



Local Governments
for Sustainability

USA

Racing to Zero

Annual Report
2021



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Our Impact



Angie Fyfe
Executive Director

From Our Executive Director

I continue to marvel at the heart, soul, and collective impact of the ICLEI network. In 2021, we increased the engagement of elected officials and delivered results in the Race to Zero, launched circular economy support, started a significant update to GHG protocols, and enhanced relationships with partners in nature, equity, and decarbonization.

I'm excited about the value our team delivers, evident in strong membership retention, and the ambition of local and state governments. We have much to do and great opportunities in 2022. Thank you — let's keep going!

ICLEI USA by the Numbers



3,000

hours of technical support to provided to our members



193

communities participating in **12** ICLEI USA cohorts



80

new ICLEI USA members in 2021



326

total ICLEI USA members



47

communities pledged carbon neutrality by 2050 in the Race to Zero



18.6% ↑

jurisdictions using ClearPath (**77 new**)



153

local government operations inventories created



259

community-scale inventories created

Race to Zero

Working Paper on High Impact Action and Science-Based Targets

Leading up to and following COP26, it was clear that our focus must include both long-term zero carbon goals (by 2040 or 2050) and equally important is the need for short-term goals (2030) that outline Science-Based Targets (SBTs) reductions. With this in mind, we were pleased to release our working paper on the "Analysis of U.S. Local Government Science-Based Targets and Pathways to Achieve Them in the Race to Zero."

This paper discusses our team's analysis, findings, and recommendations to highlight local governments' needed greenhouse gas emissions reduction. We illustrate the realistic pathways to achieve those reductions, generate discussion and critical feedback, and influence the ongoing advancement of emerging policies and programs.

The Race to Zero working paper found that **under a realistic and ambitious set of assumptions, most U.S. local communities can reduce per-capita emissions by 63% or more by 2030, aligning with SBTs intended to maintain global warming to 1.5 °C.** Read the [full working paper here.](#)



ICLEI150 Leaders

ICLEI150 is a movement of local governments across the ICLEI USA network stepping up to join the UNFCC Cities Race to Zero. Last year, 47 ICLEI USA members committed to bold targets and immediate action to cut emissions by 2030 and reach climate neutrality by 2050. Hear from [ICLEI150 leaders](#) about their community's dedication to ambitious climate action.



Florida Race to Zero

ICLEI USA co-facilitated a Race to Zero webinar along with C40, CDP, and several local government representatives to discuss our working paper and pathways to achieve SBTs. During the Conference of Mayors in Orlando, we joined elected officials and local NGOs in a panel discussion about creating engagement and buy-in for the SBTs framework.

"Participating in Race to Zero will give our City the needed support to accelerate our commitment and provide an actionable roadmap toward a healthier and greener future for all our residents."

Steven Grant

Mayor, Boynton Beach, Florida

Climate Action in the U.S.



Biden 100-Day Plan

Since its inception, ICLEI has led local governments in multilevel action on climate. ICLEI USA leaders' recommendations for the first 100 Days of the Biden-Harris administration include global collaboration and domestic leadership, several of which the administration swiftly accomplished. [Learn more.](#)

Leaders Summit on Climate

Alongside President Biden's Earth Day U.S. Climate Summit, ICLEI150 signatories, Deputy Special Envoy for Climate, Dr. Jonathan Pershing, Brenda Mallory, Chair of the Council on Environmental Quality, and Colorado Governor Jared Polis shared their renewed commitments and ongoing actions to the Paris Climate Agreement as well as the support of the U.S. 2nd Nationally Determined Contribution. Themes included climate finance, nature-based solutions, and youth engagement. Watch the [Race to Zero with ICLEI150 Leaders webinar](#).



Sustainable Development Goals in the U.S.

The U.N.'s Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are a blueprint for a thriving planet where no one is left behind. In 2021, ICLEI members adopted the SDGs as their call for inclusive action for 2030. The work centered around two projects: An 8-community [SDGs Cities Challenge](#) leadership-and-learning cohort to "localize" the Global Goals and producing the [City of Orlando's first "Voluntary Local Review"](#) of the City's contributions to the SDGs.

