

# ICLEI USA Membership Your Benefits

## Our Approach

ICLEI USA membership takes a whole-of-government approach that supports climate and sustainability staff, elected leaders, and staff from across departments. The [ICLEI Pathways](#) (Low Emissions, Equitable and People-Centered, Resilient, Circular, and Nature-Based) are a framework for designing integrated solutions that balance the patterns of human life and the built and natural environments.

As an ICLEI member, your community has access to the member resources and technical assistance offerings across our five pathways that are outlined in this brochure. These benefits may be leveraged by climate and sustainability staff, elected officials, task force committee members, and staff from all departments. Contact your membership advisor today to learn more about these benefits and how best to put your membership to work.



### Cross-Cutting Member Benefits

- The [ICLEI Community](#) portal
- Peer exchange and international networking
- 10 hours of direct technical support for your local government covering:
  - Any of the five pathways
  - Climate communications
  - Advocacy and policy development
  - Implementation



### Cross-Cutting Member Resources



- Climate and Sustainability Communications Toolkit
- Sustainability Planning Toolkit
- Member-only Capacity Building Cohorts



# Low Emissions

## Overview of the Low-Emissions Pathway

ICLEI supports local governments in the urgent work to rapidly reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions in the next five to 10 years, and to reach zero or negative emissions by mid-century. ICLEI has been a leader in local climate action since the 1990s, developing the frameworks, protocols, and tools that have become the industry standard. We help our members establish a baseline, set goals, and prioritize and implement high-impact actions to most effectively reduce emissions from their communities and their own operations.



### Low Emissions Member Benefits

- We offer **Weekly Low-Emissions Technical Office Hours** - these are a great place to bring your questions about using the ClearPath Climate Planner, finding data for GHG inventories, forecasting emissions, and modeling emissions reduction actions.
- Consider using 1-2 of your 10 hours of technical assistance for low emissions support. Not sure how to use your low emissions technical assistance? Here are some ideas:
  - **Action Planning and Implementation Conversation:** Our low-emissions experts can help you identify and prioritize emissions-reduction actions for your community. We can discuss how to get started on implementation of electric vehicle adoption, rooftop solar, energy efficiency, and many more. We can also help you think through how to track progress and monitor results.
  - **Quality Review:** QA/QC of a completed GHG inventory, emissions forecast, emissions reduction scenario in ClearPath, or Climate Action Plan.

### Low Emissions Member Resources



- **ClearPath Climate Planner Tool:** The leading online software platform for completing greenhouse gas inventories, forecasts, climate action plans, and monitoring for community-wide or government-operations.
- **ICLEI Academy:** Your go-to training course for community decarbonization. The first module covers developing a community GHG inventory; additional modules will be added throughout 2024.
- **ICLEI USA's GHG Inventory Toolkits:** A toolkit that provides what you need to get started establishing a baseline, including data request templates, spreadsheet tools for conditioning data, and step-by-step instructions.
  - Community-Wide toolkit
  - Local Government Operations toolkit
- **ClearPath Forecasting and Planning Webinar Recordings:** Educational videos for communities using ClearPath.
- **Land Emissions And Removals Navigator (LEARN) Tool:** Online tool to calculate carbon emissions and sequestration from forests and trees outside of forests.

**Need more support?** Consider hiring ICLEI USA to help your community get on a low- to no-emission pathway—learn more about our services in our [Low Emissions fee for service brochure](#).



# Low Emissions



## Low Emissions Member Benefits

Other areas to use your technical assistance hours:

- **Basic Community-Wide Emissions-Reduction Forecasting:** For members with a completed 2018 or newer GHG inventory, we will develop a basic business-as-usual forecast, science-based target, and basic high-impact actions.
- **Facilitated Access to Google Environmental Insights Explorer (EIE) Data:** We can download and help you use EIE data for your community on vehicle miles, transit/bicycle/walking trips, residential and non-residential rooftop solar potential, and tree canopy (availability of data types varies by community).



## Low Emissions Member Resources

- **The Climate Action Plan Scoping Tool:** A tool that helps set up the process for developing a climate action plan.
- **The Contribution Analysis Toolkit:** A toolkit that helps communities understand changes in GHG emissions over time.
- **High-Impact Action (HIA) Working Paper:** ICLEI USA's analysis of the most effective local actions for deep emissions reductions by 2030.
- **The Race to Zero Policy Matrix:** Matrix that lists and provides examples of high impact emissions reduction policies.
- **Join the conversation!** The ICLEI Community Low Emissions forum is our facilitated discussion group for members to engage with the pathway.



**Need more support?** Consider hiring ICLEI USA to help your community get on a low- to no-emission pathway—learn more about our services in our [Low Emissions fee for service brochure](#).



