



Path to Positive Communities Key Talking Points

Why local leaders are engaging other on climate solutions:

Climate Change is a Visibly Local Issue – Americans are already experiencing the impacts of climate change in their own communities. Citizens are experiencing climate impacts on their health, safety, finances, property and infrastructure and will continue to be acutely felt in their local communities. Local leaders have shown that they can act more nimbly in taking climate action, even as federal legislation remains elusive and international treaties have yet to generate the global results as intended.

Local Leaders are Climate First Responders – Local leaders are on the front lines of responding to an increasing number of debilitating weather events and the growing public health and economic impacts from climate-related seasonal weather changes. Community leaders can push for better prepared local emergency response, hospital, clinic and health care facilities that are equipped to provide care for their communities.

Local Solutions Can Benefit Most Americans – More than 80% of Americans live in urban communities of 2,500 or more people, and that number is increasing as young, educated workers and retirees flock to cities and their surrounding areas. This means that the efforts of local leaders to prepare for and prevent additional climate impacts will have important direct impacts on hundreds of millions of local citizens, as well as local institutions and businesses. When we focus on local community action, we bring local solutions to bear on regional, national and global challenges, while at the same time, stimulating jobs and the economy, saving money, improving health and security and making our communities better places to live and work.

Climate Action is a Local Opportunity – Preparing for climate impacts, and preventing additional climate pollution, can help bolster local economies, generate energy security, create jobs, improve infrastructure, and prevent property damage and economic disruption. Local action empowers our communities to take care and prepare, while simultaneously making our towns more attractive and livable.

Local Leaders Bring Americans Together – Local leaders and governments play an important role in shaping the daily lives of millions of American citizens. Our communities — where our citizens live, learn, work, worship, and vote — are vital hubs for economic activity, as well as for the expression of personal and social values and action. Americans are more likely to know and interact with local community leaders, including elected officials and government staff, as well as leadership in other community sectors, like faith, business, higher education, stewardship NGOs, and health care. Citizens often have direct access and opportunity to interact with local leaders, and are able to directly enjoy the benefits of local policies and programs that improve their daily lives. Therefore, local communities continue to be the best places to activate public concern for climate change.

Climate Action Has Taken Root in Local Communities – Local climate action has taken root and has produced promising results. More than a 1,000 American communities have conducted climate inventories, the most important first step to devising climate action plans designed to achieve steady greenhouse gas reductions over time. Local plans in hundreds of communities contain thousands of actions aimed at mitigating and preparing for climate change, influencing the lives of hundreds of millions of Americans. Community-scale approaches to solving the global issue of climate change will bring the issues to the “street level” and will incorporate the concerns, ideas, actions and commitment of people in communities everywhere.

Local Leaders Can Draw on Many Resources – The most well-organized and effective organizations and associations working on climate are oriented towards local and community-based solutions. There is a lot of intellectual capacity available to local leaders. State and federal governmental agencies are increasing their attention to and support of local climate action and preparedness. Associations of local leaders, like mayors, city councils, and county officials, have provided considerable support to local leaders around climate and energy challenges and opportunities. National NGOs that work to provide technical support, policy assistance and other resources have also helped to bolster the ability of local communities to lead on climate solutions. And, Path to Positive Communities brings forth many additional tools to help local leaders lead by example and engage their citizens on climate change solutions.

Communities are Hubs of Cross-Sector Collaboration – Leaders in other vital community sectors, such as faith, health, business, and higher education, are beginning to enjoy a growing range and depth of support for their work in addressing climate impacts and advancing local solutions. Community leaders will benefit from the active involvement and cooperation of other sector leaders in these deliberations and planning activities, as sector leaders will effectively extend municipal policies and programs into their own spheres of influence.

Communities are Laboratories for Climate Progress – As more communities join climate efforts, best practices are emerging and accumulating, permitting the challenges and successes of leading communities to benefit those that are just getting started. Political leaders, sector leaders, and ordinary citizens have been given opportunities to lead in climate planning by imparting lessons learned to leaders and citizens in neighboring communities.

Path to Positive Communities can help. Learn more about the benefits that Path to Positive Communities can offer at www.pathtopositive.org and get on the path to positive by [joining](#) today.