

# LEADERSHIP & ELECTED OFFICIAL DEVELOPMENT

## PROGRAM UPDATE WINTER 2023



Meet some of the most diverse class of freshmen ever elected to the Vermont state legislature, who participated in governance training with LCV Education Fund in January 2023.

**Shanthi Gonzales**  
Senior Manager, Candidate Recruitment & Training  
sgonzales@lcv.org

**League of Conservation Voters Education Fund**  
7401 5th St NW, Suite 700  
Washington, DC 20005  
[www.lcv.org/leadership-development](http://www.lcv.org/leadership-development)

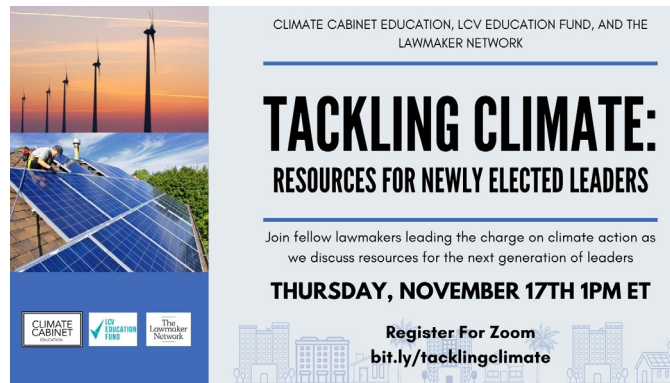


Our Earth Is Worth Mobilizing For

# PROGRAM OVERVIEW

LCV Education Fund's leadership development work is focused on changing the face of leadership in the United States, so that our leaders and elected officials are more reflective of the population of our country, and so that more voices that have historically been excluded from environmental policymaking are included.

We have two main programs. One is our governance trainings, which we conduct annually for newly-elected officials. The goal of these trainings is to provide support to environmental champions in local and state office so they can be the most effective leaders possible. The trainings also introduce our elected leaders across the Conservation Voter Movement (CVM) to opportunities for support from partner organizations like Climate Cabinet and the Lawmaker Network, which can serve as resources for developing policy, communicating with constituents, and more.



The second program is our **Boards & Commissions Fellowship**, a grant program through which LCV Education Fund supports state affiliates' work to provide in-depth training to environmental champions. State affiliates have already held trainings in four states: Idaho, North Carolina, South Carolina and Colorado. The goal of this program is threefold: to recruit diverse leaders to serve on boards and commissions in their communities, so that a broader range of voices are at decision-making tables across the country; to develop skilled policy leaders who could one day serve in elected office (or in other positions that influence environmental policy); and to position more environmental champions to shape environmental policy in their communities.

This strategy has already yielded results: Boards & Commissions Fellowship alumni have been appointed to elected office (due to vacancies) and are serving on public boards and commissions. Read on for more updates about this work.



# PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

## Updates from the Boards & Commissions Fellowship Program



**"The fellowship really opened up the possibility of public service in a way that I never thought was possible. Now, serving on a public commission, I get to see how city staff and the public come together to shape policy for the city of Boise. I also get to be involved in making decisions to help improve the lives of people who live in Boise by improving trails and parks."**

Patty Bowen is an alum from our first class of Boards & Commissions Fellows and was part of our fellowship program with Conservation Voters for Idaho Education Fund. They serve on Boise's Open Space and Clean Water Advisory Committee. Patty is also interested in running for office someday.

### Welcome Moses!

Moses Pyatt is leading our Boards & Commissions Fellowship Program in South Carolina, which will launch in spring 2023. He previously led the Great Lakes Political Academy in Michigan and worked for political campaigns. He is originally from South Carolina.





# PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

## Updates from our Vermont Governance Training

In 2022, Vermont elected its most diverse class yet of freshman state legislators, with more young and BIPOC members than ever before. Many of them joined LCV Education Fund for a governance training the weekend of January 21-22, 2023. We partnered with Vermont Natural Resources Council on a training designed to help the new legislators build a strong team that can work together effectively. They focused on building supportive relationships, learning new skills like power mapping to help them assess their ability to win on the issues they plan to advance, and goal-setting for their first term in the Legislature.

This year, the Vermont State Legislature will be taking up bills that impact the environment, energy costs, recycling, and more. One benefit of the governance training is to build working relationships among participants that encourage and foster collaboration and cooperation. It is our intention that the skills and relationships built during the training will contribute to more fruitful legislative sessions in 2023 and beyond.



**“This training has helped ground me in my new role as a legislator. I am better poised to be intentional, effective, and reflective in the path I walk in the State House and beyond.” – VT Rep. Esme Cole**



# PROGRESSIVE GOVERNANCE ACADEMY ALUMNI UPDATES



**“The Progressive Governance Academy was a great experience. It gave me the tools to begin formulating a considered agenda that I’m hopeful will be very helpful as I begin my term this year. I am certain that PGA is a great resource for anyone embarking on work in government because it gives you the time and tools to start off on the right foot and to get things done.”**

**Eric Ager was elected to represent District 114 in the North Carolina General Assembly in 2022.** He served for 25 years in the Navy, and plans to champion the needs of veterans as part of his agenda in the legislature.

Eric says his priorities include affordable, accessible mental healthcare, quality housing, cybersecurity, and online privacy. “These are daily needs for the people of Buncombe County and throughout North Carolina, on par with long-standing needs to protect our environment, grow good-paying jobs, expand high-speed internet, and invest in public education,” according to Eric.

Eric’s other job is running his family’s farm in Western North Carolina, Hickory Nut Gap Farm, and he is also the father of four.

The PGA teaches newly-elected CVM leaders how to use inside-outside strategy to win on the issues they care about — that is, how to pair their formal roles in elected office with the power of community organizations and leaders in order to win.

The PGA was especially helpful to Eric in prompting him to get started thinking about his agenda and vision for his time in the General Assembly.