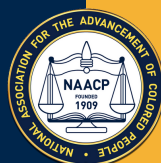


# MODULE 7

Educating and Organizing for Energy Justice

A C T I O N T O O L K I T

NAACP  
Environmental and Climate Justice Program



**JUST ENERGY**  
Policies and Practices

---

# Table of Contents

Module 7: Educating and Organizing for Energy Justice .....	1
Types of Education and Organizing Activities.....	1
A Little Planning Goes a Long Way .....	5
Town Halls, Roundtables, and Hosting a Bridging the Gap Summit .....	8
In-Person and Virtual Town Hall Meetings.....	8
Hosting an In-Person Town Hall Meeting.....	9
Hosting a Twitter Town Hall .....	14
Hosting an Energy Justice Roundtable .....	17
Hosting a “Bridging the Gap: Connecting Black Communities to the Green Economy” Summit.....	20
Engaging the Media in Energy Justice Education & Organizing.....	25
Working with the Media .....	25
Beginning Your Media Advocacy .....	28
How to Organize a Press Conference.....	29
Using Social Media for Energy Justice .....	35
Conclusion.....	39
Resources.....	40
Fact Sheet: Energy Justice Messaging: Frame Your Narrative with Facts	
Fact Sheet and Sample: Writing an Action Alert	
Fact Sheet and Sample: Writing a Blog Post	
Fact Sheet and Sample: Writing a Media Advisory	
Fact Sheet: Writing a Newspaper Editorial (or Op-Ed)	
Worksheet: Write an Op-Ed in 10 Steps	
Sample: Op-Ed	
Fact Sheet and Sample: Writing a Press Release	
Sample: Bridging the Gap Summit: Sample Agenda	

---

## Module 7:

### Educating and Organizing for Energy Justice

In order to change the way our world looks at energy and energy justice, we must develop education and awareness campaigns to convey the importance of energy democracy. Your Environmental and Climate Justice (ECJ) Committee or team can get the word out on renewable and clean energy opportunities in your community in creative and innovative ways. Each community is different; each community will have different educational and organizing needs. We will go through a wide variety of options, pick and tailor what is best for you.



#### A NOTE...

Most of you will want to explore some types of media outreach and public awareness along with your legislative campaigns and other energy justice events. This module can be used alongside all of the other modules and will enhance your efforts.

### Types of Education and Organizing Activities

The goal of these organizing and educational activities is to get the attention of the public, the media, and of course, the people you are trying to change – the utility regulators, the legislators, etc. And there are so many possibilities!

#### Here are a few examples:

Letter/email writing	Town hall meeting	Community science project
Phone bank campaigns	Bridging the Gap Summit	Spoken word night
Interfaith prayer services	Energy Justice Roundtable	Healing circles
Candlelight vigils	Teach-ins	
Social media campaign	Music and/or art festivals	The list goes on and on!
Letters to the editor	Poem writing	
Press Conferences and releases		

Like *Module 8: Direct Action Campaigning for Energy Justice*, we begin by helping your ECJ Committee or team think through which of these (or other) types of educational and organizing events is right for you. Then we discuss ways to get organized and go deeper into the following types of events:

- In person Town Halls and Twitter Town Halls
- Energy Justice Roundtables
- Bridging the Gap Summits
- Engaging the Media

---

**Here are a few questions to answer to determine which activity best fits your just energy campaign's needs:**

1. What is the main message you are trying to get across?  
Think this through and boil your message down to a few short sentences. Keeping things simple helps to keep your campaign memorable and easy to understand.
2. What change would your education and/or organizing event make? What is your end goal?  
If your goal is to educate the public on the toxins from your local power plant then a social media campaign and/or press conference might be good first steps. If your goal is to get a lawmaker to vote for or against a law that would hurt/help your energy justice campaign then letter/email writing campaigns, and phone banks might be in order.
3. How much time does your ECJ Committee have to plan an educational or organizing event? If your energy justice initiatives are long-term like changing local policies on net metering, you may decide you need several of these events along the way, which will add time into your over all timeline of plans. If your ECJ Committee or team is doing a short-term weatherization project, you may decide that one or two of these educational opportunities is fine, which would take a shorter amount of time and effort from your team.
4. Are there people in your committee or volunteers who would not be able to participate in physical activities who would be able to help with other types of activities like social media? With any good educational and/or organizing event, it is necessary to think of who is being left out (people with disabilities, people who are lower income, people who are LGBT, etc.) and how can we bring them in. **These events are community events and should represent and reach everyone in your community.**
5. How many people will you need? You may want to keep things small, you may want to make it big! Either way, make sure you have enough people and leaders designated to train and organize before, during, and after your event.
6. What resources (money, posters, stamps, volunteers, vehicles, etc.) will you need? Your ECJ committee or team will need resources before, during, and after your educational or organizing campaign; everything from scissors and markers to water and sunblock. Make a list ahead of time and if you do not have the resources, ask for donations or pool

---

resources with partner organizations. Be sure to get as many environmentally friendly resources as possible and make recycling, composting, etc. available.

7. Where will you hold the event? Do you need a permit?  
Location, location, location. This is your time to get attention, particularly if your ECJ Committee is planning a public awareness campaign. See the section below on In-Person Town Halls for more information on hosting your event in an equitable way.

Table 1 (see the next page) will help you to think through some of these questions.



**Table 1: Education and Organizing Brainstorm**

Guiding Questions	Brainstorm
What is the main message you are trying to get across?	
What do you want your educational or organizing event to accomplish? What is your goal?	
How much time does your ECJ Committee have to plan an educational or organizing event? Are there key dates or events you are planning around or should keep in mind?	
What accessibility needs should you consider? What are you able to make your event accessible and inclusive?	
How many participants would you like to be involved in your event? How many volunteers will you need? Does your volunteer capacity match your ambitions? Do you have partners or allies you can call on?	
What materials will you need?	

<p>What of these materials do you already have and what will you need to acquire? What funding or other resources are available to you?</p>	
<p>Where do you plan to hold your event? Do you need to obtain a permit or follow any other procedures in order to obtain access to the space?</p>	
<p>What other concerns or lingering questions do you have?</p>	

## A Little Planning Goes a Long Way

Once your Environmental and Climate Justice (ECJ) Committee or team has considered and discussed the above questions, the next step is to select the type of education and/or organizing event that best fits your energy justice goals. This should be a focused effort and the timing of the action should be aligned with key events or days, if possible. The more planned an action is, the better your message will be.

### Before Your Educational or Organizing Activity:

1. Work through the questions above and create a plan including timelines, tasks, materials needed, and people assigned to each task.
2. Purchase any materials required or get these items through donations, in-kind gifts, etc.
3. Recruit participants and volunteers.
4. Secure permits, if necessary.
5. Create social media posts, email blasts, letters to the editor, etc. and send them out.
6. Create any art needed like posters, print agendas, etc.
7. Host a training for both your ECJ Committee and volunteers. Include in your training:

- 
- a. The purpose of your event
  - b. The plan of action itself
  - c. The tasks and timelines
  - d. Safety concerns, Know Your Rights information, etc.
  - e. Follow up process

#### **During Your Educational or Organizing Activity:**

1. Arrive early and set up any materials, tables, signs, etc. that need set up.
2. Check-in with your volunteers and ECJ Committee members regularly.
3. Provide relief with food, water, etc. as needed.
4. Enjoy your campaign! Participate, commiserate, form relationships with media, etc.!
5. Try to clean up and recycle as you go, it makes things easier afterwards.
6. Pass around a sign-up sheet where people can register for more information.
7. Tweet, post, etc. to social media.

#### **After Your Educational or Organizing Activity:**

1. Clean up, recycle, compost, etc. any materials leftover.
2. Send thank you's, either handwritten or email, to each of your ECJ Committee members, volunteers, and media who attended.
3. Create and post follow up social media posts that include numbers and specifics. For example, "We had 200 people present for our letter writing campaign!" Or, "Thanks to the Unitarian Church Youth Group for providing water at our spoken word night!"
4. Enter the contact information from your sign-up sheets into your email blast listservs, etc. and send an email blast with specifics from the day. Include future calls to action and a specific ask for people to join your effort.
5. Follow up with the media with who attended. Send thank you emails to the media who attended and praise any positive coverage that you received. Follow up with any media who did covered of your event in a negative light and offer counter-information to their coverage. Invite all media to follow your work via social media and other avenues and encourage their attendance at your future events.
6. Follow up on your cause. The goal of your event should be followed up on after your campaign is over. What change occurred? What changes are left or did not happen that now need a different path of action?
7. Debrief with your ECJ Committee or team.



*Shifting the way people think about energy from being only toxic coal, and nuclear, to imagining clean energy like solar, and wind is something we can achieve.*

---

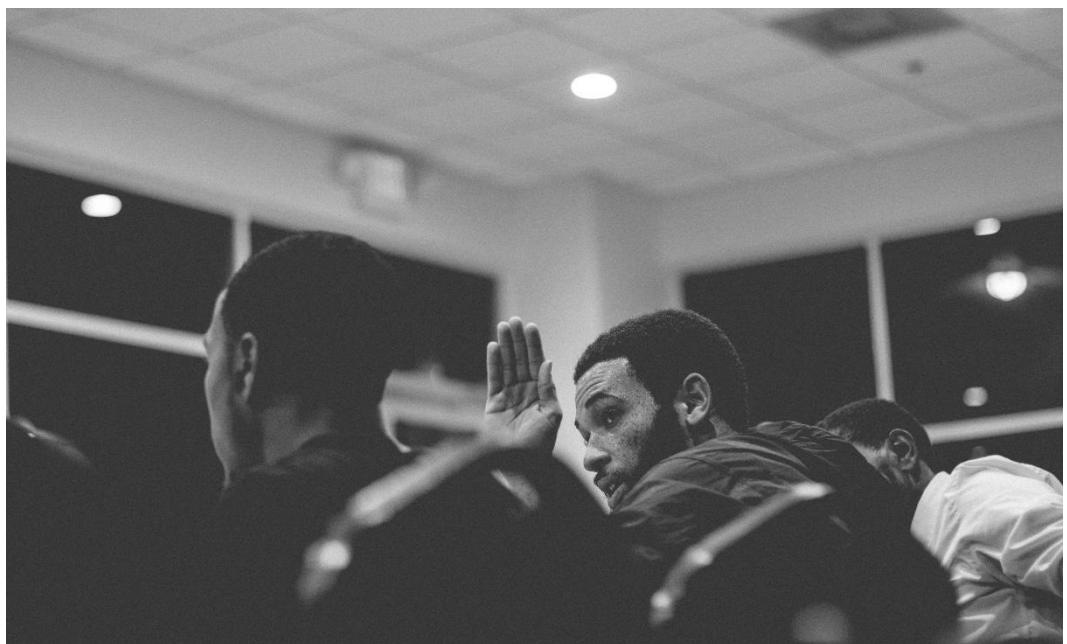
## Town Halls, Roundtables, and Hosting a Bridging the Gap Summit

As we mentioned at the beginning of this module, there are a lot of different ways your unit can participate in education and organizing activities! We are going to highlight several ways to bring a large number of people together in a space of learning: In-Person Town Halls, Twitter Town Halls, Energy Justice Roundtables, hosting a NAACP Bridging the Gap Summit, and Engaging the Media.

### In-Person and Virtual Town Hall Meetings

Town Hall meetings are where the community is invited into a space to ask questions, express opinions, and give feedback to a politician, an organization, an initiative, etc. Traditional Town Hall meetings are done in person and set up with a panel of organizers who listen and ask questions to a room of community individuals. Online or virtual Town Halls have the same goals but occur on Twitter or other online platforms. There are benefits and ways to organize each so that your Environmental and Climate Justice Committee gets the feedback they need.