"Local governments are leading the way in Iowa on climate mitigation and adaptation, and the University of Northern Iowa is proud to partner with them. UNI students and Green Iowa AmeriCorps members support climate action in Iowa communities through the Community Energy and Climate Action Planning program at UNI's Center for Energy and Environmental Education."

Eric Giddens

Energy Program Manager

Center of Energy and Environmental Education, University of Northern Iowa



Mobilizing Action: COP26 in Glasgow

Local governments are now enshrined in the Paris Agreement, in a critical win for ICLEI's advocacy work at COP26. By flexing our unique role as the focal organization for Local Governments and Municipal Authorities (LGMA) constituency group to the United Nations, we guaranteed that local elected voices were heard loud and clear throughout the halls of the climate conference venue in Glasgow. In stand-out moments, we ensured:

- "Multilevel action" is included in the Paris Agreement text.
- ICLEI leaders told U.S. National Climate Advisor Gina McCarthy directly that cities need federal support—and know how to put it work.
- Justice, nature, health, and circularity are not left out of climate action.

Read [ICLEI USA's key COP26 takeaways](#) and [hear from our COP26 delegation](#).

Daring Cities 2021

If a chemical plant were leaking toxic fumes, local officials would take immediate action to address the emergency. Should we expect a similar response to the climate emergency? The topic of new city governance structures and the challenge to keep this heightened level of engagement was the primary theme for [Daring Cities 2021](#). ICLEI USA leaders, including Mayor Ravi Bhalla of Hoboken and Mayor Taylor of Ann Arbor, highlighted the transformational changes required and the opportunity to collaborate in a collective effort no matter the size or capacity of your hometown.



Edinburgh Declaration & CitiesWithNature

Nature had its moment during COP26, the U.N. climate conference, when Maui County, Hawai'i, and Concord, New Hampshire, declared their support for biodiversity. These signatories to the Edinburgh Declaration—the local-government pledge for involvement in the U.N. Convention on Biological Diversity—coincided with ten U.S. communities joining the UN-endorsed CitiesWithNature platform in 2021, including [New York City becoming the 200th City to join](#).

"Concord residents and city leaders recognize the critical role that biodiversity plays in a healthy and sustainable future for our citizens and the wider world."
- Councilmember Rob Werner, Concord, New Hampshire

"The Race to Zero is a sprint, not a marathon. The current U.S. President has stated his concern and support for climate action. Globally, we all need to act, and we need to act now, with determination, intelligence and compassion."

Kelly King

Councilmember, Maui County, Hawaii

Tools for Climate Action



Atlas of Sustainability Action Planning

ICLEI USA's Atlas of Sustainability Action Planning (ASAP) showcases local action plans and reports from communities across the country. From greenhouse gas inventories and resilience plans to climate action plans, the map displays the bold actions taken by our members and non-members alike. **Explore ASAP today!**



Google EIE Supports More Than 4,000 Cities

Google EIE released 2020 transportation data to 4,000+ local governments throughout the United States. With this release, local governments can perform year-over-year analyses on transportation emissions dating back to 2018. The data is available for download in the ClearPath emissions management tool. **Read more about the EIE transportation data!**



New ClearPath Calculators

We expanded ClearPath with eleven new inventory calculators, including six calculators for upstream and supply chain emissions from local government operations. In addition, ClearPath now has planning calculators for the electrification of commercial buildings and government fleet vehicles. **Calculate your emissions with the new ClearPath inventory calculators!**



Updates to LEARN Tool

The LEARN Tool provides communities with an inventory of emissions and removals from forests and trees. ICLEI USA, WRI, and Woodwell Climate Research Center guided a cohort of 25 communities to use LEARN to develop inventories. Updates to LEARN begin in 2022 to support a new cohort of communities. **Check out LEARN today!**

"For more than 10 years, ICLEI has provided COG's climate and energy team with guidance, training, and technical support for us and our local government members on climate planning, GHG inventory development, the contribution analysis, and more."

Maia Davis

Senior Environmental Planner, Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments

Project Showcase



Lower Elwha Klallam Tribe



ICLEI USA provided one-on-one technical support for the development of the Tribe's community-wide greenhouse gas inventory.