# Resilient

## Overview of the Resilient Pathway

Climate change is here. Communities across the US are being confronted with a changed landscape of hazards caused or worsened by climate change, including rising seas, flooding, extreme storms, heat waves, wildfires, and drought. The pressing need to adapt to climate change—to adjust, prepare, cope, and even transform our systems and ways of life—is clear. At ICLEI USA, we help our members adapt to climate change and build community resilience through the Resilient Development Pathway. Resilient Development technical advisors can help your community understand local climate change projections, kickstart climate risk and vulnerability assessments, engage staff and the community through workshops and surveys, and strategize for implementation.



### Resilient Member Benefits

Consider using 1-2 hours of your 10 hrs of technical assistance for resilience support. Not sure how to use your resilience technical assistance? Here are some ideas:

- **Resilience Kickstart Call** (30 min): Connect with the resilient development pathway lead to jumpstart any resilience planning process (Hazard Mitigation Plan, vulnerability assessment, adaptation plan, climate action and resilience plan etc) by talking through project planning and management, brainstorming around stakeholder engagement, and learning about the latest tools and resources in the resilience space (schedule a call with [our Senior Resilience Officer](#)).
- **GIS for Climate Resilience** (30 min): Get started using GIS for climate resilience by discussing how to identify areas of high risk and vulnerability to climate hazards using spatial data, as well as assessing equity, community assets, and variation in access to environmental amenities that build resilience such as tree canopy coverage and greenspace (schedule a call with [our Resilience Team](#)).

### Resilient Member Resources



- **Vulnerability Assessment Toolkit:** ICLEI USA's one-stop-shop for climate risk and vulnerability assessments, the Vulnerability Assessment Toolkit includes template staff and community engagement materials (facilitator guides, activity descriptions, slide deck, survey) and a guided assessment report template.
- **Adaptation First Steps Guide:** (Sustainable Communities Suite): A step-by-step guide for communities getting started with their climate adaptation journey.
- **ResiliencePlus Strategies Matrix:** An array of resilience strategies covering a variety of climate change hazards and community systems (for example, strategies for adaptive governance, planning, ecosystem-based adaptation, and more).
- **Cost of Doing Nothing toolkit:** A guide and toolkit for building a local business case for climate change adaptation.
- **Join the conversation!** [The ICLEI Community Resilience and Adaptation forum](#) is our facilitated discussion group for members to engage with the pathway.

**Need more support?** Consider hiring ICLEI USA to support your community's climate risk and vulnerability assessment and adaptation planning efforts—learn more about our services in our [Climate Change Adaptation and Community Resilience fee for service brochure](#).



# Circular

## Overview of the Circular Pathway

The global economy consumes 100 billion tons of material annually to provide shelter, food, clothing, transportation, energy, and water to the 8 billion people living on our planet. This rate has more than doubled since 1990 and is projected to reach 190 billion tons by 2060. With fast-paced growth in consumption comes the degradation of natural resources and increasing greenhouse gas emissions, with an estimated 70% of global emissions tied to material handling and use. Through the development of the circular economy, and with help from ICLEI USA's Circular Pathway, communities can redistribute resources to drive smart and equitable consumption, resilience, climate action, and biodiversity conservation while offering the tools to support social equity, local job creation, public health, and community wealth.



### Circular Member Benefits

Consider using 1-2 of your 10 hours of technical assistance for circular support. Not sure how to use your circular technical assistance? Here are some ideas:

- **Circular Kickstart Call (30 min):** Connect with the circular development pathway leads to jumpstart any circular economy development process by talking through project planning and management, brainstorming around stakeholder engagement, and learning about the latest tools and resources in the circular economy space.
- **Sustainable Procurement Policy Review:** Do you need support completing your sustainable procurement policy? ICLEI USA's Circular Pathway team can review your draft policy and provide feedback and recommendations based on the following: an evaluation of your policy against ICLEI USA's sustainable public procurement best practices; a review of your policy against ICLEI USA's circular economy criteria to strengthen your policy and support your local economy; an assessment of the implementation and monitoring plan within the policy with recommendations to ensure successful outcomes.

### Circular Member Resources



- **Circular City Actions Framework:** A framework that unpacks what the circular economy concept means at the local level, to help cities on their circular journeys.
- **City Practitioners Handbook: Circular Food Systems:** This handbook provides local governments with concrete tools their peers are using to facilitate the transition to circular food systems, from stakeholder engagement to designing effective policies.
- **ICLEI's City Toolkit: Just Transition in the Built Environment:** This resource outlines six key tools that local governments can leverage to achieve these goals. For each tool, it provides policy recommendations and practical examples from around the world.
- **Urban Transitions Handbook:** The methodology and tools presented in this guidebook can be applied by local governments to a variety of sustainability programs, including those that advance the transition to the circular economy.
- **Quick Glance at Sustainable Public Procurement:** This resource provides high-level guidance on the steps a local government can take to adopt a comprehensive sustainable public procurement policy.