As a form of education and organizing, Town Hall meetings provide community members with the opportunity to discuss local issues like the health and economic impacts of pollution, energy efficiency, renewable energy, and opportunities for jobs in the green economy. They also function as yet another way your ECJ Committee can learn about how energy injustice impacts those you serve and can inform the direction of your energy justice work.



---

## Hosting an In-Person Town Hall Meeting

In-person Town Hall meetings are fairly simple to set up and with enough pre-planning, are an effective way of including the community in your energy justice campaign. Below we outline how to set up an In-person Town Hall meeting, how to run one successfully, and how to follow up afterwards.

### **Before Your Town Hall meeting:**

Meet with your ECJ Committee, unit, or team to determine the following:

1. What will your Town Hall theme or topic(s) will be?
2. What goals do you want to achieve by bringing the community together and asking them about energy justice (or your specific energy justice goal)?
3. Determine how many people you will need to run the event and how many volunteers to recruit. Draft emails, letters, etc. to recruit and reach out.
4. Create a timeline that includes enough notice for your planning meetings, inviting other agencies, gathering volunteers, and pushing notices to the public.
5. Create an agenda for the event. Leave plenty of time for conversation and questions that may or may not already be on your list.
6. Create an online registration form (or a printable form that can be affixed to an email or mailed) by using Google forms or another free online platform. Include your tentative agenda, if meals are provided, if childcare is provided, ask if anyone has any dietary needs, etc.
7. Develop a list of questions that you obtain from the community. List a space on your website, social media, and on fliers in the community for people to send in what questions they have and organize your list from their input.
8. Identify and assign someone who can moderate the Town Hall meeting. This person should have a good grasp of the subject matter, and demonstrate the ability to keep the conversation on topic while being respectful of people who are speaking.
9. Determine a location.
  - a. There is a lot to consider when planning a location that fits most

---

people’s needs. First, consider if your location is accessible to people with physical disabilities – consider if there is a ramp outside, parking options, and if the building has an elevator.

- b. Next, consider the location of the Town Hall building or space in relevance to the geographic location of the people you are trying to reach. Are there easy public transportation options? Is there a need for a carpooling option?
- c. Consider offering onsite childcare that can be monitored by volunteers in an adjacent room to the Town Hall.
- d. Take into account the politics of the area you are choosing. In other words, you may want to choose an area that is more “liberal” in nature, such as at the office of a local activist group, a church or college that welcomes all people.
- e. Consider how big your space needs to be – it is always good to get a space that is a bit larger than what you anticipate.
- f. Consider the cost of the location and see if people are willing to waive their fees in support of your cause.
- g. Consider audio/visual needs (screen and projector, white boards, etc.).
- h. Once you have chosen a few places, schedule walk-throughs with a few members of your committee to make note of any additional needs you may encounter.

## RESOURCE

The National Network for the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) has a fantastic resource entitled, *A Planning Guide for Making Temporary Events Accessible to People with Disabilities*, and guides you through how to set up a meeting space for people who have disabilities. You can find it under the “Publications” section of their website ([www.adata.org](http://www.adata.org)) or at this link: [adata.org/publication/temporary-events-guide](http://adata.org/publication/temporary-events-guide)

- 10. Publicize, publicize, publicize. All your planning will be in vain without gaining public participation through publicizing. In addition to letter invitations, create appealing flyers for posting and sharing online. Flyers could also be distributed at churches, community centers or other public places and to other organizations. A media release to your mainstream media contacts would also create public interest. Be sure to include contact information for organizers as well as any social medial sites for more information.
- 11. Purchase any materials necessary. If purchasing materials is not affordable, schedule time for asking for donations in your timeline. This may mean that ECJ Committee members ask companies for money or that your committee or team coordinates local food and resources in exchange

---

for helping those businesses with other goods and services. Either way, making time to get your materials in order should be factored.

12. Create a sign-in sheet to pass around at the event, asking for names, contact numbers, and email addresses.

#### **During Your Town Hall meeting:**

1. Welcome your attendees both at the door and in an opening introduction. Make sure the entrance to the meeting is clearly identified and that people know what to do when they enter. You may want greeters to welcome people as they enter and direct them to seating and to identifying restrooms. Greeters may direct individuals with other needs to the correct entry or suitable seating such as individuals who utilize wheelchairs or people who are hearing impaired.
2. Set up a table for people to sign in, pick up materials, including the agenda and background information.
3. Have a representative from an organization or group act as the Town Hall moderator. The introduction for the meeting should include stating the purpose of the meeting, recognizing elected representatives and the protocol for the meeting. The role of the moderator is to direct the town hall meeting. The moderator will maintain the flow of the meeting as planned. The moderator should begin the meeting by welcoming those in attendance and explaining the purpose. The responsibilities of the moderator should review the agenda, make any announcements, discuss how the Town Hall will be conducted, and introduce guest speakers (if applicable).

### **RESOURCE**

Interpreters may be necessary to reach all of the people who attend your events. If you are unsure of which type of interpreters you may need, include this question on your event's registration.

If interpreters are needed, contact local organizations who can provide these services and who may work with you if you don't have the funds.

#### **Here is a sample introduction for your moderator:**

"My name is (name and title) from (name of organization). As moderator of this meeting, and behalf of (name of organization), we welcome you here today. This meeting is a combined effort by the (name groups, or persons). [Introduce the various members and acknowledge any special guests.] Many of the community members in (name of town, city, or county) are concerned about the negative health and economic impacts from our current dirty fossil fuel energy production and interested in advocating for strong energy efficiency and renewable energy policies and projects in the community. Those present are concerned (state the issue or concern: about the proposal of a permit for a new power plant, regulations for clean air, exposed communities, low income communities, etc.) and the impact it will have/ is having on the community. They are also aware of the significant environmental, economic and health benefits that energy

---

efficiency and renewable energy could provide for the community. This information, the statements and recommendations discussed here today will serve as a basis for a local renewable energy and energy efficiency advocacy plan. If the issues identified here today are important to you, we strongly encourage you to become involved with a local advocacy group, such as any of the clean air organizations before you today as well as (any other groups present at the meeting).”

4. The moderator can also inform your participants that if you are planning to take pictures, video, or live post about the event. Offer that if anyone does not want to be photographed, their wishes will be respected.
5. Open the discussion up by asking questions that were previously determined, and of course, leave room for people to discuss or ask questions of their own. Sometimes people can get off topic, and that is ok. Allow some space for that to happen and if the time runs too long, offer to have a side conversation with that person/people after the meeting.
6. During the Town Hall, take notes of all the discussion and questions that are asked. Save them for your group and email them to the ECJ Committee afterwards. These notes will help your group to determine the direction of your campaign. You should also create summaries that you can email to the people who attended afterwards.
7. Conclude the meeting by thanking everyone and explaining what the next steps of your ECJ Committee or team will be. Offer to speak to people individually, if needed, and offer contact information so the community members can reach you afterwards.

**After the Town Hall meeting:**

1. Clean up, recycle, compost, etc. any materials leftover.
2. Send thank you’s, either handwritten or email, to each of your ECJ Committee members, volunteers, and media who attended.
3. Create and post follow up social media posts that include numbers and specifics of the Town Hall and that specifically thank the community for coming out and offering their guidance and questions to your ECJ Committee or team.

4. Enter the contact information from your sign-up sheets into your email blast listservs, etc. and send an email blast with specifics from the day. Include future calls to action and a specific ask for people to join your effort.
5. Follow up with the media who attended. Send thank you emails and praise any positive coverage that you received. Follow up with any media who covered your Town Hall in a negative light and offer counter-information to their coverage. Invite all media to follow your work via social media and other avenues and encourage their attendance at your future events.
6. Follow up on your cause. The goal of your Town Hall Meeting should be followed up on after your campaign is over. What change occurred? What changes are left or did not happen that now need a different path of action?
7. Debrief with your ECJ Committee or team. Hold a meeting shortly after your Town Hall to debrief. Allow a lot of time and space for open thoughts and suggestions. Ask someone to take notes. Ask what was done well and what your group could change next time. Afterwards, send the notes to the group and set aside time on your next meeting agenda to discuss how your strategic plan and goals may need to change or not change due to the debrief notes.



---

## Hosting a Twitter Town Hall

Twitter Town Halls are excellent ways to engage people who would otherwise not be able to attend your event in person, who are engaged in online activism, and/or who can give your Environmental and Climate Justice (ECJ) Committee a good sense of how to engage the millennial generation in your work. Keep in mind that since Twitter Town Halls are open to anyone on Twitter, you may get questions or responses from people who are not in your local community, which may or may not be helpful. Otherwise, Twitter Town Halls can be a great avenue for education and organizing.

In conjunction with your Twitter Town Hall, have an alternative way that people can participate. This may mean that you offer a conference call or an in-person Town Hall meeting. Not everyone has a Twitter account and not everyone has access to the internet. Creating alternative options ensures that you get as many voices from your community as possible.

Have a meeting with your ECJ Committee or team and work through the following steps.

### **Before your Twitter Town Hall:**

1. To get started, think of a trendy hashtag for your Town Hall meeting. This is what people will use to participate. Make it catchy and easy to type. Hashtags that are too long or too complicated won't be remembered, might have a higher chance of being misspelled, and might not get used at all. Once you've come up with an idea, check to see if it is already in use on Twitter.

Examples of might be:

#NoFrackTownHall, #NAACPEnergyMeeting, #NAACPWindMeeting, #NoNukesTownHall

2. Think of frequently asked questions that people might ask and create standardized tweets ahead of time. This will save you time during the Town Hall. Don't forget to use your own hashtag in response!
3. Create an agenda that includes questions and information you would like to know from the community members.
4. Choose a location where your ECJ Committee or team can be together for the event. Even though this is an online campaign, it will be much easier to bounce questions and ideas off of each other if you're in the same room with your team. Make sure this location has reliable and fast wifi or internet capabilities.

- 
5. Choose a date and time that appeals to the crowd you are hoping to engage. In other words, consider that if you host one during the day, you may get a different crowd than if you hosted it in the evening. Decide which works best for your needs and remember, you can always host more!
  6. Assign your ECJ Committee or team members various roles. You will probably need several people monitoring the hashtag and a couple people assigned to do the actual responses. Although it's not required, it is a very good idea to have your unit's IT person onsite and available for the event. Last minute technicalities happen and so it is good to be prepared. If your unit does not have an IT person, consider someone to assign to that role for the event.
  7. Create an online sign in sheet with Google or other online sign in sheets that you can tweet out before and during the event. This way you'll have a record of who attended and can add them to your follow up information.
  8. Create an online evaluation survey with Google Docs or a similar program that you can send at the end of your Town Hall.
  9. Promote, promote, promote! Create multiple posts for all of your ECJ Committee or unit's social media channels and ask other partner organizations to repost and retweet your posts. Create post-Town Hall tweets and social media posts so they are ready at the end of your event.
  10. You may consider doing a practice run with your team using a different hashtag. Each of you could use your own Twitter accounts to tweet to the hashtag and respond to those tweets to see how the flow works.
  11. Set up all equipment with your team early. Make sure that your ECJ Committee or team has time to get logged in and allow yourself time for technical problems.

#### **During Your Twitter Town Hall:**

1. Start on time and post welcome posts with instructions on how the Town Hall will be run. Remind people of the times of the event and introduce any ECJ Committee members or team and/or other people helping with the Town Hall.

- 
2. Stick to your agenda as much as possible but allow for questions that may take things off topic. If this happens, offer to chat with someone privately about their questions and assign an ECJ committee member or team member that role.
  3. Be prepared to not be able to answer or see every tweet. As mentioned previously, sometimes people misspell the hashtag so you will not see it. Other times you might miss a tweet or two while trying to respond to others' tweets. This is okay. One of the tweets you create ahead of time and tweet throughout the event is to ask people to send their tweets again if they haven't been responded to.
  4. Keep track of themes and questions you receive during the Twitter Town Hall. Someone on your team might take notes and keep track of how many people participate. This would be good information for your ECJ committee to review afterwards.