Shoreline, WA



ICLEI USA provided a complimentary member benefit contribution analysis for inventory years 2009 and 2019 using multiple data sources, including Google EIE, that showed a net decrease in overall emissions.



Spokane, WA



ICLEI USA provided direct technical support to update Spokane's greenhouse gas inventory while analyzing the results and outlining opportunities for greenhouse gas mitigation.



Salish Kootenai Tribal Nation



ICLEI USA provided one-on-one technical support to develop the Tribe's government operations greenhouse gas inventory.



Wasatch County, UT



ICLEI USA supported the Central Wasatch Commission to identify the emissions reduction potential for alternative transportation modes. Data-driven metrics were provided to the Utah Department of Transportation to review low emissions options to improve regional connectivity.



Fee Service



Member Benefit

Project Showcase



Jefferson County, CO



Jefferson County's community-wide greenhouse gas inventory shows the emissions for the population of 582,881.



Golden, CO



ICLEI USA worked with Golden staff, and stakeholders to develop a wedge analysis to inform pathways to achieve the City's 2030 and 2050 community-scale emissions reduction targets.



Wheat Ridge, CO



This community-wide greenhouse gas inventory quantifies the emissions of Wheat Ridge's community of 31,324 residents.



Pueblo County, CO



After two community-wide greenhouse gas inventories in 2017 and 2019, Pueblo County created a Vulnerability Assessment and Resilience Plan to reduce emissions and the effects of drought, wildfire, extreme heat, and poor air quality.



Fee Service



Member Benefit

Project Showcase



Milwaukee City, WI



After the 2018 GHG Inventory, ICLEI USA, with City staff & Community Climate and Equity Task Force input, modeled ten primary strategies to reduce emissions by 25% by 2025, 45% by 2030, and 100% carbon-free energy by 2050.



Milwaukee County, WI



Aiming to reduce local government operations emissions by 50% by 2030, ICLEI USA modeled 24 strategies to reduce 65647 MT of CO2e emissions by 2030 and 117,317 MT of CO2e emissions by 2050.



Jersey City, NJ



The Jersey City Climate and Energy Action Plan coincides with New Jersey's 80 by 50 climate strategy, centering high priority sector actions around public health, economic stability, resiliency, and equity.



Montgomery County, MD



Montgomery County aims to reduce government operation emissions by 80% by 2027 and 100% by 2030. ICLEI USA modeled the best course of action for 20 buildings for the county to reach its energy use goal.



Gainesville, FL



This greenhouse gas inventory serves as a baseline for future energy action plans for a population of 133,997 residents and opportunities to engage the municipal utility.



Fee Service



Member Benefit

Collaborative Cohorts



Tennessee Valley Authority

Tennessee Valley Authority orchestrated greenhouse gas inventories for Local Power Companies to start the conversation about climate action.



Forest & Trees Carbon Accounting

Using the LEARN tool, communities conducted community-scale forest and tree greenhouse gas inventories.



Integrated Climate Action Planning

Twenty communities began to develop an integrated Climate Action Plan, inclusive of climate equity, mitigation, and adaptation.



Sustainability Planning

Sixteen communities worked to develop a sustainability plan addressing social, economic, and environmental elements of community development and management.



Consumption-Based Accounting Supply Chain

ICLEI USA provided an overview of the current state of practice for consumption-based inventories.



Greenhouse Gas Inventory

This cohort guided local governments in creating a greenhouse gas inventory as well as targeting and forecasting in ClearPath.



Student & Regional Cohorts

Our Indiana University, Iowa, East Central Florida, and Pennsylvania cohorts combined multilevel action through student, local government, and regional collaboration.



Sabin Law Clinic

ICLEI USA partnered with the Sabin Center for Climate Change Law, housed in Columbia University Law School, to tackle some of the questions at the intersection of climate, law and policy.

"Adopting 'Responsibility for the Environment' as one of its core values in 2000, the City of West Hollywood remains duly committed to impactful climate action and sound environmental policies that lead to a cleaner, greener, more equitable way of life for its community."

