California climate justice project
 - North Carolina climate, energy, and decarbonization equity project
 - Energy and regulatory justice
 - And more...

- *One-on-one online chats*

Regions of focus

- **Virginia:** Policy opportunities on the state level will be limited until at least 2026, but policy communications opportunities should abound. We've also caught the policymaking eye of Virginia Rep. McEachin, so we will have climate justice communications opportunities at CPR works with him to develop model federal legislation (even if passage is unlikely in the near future).

Partnerships, Outreach, and Targets

- Intent: We may need some assistance from others in communicating around climate and climate justice. Groups that may be able to assist include:
 - Planet Forward at George Washington University
 - Society of Environmental Journalists
 - Climate Advocacy Lab (to coach CPR staff, scholars, and partners on message framing and change advocacy and host a media training workshop for staff and scholars on climate action messaging (media, social media, op-eds, blogs))
 - [Intersectional Environmentalists](#)
 - Youth Climate Strike movement
 - Op-Ed Project
 - Environmental Media Group (solutions-based climate communications)
 - Now.Earth (solutions-based climate communications)
 - Climate Generation (solutions-based climate communications)
- Intent: We may be able to help community, grassroots, and other partners to increase their reach, sharpen their messages, etc. through a workshop. These include:
 - Community organizations as potential partners with the aim of jointly developing effective messaging on climate justice and regulations
 - North Carolina coalition (10-12 organizations involved, includes North Carolina Interfaith Power and Light)
 - Maryland NAACP
 - Other organizations as identified by staff, scholars, and partners
- [Just Solutions Collective](#), a national support organization for BIPOC-led frontline organizations, who is already a partner of the Center. We are in the process of identifying other sources of funding to strengthen our joint work.

Staffing, Roles, and Capacity

- **Brian Gumm, Communications Director:** Project manager, planning lead, evaluation lead, graphics and video oversight support, webinar and one-on-one online conversations support
- **Maggie Dewane, Digital Media Manager:** Social media lead, social media and digital ads lead, website metrics lead, webinar and one-on-one online conversations lead, graphics and video oversight support
- **Allison Stevens, Senior Editor and Research Advisor:** Editing lead, op-ed and blog post solicitation lead, fundraising support, graphics and video oversight support, other roles as assigned
- **Minor Sinclair, Executive Director:** Project oversight lead, fundraising lead
- **Communications intern(s):** Graphics support, social media support, website support, blogging support, webinar support, climate justice media tracking support
- **Amber Clark, Contract Graphic Designer:** Report/publications design lead, *Connect the Dots* logo redesign lead
- **Public relations firm/solo practitioner:** Up to three discrete project/of-the-moment contracts to help move publications, messages, and frames out into the wider world. This could include: *Connect the Dots* Season 7 promotion; the most significant of the climate justice-related reports we have planned (organize virtual press conference, pitch several op-eds, assist with media outreach, etc.); a major convening; a discrete and specific op-ed campaign (perhaps related to our 20th anniversary roundtables; not an "on-retainer" campaign). Possible PR firms or practitioners we could partner with include:
 - Patricia Brooks/Matchmap Media (Brian has worked with her before)
 - Stephanie Celenza / www.stephaniecelenza.com (Maggie has worked with her)
 - [Confidant](#) / contact: Matt Luzuriaga (friend of Maggie's)
 - Others as we find them

Evaluation and Metrics

- Build on and expand our “baseline” communications activity/traffic (start measuring in March 2022)
 - Media hits
 - Social media stats
 - Web traffic to climate justice page
 - Connect the Dots podcast
 - Number of blog posts and op-eds that we’re publishing/placing on climate justice
 - Document circulation numbers and web traffic (where applicable)
 - Audience numbers for convenings, including webinars, and list building outcomes
 - Make note of members of the media who attend
- Built-out climate and climate justice media contacts lists
- Increased diversity of voices, perspectives, and lived experiences in the climate justice conversation (students, community members, grassroots groups)
- Assess message and subject matter penetration, using a baseline of coverage and then doing periodic searches/reviews throughout the first year of the project
 - Measure number of hits from a Google News/Talkwalker search as a baseline on climate justice, then track if those increase, decrease, or stay the same
 - Measure number of hits from a Google News/Talkwalker search of up to three select messages on climate justice and climate change, then track if those increase, decrease, or stay the same

Budget

\$100,000/year total

Staff, interns, and overhead (\$70,000 (\$60,000 to salaries/hourly wages, \$10,000 to overhead))

- Includes Brian, Maggie, and Allison (\$48,000 spread among the three)
- Includes one Fall 2022 intern at 20 hours/week at \$20/hour (\$6,000)
- Includes one Winter/Spring 2023 intern at 20 hours/week at \$20/hour (\$6,000)

Contractors and miscellaneous (\$30,000)

- Graphic design (\$2,000)
- PR firm: Project/moment-based, not retainer (\$18,000)
- Outreach to affected communities/partnerships (\$8,000)
- Other miscellaneous costs (\$2,000)

Arlie W. Schardt Fund for Climate Justice Logistics

Special Campaign Fund Page on Network for Good – Brian and Catherine

- We can set up a specific page for the fund
- We can generate a unique URL for the fund page (for smaller donors, for PR purposes)
- We should also create a fund page on our own website and encourage check donations instead of online (for larger donors)
 - Content:
 - About Arlie
 - What we're using the money for
 - Picture of Arlie (Brian will ask Michele for a picture)
- We can also set up PayPal donations
- Deadline: Friday, May 20

Public Announcement – Brian, Allison, and Maggie

- Michele is circulating to friends and professional colleagues and contacts
- CPR blast email – Minor will thank her first (by 5/9), then Brian will run idea by Michele
 - Timing:
 - Soft launch with friends and family fundraising (1-3 months)
 - Hard launch when soft launch time ends
- Examples:
 - <https://www.fallenjournalists.org/2021/06/29/fallen-journalists-memorial-foundation-launches-fundraising-campaign-with-6-million-in-new-support/>
 - <https://www.isoqol.org/announcement-of-the-dennis-revicki-memorial-award-fund/>
 - <https://foe.org/arlie-schardt-memorial-fellowship/>
- Social media
 - Posts across all our platforms at announcement time
 - "Always on" paid promotion