**After Your Twitter Town Hall:**

1. A best practice is to follow up your Twitter Town Hall with a blog post, an email blast with highlights, and a report to publish on your website.
2. Send your post-Town Hall social media posts directly after the Town Hall and for a few days afterwards.
3. Thank your ECJ Committee, the IT person, and any volunteers who helped for the event.
4. Have a debrief meeting with your ECJ Committee or team to discuss what went well and what you might like to change for next time. Discuss the results of the evaluation and plan next steps!

---

## Hosting an Energy Justice Roundtable

Roundtable discussions are a smaller in-person education and organizing event where you gather your local energy justice advocates and allies together to strategize on the problem and find solutions. This event is different from a Town Hall Meeting in that it is not a public event, although your ECJ Committee or team should invite community members to participate as they can provide advocates and other allies/partners with the community perspective.

You may decide to host a roundtable as a part of an introduction or “meeting of the minds” with allied professionals in order to find out what they think are the important energy justice issues. Or, your ECJ Committee may already have a topic picked out and want to gather allied professionals to discuss how they can help. The flexibility is endless but the goal of developing an action plan of how your ECJ Committee and these allies can move energy justice forward is the end result.

### **Before Your Energy Justice Roundtable:**

1. Your Environmental and Climate Justice Committee or team should make a list of local organizations you would like to invite to your energy justice roundtable. If your ECJ Committee has not already reached out to these partner groups, see *Module 1: Getting Organized So You Can Organize!*, for how to build these relationships.
2. Once you’ve determined who you would like to invite, create an email invite that outlines the purpose of your roundtable meeting and the goals you would like the roundtable to achieve. Roundtables are typically smaller events where key people put their minds together to make change happen. If you find that you want a lot of people at your roundtable, perhaps hosting a larger event like a summit is better for your goals. See the Hosting a Bridging the Gap Summit below for more.
3. If you already researched energy justice initiatives (policies, etc.) in your area, then gather that information and have it ready as handouts or other presentation materials to be discussed. If not, research energy justice policies and/or issues that allied organizations might want to help you with. Keep in mind that you can have as many roundtables as you like in order to create the changes you want to make in your community. So, focus this one roundtable around a few of the issues you want to change, knowing you can always invite the allies back.
4. Create an agenda for your meeting that leaves time for discussion, planning, and creating timelines of activities. Here is a sample agenda:

---

## ENERGY JUSTICE ROUNDTABLE AGENDA

Welcome

Brief Introductions with a sign in sheet

Overview of the Structure and Focus of the NAACP and your State Conference or branch

Quick Summary of the NAACP Environmental and Climate Justice Program

Introduce your ECJ Committee and what you are hoping to achieve at the roundtable

Discussion: What environmental and energy justice looks like in your state

Discussion: Partner organizations and their activities in energy justice

Action planning: How partner organizations the ECJ Committee or team with local energy justice goals.

Closing: Outline the plan that was created, even if it is still being worked on, and the next steps for your newly formed partnerships. You may also take this time to schedule follow up meetings and exchange contact information.

5. Create an online registration form (or a printable form that can be affixed to an email or mailed) by using Google forms or another free online platform. Include your tentative agenda, if meals are provided, if childcare is provided, ask if anyone has any dietary needs, etc.

### During Your Energy Justice Roundtable

1. Similar to the Town Hall Meeting, welcome your attendees both at the door and in an opening introduction. Make sure the entrance to the meeting is clearly identified and that people know what to do when they enter. Since this is a smaller venue, you may want to have name cards to identify where people sit. You also may want greeters to welcome people as they enter and direct them to seating and to identifying restrooms. Greeters may direct individuals with other needs to the correct entry or suitable seating such as individuals who utilize wheelchairs or people who are hearing impaired.
2. Set up a table for people to sign in, pick up materials, including the agenda and background information.
3. After your introductions and any logistical announcements, work your way through your agenda, leaving plenty of time for discussion. Someone from your ECJ Committee or team should take notes that will be distributed afterwards. Keep in mind that adults learn differently than other age groups. To maximize their learning and sharing during your roundtable, make sure you create a lot of activities your roundtable guests

## RESOURCE

For sample activities that use Adult Learning Theory, or ways to engage adults in a learning environment, check out Michigan State University's eLearning Industry's Facilitating Adult Learning Guide: [www.canr.msu.edu/od/uploads/files/PD/Facilitating\\_Adult\\_Learning.pdf](http://www.canr.msu.edu/od/uploads/files/PD/Facilitating_Adult_Learning.pdf)

---

will work through that will culminate in your final action planning activity at the end.

4. During the roundtable, take pictures (with permission!) and post them to your social media sites. Be sure to follow and tag the organizations that your guests belong to.

### **After Your Energy Justice Roundtable**

1. Clean up, recycle, compost, etc. any materials leftover.
2. Send thank you's, either handwritten or email, to each of your ECJ Committee members, volunteers, and roundtable guests who attended.
3. Create and post follow up social media posts that include numbers and specifics of the roundtable and that specifically thank the community members who attended (if applicable) and offering their guidance and questions to your ECJ Committee or team.
4. Enter the contact information from your sign-up sheets into your email blast listservs, etc. and send an email blast with specifics from the day. Include future calls to action and planning meetings.
5. Follow up on your cause. The goal of your Energy Justice Roundtable should be followed up on after your campaign is over. What change occurred? What changes are left or did not happen that now need a different path of action?
6. Debrief with your ECJ Committee or team. Hold a meeting shortly after your roundtable to debrief. Allow a lot of time and space for open thoughts and suggestions. Ask someone to take notes. Ask what was done well and what your group could change next time. Afterwards, send the notes to the group and set aside time on your next meeting agenda to discuss how your strategic plan and goals may need to change or not change due to the roundtable.

---

## Hosting a “Bridging the Gap: Connecting Black Communities to the Green Economy” Summit

As part of your Environmental and Climate Justice Committee’s goals, you may decide to work on increasing new energy economy opportunities, including household access to energy efficiency and clean energy like solar and wind as well as entrepreneurial and business opportunities.

Historically, access to energy efficiency retrofits, clean energy upgrades, renewable energy jobs and training/apprentice programs as well as vendor and business opportunities have not included the African American community, leaving many black households, laborers, and businesses out of green (and clean) economic opportunities. This leaves a gap between the black community and communities of color and economic opportunities. By including racial justice in your ECJ Committee’s goals of advancing equity and opportunity in the new energy economy, you are “bridging the gap,” between black communities and the new energy economy.

One way to get ideas flowing and create learning opportunities is to host a Bridging the Gap Summit. Summits are mini-conferences that usually last a day or two and gather a group of stakeholders like local nonprofit organizations and community groups together with a set agenda of training/information sharing followed up with break-out groups, action planning, and networking. A Bridging the Gap Summit brings professionals across the spectrum of energy justice together to be trained by one another on how to connect black communities to the green economy.

An important consideration in planning a Bridging the Gap Summit is to think about how to keep racial justice at the forefront of the summit’s purpose. Keep in mind that the green economy, like all other sectors, has its fair share of racial discrimination. So, planning for how to educate these companies on racial equity should be a priority in your summit’s goals.

### **Before Hosting Your Bridging the Gap Summit:**

Hold a meeting with your Environmental and Climate Justice (ECJ) Committee or team to determine what your goals are for the summit and what you would like to achieve. Specifically plan for the following:

1. Make lists of partner organizations and allies that you can reach out to. If your ECJ Committee has not already developed relationships with partner organizations, see *Module 1: Getting Organized So You Can Organize!*, for guidance on how to do this. Make a list of people who can present on different topics related to your energy justice initiative. Draft outreach emails to these individuals/organizations, ensuring you encourage them to

---

bring materials about their organization with them. Once you have the list of final presenters, send them follow up emails closer to time of the summit that includes audio/visual logistics, etc.

2. Determine how many people you will need to successfully run the summit and how many volunteers to recruit. Draft emails, letters, etc. to recruit and reach out. Once you have your list of unit staff, ECJ Committee members, volunteers, etc. together, create a schedule and ask your group to sign up for various time slots and roles (examples are set up, break down, greeting attendees, technology, moderating break-out sessions, posting to social media, etc.).
3. Create a planning timeline that includes enough notice for your ECJ Committee or team's planning meetings, time to invite and coordinate other agencies, gathering and meeting with volunteers, and pushing notices to the public.
4. Create an agenda for the summit. Leave plenty of time for conversation and questions that may or may not already be on your list. The end goal will be to create action plans for how your summit will move energy justice work forward in your community, so make sure to schedule plenty of time for the brainstorming and creation of these plans. For a sample agenda, see the resources at the end of this module.
5. Create an online registration form (or a printable form that can be affixed to an email or mailed) by using Google forms or another free online platform. Include your tentative agenda, if meals are provided, if childcare is provided, ask if anyone has any dietary needs, etc.
6. Post your information about your summit on social media and your website. Create social media posts ahead of time to post during the summit and assign committee members the role of monitoring and posting during the summit. Again, it is always a good idea to make an announcement at your summit that you will be taking pictures and videos. Be sure to announce to people that they have the option to not be photographed if they choose.
7. Determine a location.
  - a. Remember accessibility. As we've mentioned before, there is a lot to consider when planning a location that fits most people's needs.

- 
- b. Consider if your location is accessible to people with physical disabilities – consider if there is a ramp outside, parking options, and if the building has an elevator. For more information, see the text box under “*In-Person Town Hall*” above.
  - c. Next, consider the location of the summit in relevance to the geographic location of the people you are trying to reach. Are there easy public transportation options? Is there a need for a carpooling option?
  - d. Since the summit spans a day or two, consider offering onsite childcare that can be monitored by volunteers.
  - e. Take into account the politics of the area you are choosing.
  - f. Consider how big your space needs to be – it is always good to get a space that is a bit larger than what you anticipate.
  - g. Consider the cost of the location and see if people are willing to waive their fees in support of your cause.
  - h. Consider audio/visual needs (screen and projector, white boards, etc.). Does your space have a kitchen or allow catering?
  - i. Once you have chosen a few places, schedule walk-throughs with a few members of your ECJ committee to make note of any additional needs you may encounter.
8. Purchase any materials necessary. If purchasing materials is not affordable, schedule time to ask for donations in your timeline. This may mean that ECJ Committee members ask companies for money or resources or that your committee or team coordinates local food and resources in exchange for helping those businesses with other goods and services. Either way, factor time to get your materials in order.
  9. Create a sign-in sheet to pass around at the event, asking for names, contact numbers, and email addresses.

#### **During Your Bridging the Gap Summit:**

1. Similar to the Energy Justice Roundtable meeting, welcome your attendees both at the door and in an opening introduction. Make sure the entrance to the meeting is clearly identified and that people know what to do when they enter. You also may want greeters to welcome people as

---

they enter and direct them to seating and to identifying restrooms. Greeters may direct individuals with other needs to the correct entry or suitable seating such as individuals who utilize wheelchairs or people who are hearing impaired.

2. Set up a table for people to sign in and pick up materials, including the agenda and background information.
3. After your introductions and any logistical announcements, work your way through your agenda, leaving plenty of time for discussion. Someone from your ECJ Committee or team should take notes that will be distributed afterwards. Keep in mind that adults learn differently than other age groups. To maximize their learning and sharing during your roundtable, make sure you create a lot of activities your roundtable guests will work through that will culminate in your final action planning activity at the end.
4. During the roundtable, take pictures (with permission!) and post them to your social media sites. Be sure to follow and tag the organizations that your guests belong to.