Robyn Eason

Senior Sustainability Planner, City of West Hollywood, California

The Year Ahead



Race to Resilience



We're leveraging the success of our ICLEI150 Race to Zero leaders who embraced science-based targets and high-impact actions to add a companion Race to Resilience support package.

Peer Learning Overview



Each year, we host a range of peer-learning experiences for our members. We are happy to announce the following cohorts for 2022: Sustainability Planning, Greenhouse Gas Inventory & Forecast Cohort, Race to Zero Regional Cohort, Integrated Climate Action Planning, Climate Law Clinics, Climate & Sustainability Communications Workshops, and Biodiversity Bootcamp.

U.S. Community Protocol Updates



Protocols support data and tools so communities can act consistently with transparency to deliver results representative of the entire community. We're grateful for the stakeholders partnering with us to release an update to these protocols in 2022.

World Congress



Watch for 2022 announcements of new cohorts, biodiversity, climate law, and high-impact action implementation content. We hope to see you online or in Malmö, Sweden for the ICLEI global World Congress, May 11 - 13, including a research symposium at the World Maritime University.

Membership+



If your inventory needs updating, you need help determining the highest and best opportunities for mitigation, or you want to assess your community's climate vulnerability, ICLEI USA technical experts offer "membership plus" services to get these tasks done.

ClearPath Updates



The data and greenhouse gas accounting landscape is quickly shifting. ICLEI USA and our network members are incredibly well-positioned to seize these innovations. ClearPath will continue to be a repository for a myriad of data sources and a decision tool for climate action supported by guidance from our trusted team.

Meet Our Team

Our Board



Frank Cownie
ICLEI President
City of Des Moines, IA



Brigid Shea
ICLEI USA Board Chair
*Commissioner, Precinct 2,
Travis County, TX*



Pam O'Connor
Board Vice-Chair
*Former Mayor and Council
Member, City of Santa
Monica, CA*



Matthew Appelbaum
*Former Council Member
and Mayor, City of
Boulder, CO*



Harvey Ruvin
*Clerk of the Courts,
Miami-Dade County, FL*



David Driskell
*Principal with
Baird+Driskell
Community Planning*



William Peduto
*Former Mayor of
Pittsburgh, PA*



Dan Stiles
*Founding Partner at Stiles.Legal
and Senior Strategic Advisor and
General Counsel to former U.S.
Vice President Al Gore and The
Climate Reality Project*



Meghna Tare
*Chief Sustainability
Officer, University of
Texas at Arlington*



Kelly Takaya King
*Council Member, Maui
County, HI*

Our Staff



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Our Supporters

A Special Thank You to Our Partners

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Audubon Florida

Azavea

Ben Leffel, *Ph.D. Postdoctoral Fellow at University of Michigan, Erb Institute for Global Sustainable Enterprise*