# Circular



## Circular Member Benefits

Other areas where we've helped our members:

- Reviewing materials for stakeholder/community engagement (your slide decks, facilitator guides, and activities) and draft plans
- Sharing exemplary plans/materials/toolkits/policies created by other local governments & making introductions to others doing similar work
- Troubleshooting issues related to lack of data availability, siloed processes/interdepartmental collaboration
- Strategizing for effective monitoring and evaluation of circularity; and more!



## Circular Member Resources

- **The Circular Pathway Starter Pack:** This starter pack includes ICLEI USA's Circular Resource Guide for Local Governments, Circular Strategies Matrix, and Circularity 101 Presentation Template
- **Join the conversation!** The ICLEI Community Circularity forum is our facilitated discussion group for members to engage with the pathway.



**Need more support?** Consider hiring ICLEI USA to support your community apply the best practices for circular economy and sustainable and innovative procurement.—learn more about our services in [our Circular fee for service brochure](#).



# Nature

## Overview of the Nature Pathway

Alongside the climate change crisis, communities are also struggling with the loss of natural habitat and challenges around providing access for all to nature's beauty and benefits — including the many ecosystem services to humans, such as clean water, clean air, healthy food and medicines, carbon sequestration, environmental hazard protection and much more. Recognizing the urgency of this biodiversity loss — and building on ICLEI's unique role as the United Nations focal point organization on cities and nature — ICLEI USA can help your community develop a plan that conserves natural areas, improves biodiversity, and provides equitable access to nature.



### Nature Member Benefits

Consider using 1-2 hours of your 10 hours of technical assistance for nature support. Not sure how to use your nature technical assistance?

Here are some ideas:

- **Nature Kickstart Call (30 min):** Connect with the Nature Pathway Leads to discuss the following topics - Integrating Nature into a Sustainability plan or CAP, LEARN tool, CitiesWithNature, or a FFS Scoping call
- Other areas where we've helped our members:
  - Reviewing nature/biodiversity elements in Sustainability/Climate Plans
  - Reviewing LEARN Tool reports or Demoing the LEARN tool
  - Providing a resource overview.
  - Hosting a Nature Cohort to support nature integration into a Sustainability Plan or Climate Action Plan

### Nature Member Resources



- **CitiesWithNature (CWN) and RegionsWithNature (RWN) Platforms:** Global platforms with resources to strengthen collective action to mainstream nature into cities and regions. The CWN and RWN platforms provide communities with direct ties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD).
- **Berlin Urban Nature Pact:** An initiative that supplies communities with nature and biodiversity targets they can adopt and incorporate into a climate and/or sustainability plan.
- **Cities Biodiversity Index Tool:** The Cities Biodiversity Tool located in the CitiesWithNature Platform supports local governments in developing their own Cities Biodiversity Index to assess the state of nature and biodiversity in their boundary.
- **Land Emissions And Removals Navigator (LEARN) Tool:** Online tool to calculate carbon emissions and sequestration from forests and trees outside of forests.
- **Nature Based Solutions Matrix:** Matrix of nature based solutions local governments can incorporate into their climate and/or sustainability plans.

**Need more support?** Consider hiring ICLEI USA to support your community's nature-based solutions—learn more about our services in our [Nature fee for service brochure](#).



# Nature



## Nature Member Resources



- **Nature Planning Guidebook**: Guidance document to support local governments with developing a Local Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan for their community.
- **Guide to Biodiversity Financing for Cities and Regions**: Guidance document that discusses the financial instruments needed to implement biodiversity strategies and actions.
- **Join the conversation!** The ICLEI Community Nature forum is our facilitated discussion group for members to engage with the pathway.

**Need more support?** Consider hiring ICLEI USA to support your community's nature-based solutions—learn more about our services in our [Nature fee for service brochure](#).





# Equitable & People-Centered

## Overview of the Equitable & People-Centered Pathway

ICLEI USA offers members crucial support in navigating the challenges of climate change and fostering sustainable urban planning. With a central focus on equity, we assist local governments in prioritizing inclusivity and addressing climate-related disparities. Our organization goes beyond emission reduction by advocating for the creation of just, livable, and inclusive communities to tackle the root causes of injustice. Together, we strive to build resilient communities where every voice is heard and cultural diversity is integral to the social fabric, ensuring a sustainable future that safeguards human health and the natural environment.