Since energy justice is a part of environmental justice, think about how you can reduce your impact on the environment while engaging communities of color, women, LGBTQ people, people with disabilities, etc. in your event. Consider making your event as local and environmentally friendly as possible. If you have the funds to cater food, find local caterers who are from underrepresented communities and ensure that you have vegetarian and vegan options. Think about paper waste and how you can reduce it or eliminate it altogether. Instead of using Styrofoam or paper plates and plastic wear, consider bringing in these items from your homes and establishing washing stations after meals. Or, purchase (or have donated) compostable plates and flatware. If you host your event at a local community center that has strong environmental principles, they may have composting and recycling available. If the space you find does not normally have recycling and composting available, establish these bins and ask volunteers or committee members to coordinate these logistics.

---

## After Your Energy Justice Roundtable

1. Clean up, recycle, compost, etc. any materials leftover.
2. Send thank you's, either handwritten or email, to each of your ECJ Committee members, volunteers, and roundtable guests who attended.
3. Create and post follow up social media posts that include numbers and specifics of the roundtable and that specifically thank the community members who attended (if applicable) and offering their guidance and questions to your ECJ Committee or team.
4. Enter the contact information from your sign-up sheets into your email blast listservs, etc. and send an email blast with specifics from the day. Include future calls to action and planning meetings.
5. Follow up on your cause. The goal of your Bridging the Gap Summit should be followed up on after your campaign is over. What change occurred? What changes are left or did not happen that now need a different path of action?
6. Debrief with your ECJ Committee or team. Hold a meeting shortly after your roundtable to debrief. Allow a lot of time and space for open thoughts and suggestions. Ask someone to take notes. Ask what was done well and what your group could change next time. Afterwards, send the notes to the group and set aside time on your next meeting agenda to discuss how your strategic plan and goals may need to change or not change due to the roundtable.



---

## Engaging the Media in Energy Justice Education & Organizing

Most of your education and organizing efforts will involve some degree of media engagement. Whether you are conducting social media campaigns or writing op-eds, knowing how to talk and report on energy justice will help you spread your message as wide as possible and change the way people think and feel about energy in their community. **This mindset change is vital; shifting the way people think about energy from being only one option (dirty coal, nuclear, etc.) to imagining clean energy (solar, wind, etc.) as something they can actually achieve on the community level is invaluable to inspiring community momentum.**

In this section we will guide you on how your Environmental and Climate Justice Committee can work with the media. We will start with a few terms and then describe how you can organize a press conference and social media campaign.

When planning your media engagement, it is important for us to note that **not everyone has access to the internet and for some, their internet is not reliable.** Not everyone who has internet in their area is able to afford it or afford getting to libraries or other free community centers to use it. Another consideration is that a large number of internet sites are in English, which is not accessible for those who do not speak English or who English is not their first language. And, even though the technology exists, not everyone builds their websites with people who have visual or hearing impairments in mind. There are many social justice issues to work through when you are relying solely on internet sources to get your message out. Where possible, provide alternatives so that your ECJ Committee can reach as many people as possible.

### RESOURCE

Don't have a website? Consider free website programs such as Wix. Wix is intuitive to work with, easy to maintain, and can be created with your needs in mind. Learn more: [www.wix.com](http://www.wix.com)

Social media and a website or webpage in your NAACP unit's website are essential for any campaign you decide to do. Because these online sources require a lot of monitoring, having one or two people dedicated to do your social media and website upkeep will help the rest of your committee focus on their tasks and not be multitasking posts and comments from your social media.

### Working with the Media

Building a media relationship is very similar to any other kind of networking that you have done in the past. Reporters, bloggers, editors, etc. are all people that you can reach out to with any and all of your energy justice articles and initiatives and expect they will respond. With any professional relationship, building trust and a flow of communication and ensuring everyone is on the same page takes time. But, it can be done and will benefit your Environmental and Climate Justice Committee's efforts.

---

Here are a few steps to making that relationship happen.

**1. Do Your Research**

The first step in building relationships is researching who is reporting on energy justice and email them directly. You may also research who is reporting on issues related to environmental justice, climate change, etc. Be broad in your search criteria – those who may have reported on the environment in general may be interested in reporting out on your energy justice issues. Ask yourself if you want to concentrate on just local media or try to reach a larger audience through national media. This will determine who you end up working with the most and keep in mind you can always broaden your scope later on.

**2. Make a Press List and Email Distribution List**

Once you have gathered a robust list of reporters put them into a list and create an email distribution list. This is now your press list.

**3. Send Emails or Make Phone Calls to Your Press List**

Craft an email or some talking points and make phone calls to discuss your ECJ Committee, the work you are doing, and ask if the reporter/media personnel would be interested in starting a conversation around local energy justice issues. Be sure to tell them to follow you on social media and to ask for their social media handles so that you can follow their work. Depending on the responses you get, keep track of who is interested in what topic and start honing your press list to match these topics. In other words, if a reporter is mostly interested in local jobs initiatives and how your energy justice initiative fits into that work, you can keep them on a list to contact individually about labor projects. This initial email will serve as an introduction to many more emails you will send to your press list later on.

**4. Continue Developing Your Relationship**

Now that you have your list, follow their work on social media and in the local online and in print newspapers. When they write a great article on an issue, even if it's not entirely related to your energy justice work, send them an email or call them to tell them they did well. Positive feedback is something reporters and media people rarely receive. They will trust your relationship more quickly if they know you are paying attention and taking the time to praise their work. If they write an article that doesn't do so well covering your local energy justice initiatives, write them an email or call them and offer to provide them with further information they will want to consider in the future. A part of keeping up with this relationship is to honor the reporters' deadlines to the best of your ability. At times they will want you to respond on a moment's notice, other times you will

---

have a couple days, particularly if they are investigative journalists working on a longer term project.

#### 5. Develop a Media Plan with your ECJ Committee

Media plans can be as elaborate or simple as you like. At the very least your media plan should include:

- A media contact person or people who are willing to be “on call” if needed to field media questions.
- A Press Hustler, or someone who gathers a list of contacts information for any media who come to your events and sends them follow up emails or phone calls afterwards.
- A strategy for responding to incidents that happen both during business hours and after business hours. Who will respond, in what way, what will go on your website and social media, if anyone needs to approve your response before it goes out, etc.
- A description of what issues are important to respond to and what issues are not. In other words, you may find that it is not your role but another organization’s role to respond to a certain inquiry. And, in keeping with your ECJ Committee’s mission, you may find that certain reporters will ask you for statements or articles, etc. on things that are outside your mission of work or that the reporters work for news outlets that do not fit in with the mission of the NAACP. Declining these requests is necessary to keep your focus and the mission of the work a priority.

Some media reporters will want an urgent response from you and may pressure you to provide a statement by stating they have strict deadlines. **Responding immediately is rarely necessary.** Taking some time or even a day to do some research and gather an appropriate response is fine. If you want, you can tell the reporter or put a notice on your social media sites that you are aware of the issue and are formulating a response with your ECJ committee or local NAACP unit.

## Beginning Your Media Advocacy

First things first, we will review a few of the types of media response your ECJ Committee can organize around energy justice. By no means is this list comprehensive, but a snapshot of some of the important terms. And then, we will go into further detail on some of these media responses and will provide you with examples.

At the end of this module, we include examples of media responses. For even more examples, visit the NAACP website under the News section.

**Table 2: A Few Explanations of Types of Media Response**

Type of Media	Brief Explanation	How to Use it
Action Alert	A short (one page in print, few paragraphs online) call to action statement that is typically about legislative and policies issues but not always.	Write action alerts to alert people that an important energy justice issue is coming up, what it is about, and action steps people can take to support or not support the issue. Post these online and send to your email lists.
Blog	Short (few paragraphs), more intimately written articles, on a topic and posted online.	Use blogs to discuss issues in brief ways, linking to other articles and resources. Blogs can be about a specific energy justice issue or random thoughts related to the issue. Blogs are released once or twice a week, sometimes daily and can be published to your website.
Editorial/Op-Ed	These terms are used interchangeably. Editorials/op-eds are used to express an opinion and get a reaction to something that has occurred.	Write op-eds in response to good and negative things that happen in your community on energy justice. Write them often and submit them to your local print and online media sources.
Media Advisory	A short (one page) statement that notifies the media of an event you are having.	Write these to answer the who, what, when, where, and why of your energy justice event and send them to your media contacts. You can place them on your website and other social media sites.

Media Packet	A collection of handouts about your energy justice campaign that include important talking points, your media contact person, etc.	Create a media packet for any press conferences or other public events you hold that you think media may show up. The packets do not have to be extensive but should cover the basics on your energy justice initiative and how the media can report on it. The packet can be online and also in paper form to be handed out.
Press Conference	A meeting with the press to announce an important event or issue.	Use press conferences to host the press and offer them the opportunity to ask questions and get quotes from you and your ECJ Committee after you make your statement. These are excellent events to develop relationships with press and get your energy justice message out broadly. Announce press conferences online, on social media, and email to your press list.
Press Release	A detailed announcement (1-2 pages) that includes quotes from your organization and your stance on an issue.	You can use press releases to announce a press conference in conjunction with a media advisory, or it can stand alone as a statement from you that is directed at the media on an energy justice issue. Send these to your press email list and post online.
Social Media	A wide variety of free online websites that offer people the ability to share information and network with each other.	Use social media to the fullest extent possible, while providing alternatives to people who are not on social media or who do not have access to the internet. Release important information, relevant articles, and network with other organizations. The positive possibilities are endless.

## How to Organize a Press Conference

Press conferences are beneficial to your energy justice work and enhance the message you are trying to get out to your community. Think of it as “free” advertising in that your Environmental and Climate Justice Committee invites a group of reporters to learn and ask questions about your energy justice campaign, and then write columns, articles, blogs, etc. FOR YOU. In one meeting you can reach a broader audience than if your ECJ Committee tried to submit articles to each of those news outlets. Press conferences also help build credibility and

---

relationships with local news sources – the more they are invited into your work, the more they will connect with you when they have stories to write.

Organizing a press conference is fairly easy and with our guidance below, you will be meeting with the press like a pro!

### **Before your Press Conference:**

Meet with your ECJ Committee, unit, or team to determine the following:

1. What goals do you want to achieve by hosting a press conference? How do these goals fit into your larger energy justice initiatives?
2. Determine how many people you will need to run the press conference and how many volunteers to recruit, if any. Draft emails, letters, etc. to recruit and reach out to ECJ Committee members and volunteers, if needed.
3. Assign and/or ask people to cover certain roles that will be important to the day:

**Press Hustler** – This person will be assigned to gather names, media outlets, etc. as media arrive, ensuring that they get information from everyone who attended.

**Moderator** – This person should have a good grasp of the subject matter, and demonstrate the ability to keep the press on topic while being respectful of people who are speaking.

**Registration Table** – This person will sign the press into the event via a sign in sheet and hand out press badges. If you have this role established, a press hustler may not be needed, although they are helpful in case you have reporters who missed the table.

**Set up/Break Down** – These folks will figure out any audio/visual needs you may have and set up/break down the space.

**Speakers** – These people could be from your ECJ Committee, from allied partners, from government official supporting your work, community members, and/or a combination of all. The list is up to you.

- 
4. Create a timeline that includes enough notice for your planning meetings, determining which reporters to invite and inviting them, gathering volunteers, and pushing notices to the public via your social media outlets and website.
  5. Create and send out a press release. This will alert the press that you are gearing up for your event as well as alerts the public what you are doing with your energy justice work. For example press releases see the resource section in this module.
  6. Create an agenda for the event. Leave plenty of time for conversation and questions that may or may not already be on your list.
  7. Create a media advisory. Along the lines of an email blast, media advisories are short announcements you email to your list of reporters, bloggers, etc. telling them about your event and asking them to attend. See the resource section in this module for a sample.
  8. Create an online registration form (or a printable form that can be affixed to an email or mailed) by using Google forms or another free online platform. Include the purpose of your press conference, text fields for names, email addresses, which media outlet they are with, etc.
  9. Determine a location.
    - a. As we've mentioned before, there is a lot to consider when planning a location that fits most people's needs.
      - a. First, consider if your location is accessible to people with physical disabilities – consider if there is a ramp outside, parking options, and if the building has an elevator. For more information, see the text box under "*In-Person Town Hall*" above.
      - b. Consider the location of the press conference in relevance to the geographic location of the people you are trying to reach. Are there easy public transportation options? Is there a need for a carpooling option? Take into account the politics of the area you are choosing. In other words, you may want to choose an area that is more "liberal" in nature, such as at the office of a local activist group, a church or college that welcomes all people.
    - c. Consider how big your space needs to be – it is always good to get a space that is a bit larger than what you anticipate.