Brookings Institution

C40

CDP

Center for Planning Excellence

Ceres

Circle Economy

Climate Mayors

Climate Nexus

Cool Roofs Ratings Council

Denice Ross, *U.S. Chief Data Scientist*

East Central Florida Regional Planning Council

Electrification Coalition

Environmental Law Institute

EPA's Heat Island Reduction Program

First Street

Florida Municipal League

GIZ

Global Youth Biodiversity Network

Governor of Louisiana, John Bel Edwards

Governor of Nevada Steve Sisolak

Greater Portland Council of Governments

Greenlink

Hudson Valley Partners for Climate Action

Hudson Valley Regional Council

IUC

Launch Academy

Marin County Community Choice Aggregation

Mayors Migration Council

Metabolic

Mountain Towns 2030

National League of Cities

National Environmental Health Association

New Building Institute

PFM

Princeton University

Public News Service

Resilient Cities Catalyst

RMI

Sabin Center for Climate Change Law

Southeast Sustainability Directors Network

Southern Maine Planning & Development Commission

Southeast Sustainability Directors Network

U.S. Conference of Mayors

UN Environment North America

University of Indiana

University of Melbourne

University of Nebraska-Lincoln

University of Northern Iowa

University of Texas at Arlington

USDA Office of the Chief Economist

Urban Sustainability Directors Network

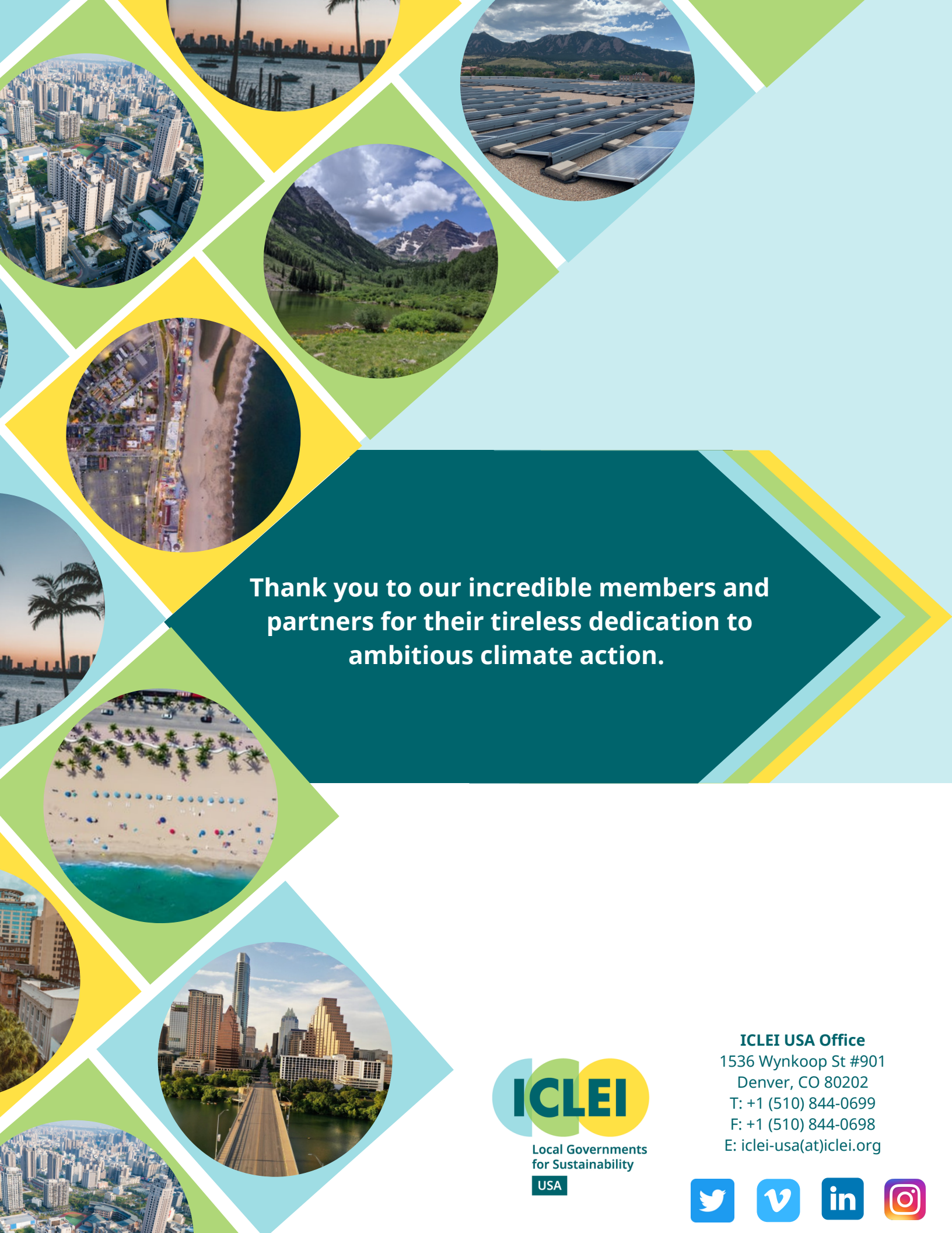
Vernonster

World Wide Fund for Nature

"We just issued our climate resilience plan and I was thinking back to when we started with ICLEI's ADAPT framework and held a staff workshop that ICLEI organized and facilitated. I think those were key."

John Bolduc

Environmental Planner, Cambridge Community Development Department



**Thank you to our incredible members and
partners for their tireless dedication to
ambitious climate action.**



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