### Equity Member Benefits

### Equity Member Resources



- ICLEI USA's **Equity: First Step Guide**: Introduces local governments to equity by helping them identify and track inequities that occur within their community. The guide provides local governments with a starting point for tracking inequities in five distinct categories. These categories include: Energy Access, Public Health, Infrastructure, Economic Prosperity, and Education.
  - At a minimum, these are the areas in which communities must analyze inequities.
- ICLEI USA's **Equity in Climate Planning Trends and Best Practices for Local Governments**: This report builds on the Equity: First Steps Guide and provides communities with examples of equity in climate action plans, community engagement strategies, data and metrics for tracking equity and core actions for incorporating equity.
- Learn from The Urban Transitions Alliance, ICLEI's network of industrial-legacy cities, including Buffalo, Pittsburgh, and Cincinnati, in an **equity-centered webinar series**.
- **Join the conversation!** The **ICLEI Community Equity "forum"** is our facilitated discussion



# Communications Support

## Overview of Communications Support

Dedicated to crafting compelling narratives, the Communications Department at ICLEI USA provides essential assistance to our members, guiding them in effectively presenting their sustainability and climate change initiatives to engage their community members. Our goal goes beyond mere visibility; it's a collective effort to emphasize the importance of taking climate actions holistically. Through dynamic storytelling and place-based strategies, we aim to ignite enthusiasm and foster collaboration to build stronger communities.



### Communications Member Benefits

Consider using 2-3 hours of your 10 hours of technical assistance for nature support. Not sure how to use your communication technical assistance? Here are some ideas:

- **Communications Strategy Call (1 hour):** Meet with ICLEI USA Communications Officer to discuss your community's communications strategy, brainstorm goals, and create an action plan. All calls are followed up with detailed notes, next steps, and resources.
- **Climate and Sustainability Communications Workshop (1 - 2 hours):** Schedule an interactive workshop for your communications team or interested staff. The 60-minute workshop will cover key climate and sustainability communications items and brainstorm ideas for your community.
- **External Communication Channel Audit Request (2-3 hours):** Meet with ICLEI USA Communications Officer to request an external communication channel audit. The communications officer will then review and provide feedback to increase public engagement.

### Communications Member Resources



- **ICLEI USA's Climate & Sustainability Communications Toolkit:** This toolkit provides all the necessary tools and guidance to promote effective messaging and delivery techniques within climate and sustainability communications for local governments.





# Advocacy, Policy and Leadership Opportunities

## Overview of Advocacy, Policy and Leadership Opportunities

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### Leadership Opportunities

- **Join the Cities Race to Zero or Cities Race to Resilience.** Become an internationally recognized climate champion and gain access to our technical support packages that put you on track by 2030 for 2050 carbon-neutrality and resilience.
- **Join CitiesWithNature.** Champion nature, biodiversity, and ecosystem services while unlocking technical support for nature-based solutions in your community.
- **Join CityFood.** ICLEI's global flagship program aims to accelerate local and regional government action toward sustainable food systems transformation.
- **Serve with (or Inform) ICLEI Governance.** Every three years, parallel regional elections take place in all 9 ICLEI regions to elect the ICLEI Global and Regional Executive Committees. Representatives from eligible ICLEI Members can apply in their region by submitting an application, and all eligible ICLEI Members then vote, which is then followed by the ICLEI Global Executive Committee elections.
- **Be part of ICLEI's Delegation to the UN Climate Conference and other events.** ICLEI leaders share their community's story by attending United Nations' international conferences on climate (annually around November/December) and nature (every 2 years), offering a unique chance for elected leaders to take the global stage.

### Advocacy Member Resources



- **High-Impact Advocacy (HIA) Policy Matrix (Coming 2024):** From declaring a climate emergency to building just, equitable communities, we outline the highest-impact policies that local leaders can adopt for transformative change.
- **Cities Race to Zero and Race to Resilience Resources:** Set a science-based target and reach carbon-neutrality by 2050 and ensure the resilience is embedded into city or town processes with our technical support packages for both rapid decarbonization and climate adaptation.
- **Cities Forward Academy (2025):** This 6-month, sequential leadership-and-learning virtual series will share lessons from two years of Cities Forward, the U.S. State Department's flagship resilience-building initiative.
- **Budgeting for Climate Action and Sustainable Public Procurement Support:** Tap ICLEI expertise for municipal finance that meets climate and sustainability aims.

# ABOUT ICLEI USA

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ICLEI is the first and largest global network of local and regional governments devoted to solving the world's most intractable sustainability challenges. ICLEI USA's standards, tools, and programs credibly, transparently, and robustly reduce greenhouse gas emissions, improve lives and livelihoods and protect natural resources in the U.S. communities we serve. Through a data-driven approach and focus on just and equitable communities, ICLEI USA and our network partners are working to keep 1.5 °C alive.



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