- 
- d. Consider the cost of the location and see if people are willing to waive their fees in support of your cause.
  - e. Consider audio/visual needs (screen and projector, white boards, etc.). Once you have chosen a few places, schedule walk-throughs with a few members of your committee to make note of any additional needs you may encounter.

**Remember, Interpreters may be necessary to reach all of the people who attend your events. If you are unsure of which type of interpreters you may need, include this question on your event's registration. If interpreters are needed, contact local organizations who can provide these services and who may work with you if money is an issue.**

10. Purchase any materials necessary. If purchasing materials is not affordable, schedule time for asking for donations in your timeline. This may mean that ECJ Committee members ask companies for money or that your committee or team coordinates local food and resources in exchange for helping those businesses with other goods and services. Either way, making time to get your materials in order should be factored.
11. Create a sign-in sheet to pass around at the press conference, asking for names, contact numbers, and email addresses. This will be used later to send email thank you's as well as to add these individuals to your press list.
12. Create a press kit. A press kit, or media kit, consists of handouts that explain your energy justice initiative, gives examples of your work, lists media talking points, and also lists sample tweets, Facebook posts, etc. The goal of a press kit is to make it easy for reporters to tell your story. You can create a paper version to hand out at your event, post it online, or both.

**Your press kit can include:**

- Table of contents (this may not be needed if your kit is small)
- NAACP unit and ECJ Committee overview, recent accomplishments, etc.
- The press release
- Press/media contact person including cell and email

- 
- List of speakers at your conference including short (150 word) bios, pictures, and contact information
  - Fact sheet about your energy justice initiative written in easy-to-understand terms
  - Frequently asked questions page

13. Create press badges. These can be as simple as a name badge with the word PRESS on it or can be as elaborate as making lanyard badges.

#### **During Your Press Conference:**

1. Welcome your attendees both at the door and in an opening introduction. Make sure the entrance to the meeting is clearly identified and that people know what to do when they enter. You may want greeters to welcome people as they enter and direct them to seating and to identifying restrooms. Greeters may direct individuals with other needs to the correct entry or suitable seating such as individuals who utilize wheelchairs or people who are hearing impaired.
2. Set up a table for people to sign in, pick up materials, including their press kits and press badges.
3. Start by inviting the moderator to give introductions, open the press conference, and explain how the press conference will be conducted (introductions, speeches, question and answers, etc.), and begin the agenda.
4. During the press conference, take notes of all the discussion and questions that are asked. Save them for your group and email them to the ECJ Committee afterwards. These notes will help your group to determine what went well and what you would like to change next time.
5. One of your ECJ Committee or team can live tweet and post to social media about the press conference, if your team has established social media accounts.
6. Open the floor for questions from the reporters. Reporters will ask questions that your ECJ Committee or team are prepared to answer and some questions you will not be prepared to answer. Don't let this stress you! You can always say that your ECJ Committee will provide more information on that question at another time and that they can follow up with your team for more information. Never feel pressured to answer anything you don't feel prepared to answer.

- 
7. Conclude the press conference by thanking everyone and explaining what the next steps of your ECJ Committee or team will be. Offer to speak to people individually, if needed, and offer contact information so the community members can reach you afterwards.

**After the Press Conference:**

1. Clean up, recycle, compost, etc. any materials leftover.
2. Send thank you's, either handwritten or email, to each of your ECJ Committee members, volunteers, and media who attended.
3. Create and post follow up social media posts that include numbers and specifics of the press conference and that specifically thank any community members and reporters for attending.
4. Enter the contact information from your sign-up sheets into your press list in your email account and send an email blast with specifics from the day. Include any links to your website that might be important and request the reporters follow your efforts on social media (if applicable).
5. Watch your local papers and online news sources to see if your press conference was covered and/or if the reporters present wrote articles, blogs, etc. on your work. Follow up with those who did by sending thank you emails and praise any positive coverage that you received. If any reporters covered your press conference of energy justice initiative in a negative light, reach out to them and offer counter-information to their coverage.
6. Debrief with your ECJ Committee or team. Hold a meeting shortly after your press conference. Allow a lot of time and space for open thoughts and suggestions. Ask someone to take notes. Ask what was done well and what your group could change next time. Afterwards, send the notes to the group and set aside time on your next meeting agenda to discuss how your strategic plan and goals may need to change or not change due to the debrief notes.

---

## Using Social Media for Energy Justice

Social media is an effective way to reach a large number of people in an instant. Using social media for your energy justice work can help your local communities be informed and get involved. Instagram, Twitter, Facebook, and other social media sites are a huge part of how some non-profits and social justice advocates are creating social change. Again, not everyone has access to the reliable internet or internet at all and still others are not on social media for a wide variety of reasons. So, while important, social media should not be the only way you engage people in your community on energy justice.

### *Creating a Social Media Plan*

There are a few things to keep in mind when your ECJ Committee or team decides to utilize social media for your energy justice work. The following questions and considerations will help you to make a Social Media Plan.

1. Does your NAACP unit already have a social media account? Can your ECJ Committee utilize this and/or what are the benefits of having a separate social media account specifically for your ECJ Committee? If you decide that a separate account is needed, discuss how to keep communication open between the administrators of the unit's social media sites and the ECJ Committee's social media sites. Keeping everyone in the loop about what everyone else is doing (and also cross posting each other's posts!) is important.
2. What are the goals for social media in your energy justice work? Where in your strategic plan does social media fit?
3. What social media sites will you sign up for? As we mentioned, there is Instagram, Facebook and Twitter. There is also Pinterest, Snapchat, and many more. Each have their own benefits and drawbacks. Think about which would benefit your ECJ Committee or team's energy justice work and concentrate on those. You can always start with one and add/take away as you need to. As a general rule, being really active on one or two sites is better than being spread out among many sites and not being able to keep up.
4. How much ECJ Committee time or volunteer time can you commit to social media? One drawback of having an online presence is that it takes time: time to monitor, respond to, set up, maintain, feed, network, etc. How many hours per day/week/month can you commit? Answering this may also help you to determine how many social media sites to be present on. We go more into depth below under How Much Time to Devote to Social Media.

---

### *Username and Account Administration*

Once your ECJ Committee or team answers these questions, it is time to get started on signing up for accounts, assigning people to be administrators, and creating usernames. Your username or handle should be something that represents your NAACP unit and your ECJ Committee's energy justice work and not too lengthy. Assign ECJ Committee members to be administrators and keepers of the login information, including passwords (remember to make your passwords complicated so ensure security). Be sure to set up your pages completely. In other words, fill out the profiles, add links to your website (if applicable), add pictures, etc.

### *How Often to Post*

There are a couple different strategies or formulas non-profits and social justice organizations do when it comes to how often to post and what to post about.

#### **One strategy is called 5-3-2:**

- 5 posts about your energy justice project. These could be from your press conferences, town halls, sit-ins, ECJ Committee meetings, etc.
- 3 posts from other organizations that support energy justice. These come from your allies and organizations that you follow. They will share your posts if you share theirs – it's a great way to network.
- 2 posts that are lighter, behind-the-scenes posts. For example, a picture of your office desk a mess with a caption that reads, "Energy justice work takes a LOT of energy!" These posts help humanize your ECJ Committee and make your work more personal.

This strategy is one of many you can research but may or may not work for you. Try it and look at the number of likes, reaches, and other types of feedback that Facebook and other social media sites give you.

When it comes to posting, not everything you post will be seen by your followers. This is because social media sites have formulas, or algorithms, that they use to control how much information is channeled to everyone. And these algorithms change constantly. One reason social media owners created these formulas was because your newsfeed would be jammed if you saw everything that every one of your Facebook friends or Twitter followers posted every single day.

#### **A few tips on how to beat the system:**

- Post during peak hours of the day: 9am, noon, 2pm, 4pm, 8pm. If you have Hootsuite, you can schedule your posts during this time.
- Post pictures and videos more than plain text posts. People who use social media are more likely to quickly scroll and like a picture or video

## **RESOURCE**

There are FREE websites that will post for you and let you create and schedule posts ahead of time. Hootsuite is one of these programs. You will save yourself a lot of time by planning posts in advance, scheduling them, and then letting Hootsuite do the work! Learn more: [www.hootsuite.com](http://www.hootsuite.com)

---

## RESOURCE

Canva is a FREE website where you can design beautiful images to accompany your social media posts. You can create a team and share work with other team members. Learn more:

[www.canva.com](http://www.canva.com)

- versus read an entire article (although if the article is catchy enough, they might).
- Use hashtags. Hashtags tell the social media algorithm to push out your post to more people. Your hashtag will go to people who often like or follow work about that certain issue. For example, if you use #NAACP and #EnergyJustice, that information will be sent to people who follow the types of work relevant to NAACP and energy justice.
- Don't over-post. The more you post in a single day, the less social media sites will push out to your followers. This is another part of their algorithm/formula. No one knows for sure the magic number of how many times to post in a single day, but some say between 5-10 is a good amount. This is something for you to monitor and play with as you begin posting.

### *How Much Time to Devote to Social Media*

By now you probably have the idea that social media can take a lot of time. The more time you invest, the more benefits you will see with the number of people you engage, the number of allies you build, the number of media who follow your work, etc. But many folks do not have that much time to spare.

When your ECJ Committee or team meets to determine a Social Media Plan, think through:

- How visible you want your work to be
- How many people you want to reach/engage
- How many social media sites will you feel your work needs to be on
- Are you attempting to build up the community's involvement in your energy justice work?
- Is your energy justice work more event-specific (you only post when you have an event)
- Is your goal to engage with your allied organizations more?

Once you have answered these questions (and more that will arise), you can determine how much time to devote to social media work.

**There is no magic formula. That being said, devoting 1 hour a day, 5 days a week for a total of 5 hours per week (and more if you're having events like a press conference, Town Hall Meeting, Twitter Town Hall, etc.) is a good place to start.**

---

For some ECJ Committees or teams, this number is a lot! This is where your ECJ Committee or team can recruit help. Volunteers and interns are a great source to tap into when it comes to social media. Many colleges have web design and other online majors that require their students to do community projects. Or, the student may want to intern with your ECJ Committee for their future portfolio, etc.

### *How to Deal with Negative Comments on Social Media*

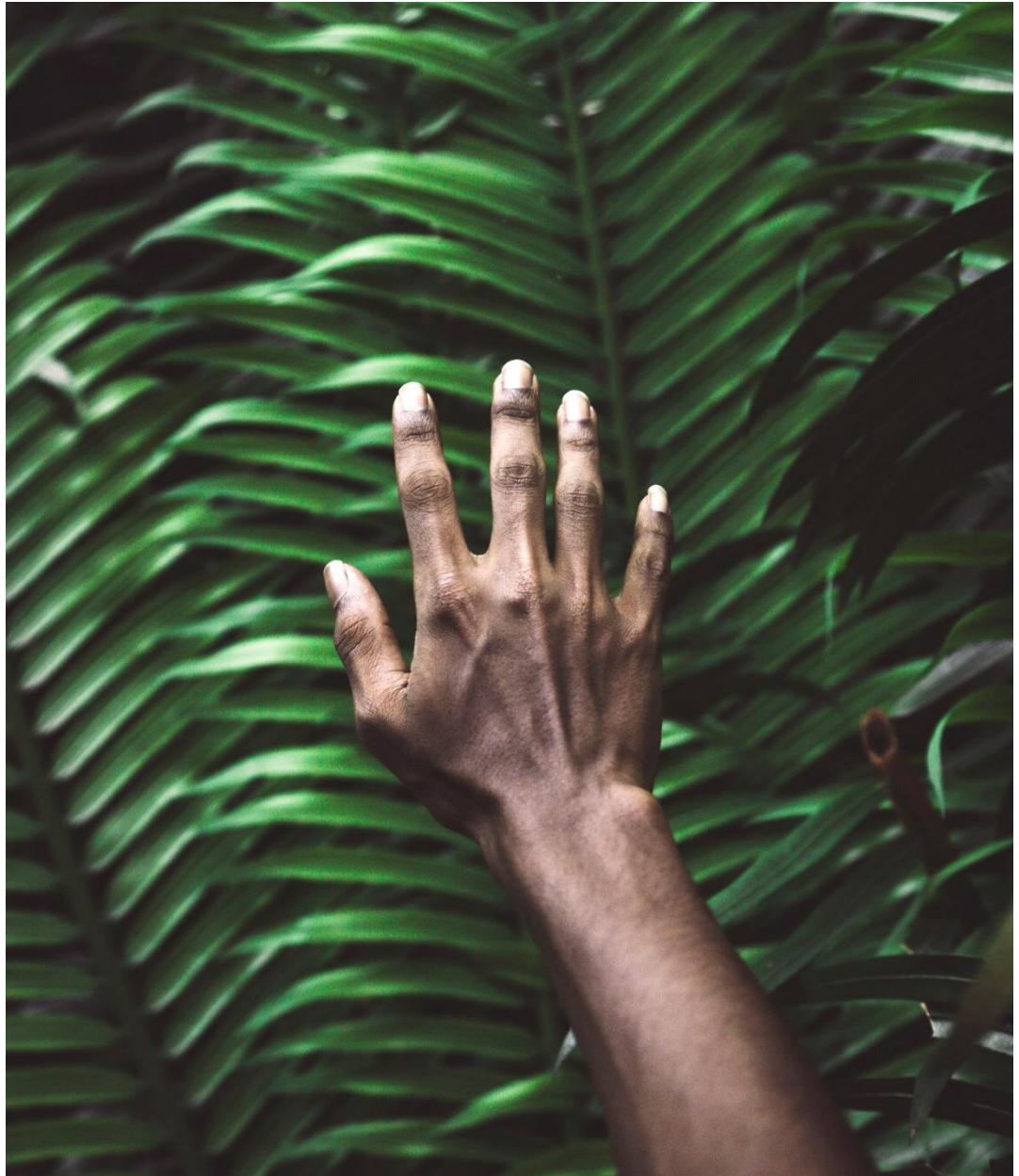
As soon as you begin posting your work – probably on the same day and maybe on your very first post! – you may get negative comments. The nature of social justice work in general means that you may gain the attention of people who disagree with your cause. The nature of energy justice and racial justice work is no different. Expect some negativity but also expect positive responses from the public, new allies you will gain, and the knowledge that you are furthering your cause.

The golden rule of “never read the comments” does not really apply if you are the one managing a social media account for your energy justice work. Reading the comments, even the negative ones, can be helpful for you to know how to better engage the people you are trying to engage. So, what to do about those negative comments?

### **A good practice? Don't respond.**

#### *Do not respond to negative comments on your social media posts.*

*Any response*, even a practical and level-headed response from you to the negative commenter, will only increase the likelihood that they will respond again and more often. **Very little positive change can come from engaging people down a rabbit hole of back and forth communication in the comment's section of a social media post.** Allow the followers of your work to respond to the negative commenter. Doing so will help to start a dialogue within the community instead of a dialogue between your ECJ Committee/NAACP unit and a negative commenter. And of course, if the person repeatedly adds negative comments to your social media, you can block them.



## Conclusion

Education and organizing events will probably coincide with all of your energy justice activities. By now you have a few tools to begin an Energy Justice Roundtable, Twitter Town Hall, and how to work with the media. Remember to tailor these and other events to your community by involving your community members. There are many possible ways to engage in energy justice awareness change so let our instructions and tips help to guide you along your own path for energy justice change.

---

## Resources

### Center for Story Based Strategy

The Center for Story Based Strategy works with organizations and allies in the climate justice, low-wage worker and other social justice sectors to amplify their organizing, integrate messaging with movement building, and build the movement's capacity to shift public opinion. They have worksheets that help shape your social media and other types of media messages.

Learn more: [www.storybasedstrategy.org](http://www.storybasedstrategy.org) (Worksheets located under Tools)

### ClimateNexus

Climate Nexus leverages all forms of communication to tell the stories of the people impacted by climate change and those driving the energy transition. To achieve these goals, we work with the media, non-profits, community organizations, business leaders and policymakers. We use science to support our stories, and draw from other fact-based sources like economic, legal and scholarly analysis. We are flexible and dedicated to acting upon critical new moments as they arise. We correct misinformation about climate change to encourage an educated and robust debate about threats and responses.

Learn more and check out their "Communications Basics" articles located on their homepage or at this link: <http://climatenexus.org/communications-climate-change/>

### Island Press

Island Press books are forged by an author's experience, shaped by our editors, and refined in review so that the final result is clear, strong, and accessible. Even today, when knowledge is being developed much more quickly than ever before, this process remains at the heart of how we develop ideas to stimulate change.

Learn more: <https://islandpress.org>

### Movement Strategy Center

Movement Strategy Center supports people, organizations, alliances, and networks to have the leadership, vision and relationships necessary to move from grievance to governance, from incremental change to transformation. They have many, many resources on how to build change through direct action and forming community relationships.

Learn More: [www.movementstrategy.org](http://www.movementstrategy.org) (Information located under Resources)

---

### **Opportunity Agenda**

The Opportunity Agenda is a social justice communication lab. We collaborate with leaders to move hearts and minds, driving lasting policy and culture change. We bring the inspirational voices of opportunity and possibility to social justice issues through communication expertise, and creative engagement.

Learn more: <https://opportunityagenda.org/>

### **The Center for Media Justice**

At the Center for Media Justice, home of the Media Action Grassroots Network, they believe that the right to communicate belongs to everyone. When they oppose media consolidation, they take a stand for the rights of workers whose jobs are being eliminated by corporate mergers, and for working families forced to pay more for reduced services. When they fight for media representation, they counter the stereotypes that help regressive policies flourish, and win better coverage of our communities and issues. Community ownership of media infrastructure leads to robust local economies and stronger, more engaged communities. When they hold those in power accountable for our rights in a digital age, they counter the surveillance used to cripple our communities and our campaigns. For these reasons, and many more, they organize under-represented constituencies for media rights, access, and representation to win social and economic justice.

Learn more and visit their online Resource Library:

[www.centerformediajustice.org](http://www.centerformediajustice.org)

### **TigerComm**

We are the top U.S.-based cleantech marketing communications, PR and public affairs firm. For nearly 10 years, we've helped clients increase sales, build brands and secure the fair policies that build markets.

Learn more: <http://www.tigercomm.us/>

# Energy Justice Messaging

## Frame Your Narrative with Facts

Low-income communities and communities of color are the most negatively impacted by the generation of energy from fossil fuels. We often refer to the fossil fuel economy as the extractive economy not only because it requires the violent extraction of resources from our earth, but also because it extracts wealth and wellbeing from our community, with little or no benefit in return. It is important to include these kinds of impacts in your campaign messaging. Here are some facts and figures to keep in mind when framing your educational message:

### Health and Pollution Facts

- 5.9 million Americans live within three miles of a major coal-fired power plant.
- Those 5.9 million people have an average per capita income of \$18,400, which is 17% lower than the U.S. average.
- Out of those 5.9 million people, almost 40% are people of color.
- 78% of African Americans live within 30 miles of a coal-fired power plant.
- African Americans are hospitalized for asthma at three times the rate of white Americans, and the death rate from asthma is 172% higher for African Americans than for white Americans.
- Several of the toxins from power plant emissions are also tied to lung cancer and other deadly health conditions.
- Even though African Americans are less likely to smoke, they are more likely to develop and die of lung cancer than white Americans.
- Mercury from coal-fired power plant plants accumulates in local waterways and poses a direct risk to people when they eat contaminated fish.

### Economic Facts

- In 2009, African Americans spent \$40 billion on energy, but only 1.1% of energy jobs were held by African Americans, and only .01% of energy revenue went to African Americans.
- Developing renewable energy and energy efficiency provides an opportunity for local people, low-income people, people of color, and women to have greater access to jobs and revenue in the energy sector.
- Every dollar invested in renewable energy creates three times as many jobs as every dollar invested in fossil fuels.
- Solar is among the top ten fastest growing industries in the country with one out of every 50 new jobs created in the country coming from the solar industry.
- Wind power technicians enjoy the fastest job growth in the United States.
- Median wages are 13% higher in green energy careers than the economy average.

### Benefits of Renewable and Clean Energy Facts

- The proportion of income spent on energy is higher for lower income communities and communities of color. While the average U.S. household spends 4% of income on home energy costs, low-income families spend 17% of their annual income on energy.
- States have already instituted clean energy and energy efficiency programs without a negative impact on consumers. Many have instituted a Pay As You Save (PAYS) models that allow for homes to have energy upgrades installed. This on-bill financing model enables households to stabilize or lower their bills as their energy savings pay for the retrofit.
- In a state like Arizona where solar use has gone to scale, the Solar Energy Industries Association (SEIA) has found that there will be a net benefit to Arizona Public Service customers of \$34 million a year beginning in 2015.
- If the U.S. implemented simple residential energy efficiency measures the residential sector could reduce energy consumption by 35%.



**The Center for Story Based Strategy** offers many tools and worksheets online to help you frame your message. Check it out by going to: <https://www.storybasedstrategy.org/tools.html>

# Writing an Action Alert

---

## When to write an action alert

Action alerts are brief, clear, and make simple action requests. Action alerts are intended to mobilize a large number of people in a short amount of time around a specific action.

## How to write an action alert:

- Be concise, try to keep it to one page. Consider linking to additional information.
- Identify the issue: Provide background information, outline the current situation, make clear your demands, or what you want to change, and include the target of the action
- Include a date and deadline for when the action should be completed
- Clearly state the action step(s) you would like people to take, the more specific the better
- Make it easy to understand by providing a clear, descriptive headline and accessible language
- Be compelling and give a sense of urgency to your cause and requested action

---

## Sample action alert:

### WE MUST PASS THE DREAM ACT NOW!

DECEMBER 1, 2017

On September 5, 2017, U.S. Attorney General Sessions announced that as of March 5, 2018, the Trump Administration would formally terminate the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals, or “DACA” program which President Obama had initiated and the NAACP supported in June of 2012. The program allows some individuals who entered the country as minors without documentation to receive a renewable two-year period of deferred action from deportation and eligibility for a work permit. As of 2017, approximately 800,000 individuals – referred to as “DREAMERS,” after legislation known as the DREAM Act (the “Development, Relief and Education for Alien Minors” Act) – were enrolled in the program created by DACA. DREAMERS originate from all parts of the world including Africa, Asia, the Caribbean, Central and South America, and Europe, and currently live in every state in our nation.

It is now up to Congress to help the “DREAMERS.” Congress must pass the DREAM Act before adjourning for the Christmas holidays. Congress has had almost three months to resolve any outstanding issues facing the legislation, yet no action has been taken. It is immoral and repugnant to play politics with anyone’s life, especially a young life.

For more information and to see what you can do to demand action from your elected representatives, please see the attached Action Alert (<http://www.naacp.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/DREAM-ACT-NOW.pdf>).

To see more examples of action alerts, visit the “News” section of the NAACP website.

# Writing a Blog Post

Blogs are great ways to keep your energy justice initiatives fresh and interesting online. Use blogs to discuss issues in brief ways, linking to other articles and resources and expressing your opinion on energy justice issues. Blogs can be about a specific energy justice initiative or random thoughts related to the issue. The frequency of blogging is up to you, but the more often you blog, the more followers you will get.

For more examples of blog posts, go to the News section on the NAACP website ([www.naacp.org](http://www.naacp.org)).

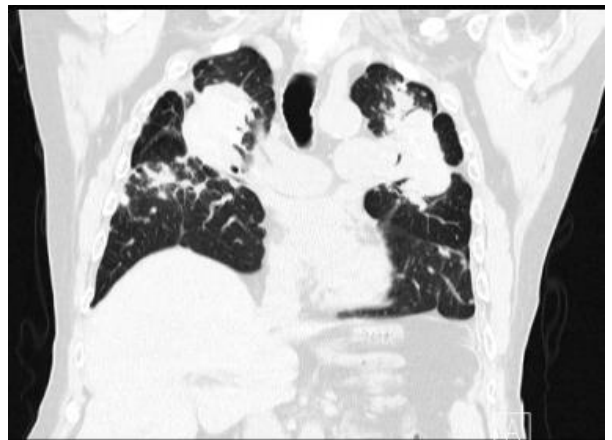
## COAL BLOODED: SYSTEMIC CORRUPTION STEALS MINE WORKERS' RIGHTS AND LIVES

OCTOBER 9, 2015 / BY JACQUELINE PATTERSON

"If you're not outraged, you're not paying attention". This adage came to mind this morning when the first message in my inbox was a message from a newly found colleague, Maureen McCue of [Physicians for Social Responsibility](#). She shared the 2<sup>nd</sup> installment in the Center for Public Integrity's (CPI) series "[Breathless and Burned: Dying of Black Lung and Buried by Law and Medicine](#)" with me. I was sick to my stomach and ashamed of my alma mater, the Johns Hopkins institution.

I am an avowed tree-hugging environmentalist. I also firmly believe we need to transition to energy efficiency and clean energy. But I am also an ardent defender of human rights. So even as I work to transform how we generate our energy, as long as we are still mining for coal I am standing up for justice for past, present and future coal miners and their families.

Since 1968, [76,000 coal miners have died of black lung disease](#), while year after year after year the coal mining industry has actively fought against the regulations that would require them to institute measures to protect their workers from toxic coal mine dust. Last year the [first ever regulations](#) to add these critical protections finally squeaked through and became established legislation – far too little and far too late for the 76,000 grieving families.



This image from a CT scan taken of Steve Day shows what Dr. John E. Parker regards as a case of complicated black lung.

CPI has brought to light disturbing evidence of a possible connection between my alma mater and the machinery that operates to willfully deny the rights of coal miners and their families to wellbeing and redress, all the while maintaining the rampant profiteering based on polluting with impunity.

With [fees for readings of black lung case x-rays costing between \\$500-\\$750](#) and with Hopkins being the go-to institution for coal companies seeking to absolve themselves of responsibility, at minimally 2,000 to 3,000 cases per year, that would mean the institution is collecting between \$1million and, at the high end, over \$2million (not including the [fees of \\$600/hour](#) for physicians to testify in court). For these cases, the [vast majority of the findings](#) come back negative for black lung, often in contrast to [positive readings from other doctors](#).

Meanwhile, the coal mining industry and aligned legislators are pushing back against the [Black Lung Benefits Act rule](#), which proposes to give coal miners greater access to their health records and require coal mine owners to pay all benefits due in a claim before the award can be challenged through modification. A prominent law firm has even been found to have [withheld evidence in black lung cases](#) over the years to ensure defeat of compensation claims.

How could there be such a concerted effort to trounce on workers' rights? It could be because there is money at stake. BIG money! Coal mining is a multibillion dollar industry where the [average coal company CEO earns \\$8 million annually](#) in compensation, which is 100 times the [compensation of the average coal miner](#) who, on a daily basis, risks slow death from black lung disease or instant death from a coal mine collapse. Meanwhile, in 2012 alone the coal mining industry spent \$19m in lobbying on an anti-regulatory agenda, and [\\$4 million in congressional campaign contributions](#), 96% of which went to politicians with histories of voting against regulations that protect worker and community health and wellbeing.

These egregious injustices have been wrought upon people who are too sick and often too impoverished to fight back effectively against the Goliaths that have steamrolled over workers' rights to safe working conditions. Even though those who toil to keep our lights on every day work in anonymity, they still require just treatment.

# Writing a Media Advisory

---

## When to write a media advisory:

A media advisory is similar to a press release in that it is a tool to communicate with the media but is like a “heads up” or an invitation that can be easily emailed, mailed, or faxed. Media advisories are promotional, and provide the logistical information for an upcoming event. Like a press release, you want to convince a reporter to be interested in and attend your event. Media advisories are usually less detailed than a press release—the aim is to give reporters enough information that they will be able to mark their calendars for your event (the who, what, where, etc.), but not necessarily everything they will need to write a story about it. This way they will be enticed to reach out to you or come to your press event.

Here is an example formula for writing a media advisory. For more examples of media advisories, visit the News section of the NAACP webpage ([www.naacp.org](http://www.naacp.org)).

---

## **MEDIA ADVISORY**

Media Contact: Name, (000) 000-0000, sample@example.net

### **HEADLINE IN BOLD AND ALL CAPS**

SUB-HEADLINE WITH ADDITIONAL INFORMATION (optional)

Brief, descriptive paragraph to introduce the event that your media advisory is advertising (optional). You can also choose to include a “what” and “why” below instead.

**WHY:** If you did not include an introductory paragraph above, you can choose to add context

**WHAT:** If you did not include an introductory paragraph above, briefly describe the event here

**WHO:** Who will be in attendance and/or is invited to attend

**WHEN:** When will the event take place, include date and time

**WHERE:** Where will the event take place, include physical address

## **INTERVIEW OPPORTUNITIES:**

- This is optional, but if you want you can list the names of individuals who will be in attendance that the press might want to interview.
- Name, affiliation

# # #

(place three number signs centered at the end of your advisory)

# Sample Media Advisory

---

## NAACP, CLEAN AIR TASK FORCE, AND NATIONAL MEDICAL ASSOCIATION TO RELEASE LANDMARK STUDY ON THE IMPACT OF OIL AND GAS POLLUTION ON AFRICAN AMERICAN COMMUNITIES

NOVEMBER 10, 2017

### MEDIA ADVISORY

MEDIA CONTACT: Katherine Taylor ([ktaylor@naACP.net](mailto:ktaylor@naACP.net))

**BALTIMORE (November 10, 2017)** – Against the backdrop of the current Administration’s all-out assault on environmental safeguards, particularly on curbing methane emissions from the oil and gas industry, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), the nation’s foremost civil rights organization, Clean Air Task Force (CATF) and the National Medical Association (NMA) are releasing a first-ever report on the growing threats to the health of African American communities across the country from airborne oil and gas pollution. Our November 14<sup>th</sup> panel will include discussion from experts on the quantification of these elevated health risks which millions of African Americans face.

**What:** The study, entitled *Fumes Across the Fence-Line*, is jointly published by researchers at CATF and NAACP, and quantifies the health risks, including cancer and respiratory illnesses, which are caused by emissions from the natural gas supply chain. The disproportionate health impacts are the result of decades of building fossil fuel facilities close to the properties of African American and low-income people, or “fence-line communities”, and the threat is growing as the natural gas industry has boomed in recent years. The study also examines the toxic and hazardous emissions from oil refineries.

**Who:** Speakers at the Press Club panel will include:

- *Al Green* (D-TX), member of the Congressional Black Caucus
- *Marcus Franklin*, Co-author of *Fumes Across the Fence-Line*, Environmental & Climate Justice Program, NAACP
- *Lesley Fleischman*, Co-author of *Fumes Across the Fence-Line*, Clean Air Task Force
- *Doris Browne*, President of the National Medical Association

**When:** Tuesday, November 14, 2017, 9:30 – 11:00am

**Where:** National Press Club, 529 14<sup>th</sup> Street, Washington, DC

# # #

# Writing a Newspaper Editorial

## (Or an Op-Ed)

---

### Why write an op-ed

Writing and publishing an opinion editorial, or an op-ed, can be a great way to voice an opinion in a constructive way. Op-eds are an opportunity to provide a more personal perspective and an important opportunity to provoke dialogue, which is an important aspect of involving the community in your unit's work.

### Keep it focused and to the point

Remember you are competing for the reader's attention. This means that you want to grab the reader's attention right away and make every sentence that follows count. Get to the point right away, make it relevant, and give your argument urgency or timeliness. Remember, your challenge is to convince the reader to care about the topic you are writing about.

### Be efficient

The longer your op-ed goes on, the smaller your readership will get. Front-load your most important information to the top; don't assume that the reader will make it all the way to the end. Keep your sentences and paragraphs short. You also want to keep your op-ed short, usually between 750-800 words. Check with the publication where you intend to place your op-ed to get an idea of the length of the op-eds that they publish.

### Make it accessible to your target audience

It is important to keep in mind the audience that you are writing for or targeting with your op-ed. If you are writing for a major newspaper than keep in mind your broad audience. You want to use language that the ordinary reader will understand. Avoid using technical jargon or terminology that only experts in the topic might understand. Keep your target audience in mind as you write.

### Be opinionated

The purpose of an op-ed is to share your opinion. So be opinionated! Don't be afraid to make a bold statement. You want to take a stance and be direct. Be confident and write in a declarative tone. Avoid writing in the passive voice.

### Make it personal

Use your positionality or your relation to the issue you are writing about to your advantage. The purpose of the op-ed is to showcase *your* opinion from *your* perspective. Write in your own voice and draw from your personal experiences. Not only will this help your op-ed stand out to the editor, but it will also help your audience relate to and care about what you have to say. People relate to stories.

### Make it timely

Timing is important. You are most likely to get your op-ed placed if it relates or responds to other news stories. If your topic is not directly related to a story in the news, then see if there are opportunities to tie your op-ed to a current event. Familiarize yourself with any other news stories or op-eds that have been published where you intend to place your op-ed so you can put your piece in conversation with tie your op-ed to a current event. Familiarize yourself with any other news stories or op-eds that have been published where you intend to place your op-ed so you can put your piece in conversation with related news coverage.

# Write an Op-Ed in 10 Steps

---

1. **Lede.** *What is there to worry about in recent news? (localize as needed)*
2. **Need.** *How bad is the problem getting? (localize as needed)*
3. **Engage.** *What are we doing to solve the problem?*
4. **Challenge.** *Why is the solution taking so long?*
5. **Stakes.** *How will our solution help? (localize as needed)*
6. **Opposition.** *How do we address criticisms of solution?*
7. **Process.** *What will it take to get a solution in place?*
8. **Vision.** *What is the broader vision?*
9. **Momentum.** *Who else supports us?*
10. **Action.** *What will we do now?*

# Sample Op-Ed

---

## Net metering is a way to move Colorado toward climate justice

*Denver Post, Oct 24, 2014*

Some may wonder why “environmental justice” is among the “Five Strategic Game Changer Initiatives” of the NAACP. Why would a historic civil rights organization like ours rank it as equal among other more traditional civil rights mandates: Closing the achievement gap, ending race-based health disparities and abolishing the egregious and racist death penalty?

The answer is all in the numbers.

Communities of color have disproportionately borne the weight of environmental injustice — and it is no different with our electricity production system where the health and economic impacts of the processes are a particularly heavy load. Nearly 70 percent of all African-Americans live within 30 miles of coal-fired power plants like Denver’s Cherokee Station, making African-Americans more likely to suffer from exposure to smog, mercury, and other harmful emissions than any other group.

These same polluting facilities are major contributors to climate change, a global threat that is disproportionately impacting communities of color. While African-Americans endure most of the harmful impacts of traditional energy production, communities of color reap few of the benefits. A study by the American Association of Blacks in Energy found that, while African-Americans spent \$41 billion on energy in 2009, only 1.1 percent of energy jobs were held by Black professionals and a mere 0.01 percent of profits were earned by Black businesses.

Colorado has made good progress in cleaning up the state’s electricity mix and putting people in control of their own energy choices. One of the most important state policies driving this clean transition is net metering. Unfortunately, the future of net metering is currently in question at the Public Utilities Commission — and we must speak boldly for justice.

Here’s the story on net metering: It makes sure solar customers get full credit on their utility bills for the valuable clean power they deliver to the grid. Many corporate entities oppose it because having people produce their own solar power is a threat to profits and an old way of doing business. But the NAACP believes it’s time to change the game in the the relationship that all customers, especially communities of color, have with the trillion dollar energy industry.

Affordable solar is putting Coloradans in charge of their own energy like never before. Organizations like GRID Alternatives provide pathways for economically-challenged families of color to go solar —

and save precious dollars that can go to help their children thrive and reach goals like college attendance — rather than spending so much money on high monthly utility bills. In 2012, Colorado sent \$280 million out of state to buy coal to burn to generate electricity while polluting communities.

In addition to helping families, putting solar on homes, schools, churches and businesses reduces the need for expensive power plants and infrastructure, which can help keep rates low for all of us. A study by Crossborder Energy found that these grid savings total \$13.6 million annually, and that's before accounting for the environmental and public health benefits that are so important to communities of color.

By putting boots on roofs and harvesting local sunshine, solar also keeps energy dollars invested in our communities in a way that our fossil economy has failed to do. Colorado should be working to expand solar options and ensure access to solar jobs that can be a pathway to the American dream. The state should be encouraging utilities and customers alike to invest in more renewable energy. What our state should not be doing is limiting opportunity by weakening existing successful clean energy programs. The NAACP State Conference strongly urges the Public Utilities Commission and Governor Hickenlooper to support net metering as a critical game-changing tool for building a cleaner, healthier, and more prosperous Colorado for all.

*Rosemary Harris Lytle is president of the NAACP CO-MT-WY State Conference. She lives in Colorado Springs.*

For more examples of op-eds, visit the News section of the NAACP webpage ([www.naacp.org](http://www.naacp.org)).

# Writing a Press Release

---

## **When to write a press release:**

A press release is an official communication document that reports specific information about an event or circumstance. Press releases are designed to target the media, but can also function as an official statement to be posted online or in print. Here are some tips for writing your press releases.

### **Be attention grabbing**

Write a short, catchy headline. You want the headline to be descriptive, but also something that will grab journalists attention and compel them to publicize your story. Especially if you are distributing your press release electronically, the quality of your headline (or subject line) will be the difference between getting your email opened or not.

### **Get to the point**

You should summarize your subject in the first paragraph, but be careful to not totally repeat your headline in your first sentence. You want this paragraph to be detail-heavy and include all the relevant information. Make your press release top-heavy, with all the important information (the who, what, where, when, why, how) in the first few sentences, and you can include any additional information in the following paragraphs.

### **Keep in short**

In most cases, your press release should not exceed one page. Limit yourself to the most important information, and don't include extra details that aren't necessary. Journalists are looking for a short and easily read document. If your press release is too long and detailed, that can actually be counter-productive and might

lead to the release not being read at all. In the case of the press release, less is more.

### **Include quotes**

Even though a press release should be written in the third person, consider providing a short quote from the author or from another relevant figure. Quotes can be good way to provide additional elaboration in the paragraph(s) following the lede and also help personalize the formal tone of the release.

### **Link to more information**

One good way to help keep your press release short and to-the-point is to provide relevant links to additional information. You can link to your webpage or to other relevant websites that might add more context for your press release.

### **Provide contact information**

If your press release is deemed newsworthy, reporters will want to follow up with a contact for more information and to schedule interviews. Include a phone number, email address, or both on the release.

# Sample Press Release

For more examples of press releases, visit the News section of the NAACP webpage ([www.naacp.org](http://www.naacp.org)).



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

MEDIA CONTACT:

Katherine Taylor/[ktaylor@naacpnet.org](mailto:ktaylor@naacpnet.org)

## NAACP Launches Campaign, Power to the People: Fueling the Revolution for Energy Justice

*Campaign focuses on NAACP units, branches, and state conferences' leadership to bring energy democracy to their communities.*

**BALTIMORE (September 29, 2017)** – The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), the country's foremost civil rights organization, and the NAACP's Environmental and Climate Justice Program launched an online campaign Monday to highlight the leadership of the NAACP units, branches, and state conferences across the country who are creating energy democracy in their communities.

The campaign, *Power to the People: Fueling the Revolution for Energy Justice*, connects the public with NAACP energy justice work happening on the ground.

"Why is energy justice important to our branch? We know that low-income and communities of color pay a larger percentage of their resources for their energy dollars. Energy justice is about ensuring our communities benefit fully from green jobs, clean air and an energy-independent future," explains **Jo Ann Hardesty, President of the NAACP Portland Branch**.

The campaign uplifts the work of the state and local branches of the NAACP who are fighting for black, brown and other frontline communities who are hit first and worst with energy injustice. **Jeremy Orr, Michigan State Conference NAACP Environmental and Climate Justice Chairperson**, is working in Michigan to create a Master Plan on Environmental Justice.

“Michiganders have long lived in the shadows of poor industry standards and practices. Our auto industry keeps the world on wheels, but at home our communities suffer with respiratory health issues from ground-level ozone caused by vehicle emissions,” said Orr, “ Our state’s leaders claim to take pride in our Great Lakes, yet allow fracking to deplete our fresh water resources. Our legislature passed ground-breaking renewable energy legislation, meanwhile utility shutoffs are still occurring at astronomical rates due to the unreasonably high costs of energy. And of course those most impacted by these injustices are our black and brown communities and our low-to-moderate income communities. Because of this, the Michigan State Conference NAACP knows that we must be a fighter at the forefront of the revolution for energy justice in order to protect the health and wellbeing of our communities for years to come.”

The latest hurricanes that have impacted the U.S., Puerto Rico, and Caribbean Islands are, in part, due to the production of toxic energy and climate change. “In Missouri flood disasters are occurring more frequently, and the impacts from these flood disasters are becoming more severe, both as a result of burning fossil fuels for energy. Missouri low income and minority communities are less likely to recover from the financial devastation caused by these floods,” says **Bruce Morrison, Missouri State Conference NAACP Environmental and Climate Justice Chairperson.**

Our NAACP units and branches across the country are working with their communities to end the health and environmental impacts of dirty energy sources by bringing renewable energy and good, green jobs to their areas.

To learn more about their work, visit our campaign: [naacp.org/power-to-the-people](https://naacp.org/power-to-the-people)

#### **ABOUT THE NAACP:**

Founded in 1909, the NAACP is the nation’s oldest and largest nonpartisan civil rights organization. Its members throughout the United States and the world are the premier advocates for civil rights in their communities. You can read more about the NAACP’s work and our six “Game Changer” issue areas by visiting NAACP.org.

- ### -

# Bridging the Gap Summit

## Sample Agenda

---

We've created a sample agenda from a previous Bridging the Gap Summit that an NAACP unit hosted. Keep in mind that this agenda contains names of people who may or may not still work at these organizations, so should be used as an example only, not a reference for contacts. Tailor your Environmental and Climate Justice (ECJ) Committee's agenda to meet the needs of your energy justice project and be as creative as you like. The goal is to host a space where people can come together, learn, and make connections to further energy justice in your community.

---

### AGENDA

- I. Registration, Meet, Greet, and Mingle Over Continental Breakfast 8:30am-9:00am
- II. Opening Panel 9:00am-10:30am
  - MODERATORS—Lillian Singh, Jacqui Patterson, NAACP
  - a. Dr. Beverly Wright, Deep South Center for Environmental Justice
  - b. Ananda Lee Tan, Global Alliance for Incinerator Alternatives
  - c. Connie Evans, Association for Enterprise Opportunity
  - d. Ed Whitfield, Southern Grassroots Economies Project
  - e. Willie Baker, Coalition of Black Trade Unionists
  
- III. Working Groups--Break Out I 10:45am-12:15pm
- In these working groups, individuals will be given large paper and markers to make a brainstorming plan around their particular topic.
- MODERATOR—Jessica Pierce, NAACP
- a. Policy/Advocacy
  - i. GROUP I--Green For ALL—Shamar Bibbins
  - ii. GROUP II--Center for Social Inclusion—Anthony Giancatarino
- b. Youth Mobilization/Elevating STEM
  - i. GROUP I--Environmental Justice and Climate Change Initiative—Kari Fulton
  - ii. GROUP II--Energy Action Coalition—Andrew Nazdin
- c. Research
  - i. GROUP I—United Negro College Fund—Felicia Davis
- d. Corporate Social Responsibility
  - i. GROUP I—Corporate Ethics International—Anne Pernick
  - ii. GROUP II—Environmental Protection Agency---Stephanie Owens
- e. Entrepreneurship/Small Business Development

- i. GROUP I—Green For ALL—Khary Dvorak Ewell
- ii. GROUP II—Association for Enterprise Opportunity---Samira Cook-Gaines
- f. Grassroots Organizing/Place Based/Frontline Community Action
  - i. GROUP I—Global Alliance for Incinerator Alternatives—Ananda Lee Tan
  - ii. GROUP II—PUSH Buffalo Founder and Former Director—Eric Walker

IV. GALLERY WALK (During transition to Lunch) 12:15pm-12:30pm

The Gallery Walk is an interactive way for each of the breakout groups to view each other’s work. One representative from each of the breakouts stands by their notepaper. In 5 minute increments or less, the other participants visit each of the other group’s work and is given a presentation of their brainstorming notes and ideas.

V. LUNCHEON 12:30pm-1:30pm

- a. MODERATOR: Dorcas Gilmore, NAACP
- b. Khari Mosley, BlueGreen Alliance
- c. Paula Jackson, Interim President and Chief Executive Officer, American Association of Blacks in Energy
- d. Robert Wallace, President and CEO, BithEnergy

VI. Working Groups Report Back Panel 1:45pm-2:30pm

MODERATOR: Jessica Pierce

The working groups can discuss ideas not already shared and receive additional questions from other participants in the summit.

VII. Working Groups—Break Out II 2:45pm-3:45pm

Participants will organize around another determined plan of action and create additional ideas and goals to share with the larger group.

~~~~~BREAK~~~~~

VIII. Working Groups Break Out III 4:00pm-5:00pm

Participants should share their working group’s next steps and begin creating ONE master plan of action with timelines and organizational commitments (i.e. staff members and resources each organization can offer).

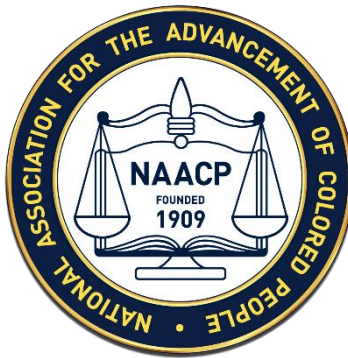
IX. DEBRIEF AND NEXT STEPS 5:00pm-6:00pm

MODERATORS: Lillian Singh, Jacqui Patterson

X. RECEPTION—Including a Networking activity 6:00pm-7:30pm

XI. Film Festival- 7:30pm-10:00pm

Trashed: No Place for Waste, Shift Change, Land of Opportunity, Power Paths, Beasts of Southern Wild



## **Just Energy Policies and Practices Action Toolkit**

National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP)

Environmental and Climate Justice Program

[www.naacp.org/issues/environmental-justice](http://www.naacp.org/issues/environmental-justice)

[ecjp@naacpnet.org](mailto:ecjp@naacpnet.org)