



Our Earth Is Worth Mobilizing For



# STRATEGIC

# PLAN 2021-24



WE ARE LIVING IN OUR  
NOW OR NEVER MOMENT



# OUR VISION FOR A MORE JUST &





# EQUITABLE PLANET

We envision a world in which tackling the climate crisis, confronting environmental injustice, and strengthening our democracy lead to cleaner and healthier communities, good, well-paying jobs, and a more just, equitable, and sustainable planet for all.





# WHO WE ARE AND WHAT WE DO

**LCVEF builds grassroots power to protect people and the planet. The threats to our environment and democracy are interlinked, and our nation's biggest environmental challenges and the threats to our democracy require greater civic participation.**

To address these interconnected challenges, LCVEF expands voter participation, advocates for policy change, engages in public education, mobilizes, organizes, and builds grassroots power in communities, and partners with and supports the Conservation Voters Movement (CVM) and allies.

Guiding and motivating our actions are LCVEF's values – accountability, anti-racism, community, innovation, learning, and sustainability – which will shape every decision across our organization. Central to these values is our firm commitment to center racial justice and equity in all of our work, including our external climate, democracy, and civic engagement work and our internal policies, practices, and structures.

# LCVEF Core Values



## ACCOUNTABILITY

We believe true accountability means living by our values; living up to the promises we make to our members, partners, allies, staff, and the planet; acting with transparency; and taking responsibility for the consequences of our actions or inactions.



## ANTI-RACISM

We value being part of an organization that centers and advances racial justice and equity in all of our work, including our external climate and democracy work and our internal policies, practices, and structures. Our efforts to protect the environment and engage in the political process must be rooted in an understanding of environmental, racial, and social justice — all on their own and in how they intersect — and how that understanding informs our actions.



## COMMUNITY

We value being part of a community defined by a desire to bring about change. We also understand that trust is integral to fostering a sense of community, both in our external and internal work, and that living up to our values will help engender trust from our staff and our external partners. Joy is also an important component in creating and supporting community. Being able to approach our work with a sense of solidarity, internally and externally, will lead to greater individual and organizational joy, and the expansion of a movement committed to building power with and for people and the planet.



## INNOVATION

We value thinking and acting boldly to achieve our goals while living up to all of our other values. Innovation also means ensuring that every member of staff is included as a thought partner in driving us to be bold while staying true to the organizational culture our values are designed to cultivate and maintain.



## LEARNING

We value taking risks in our work and supporting a culture of creativity. That means having the space to make mistakes and opportunities to learn from them. We value listening and learning in all its forms: learning from and with communities, our staff, partner organizations, and science. Learning means consuming data and media critically in order to help us make informed decisions that center people in attaining our goal of saving the planet.



## SUSTAINABILITY

We believe protecting the planet and its people is long-term work requiring strong partnerships with communities most impacted by the climate crisis and an organizational culture and infrastructure that creates the space for our staff to do their best work and live their best lives. This requires a commitment to planning that intentionally considers and includes the involvement of all relevant stakeholders throughout the planning process.



# LAY OF THE LAND

**With each passing day, climate-related disasters result in an increasing loss of lives, livelihoods, quality of health, and public safety, especially in communities of color and low-income communities. Scientists warn that we have only 10 years left to take the actions necessary to avoid climate catastrophe. And yet, polluters and their elected allies continue to oppose action on climate to protect their profits.**

At the same time, our democracy – its institutions and processes – has similarly been overtaken by interests that benefit from the exclusion and disenfranchisement of Black, Indigenous, Latinx, Asian American and Pacific Islander, and other communities of color, as well as low-income communities. While there is a long, ugly history of racist anti-democratic actions in the U.S., ongoing voter suppression efforts continue to disenfranchise these communities traditionally and intentionally left out of the democratic process.

Underlying and exacerbating these challenges are the realities of systematic and structural racism. From the climate crisis and assaults on our democracy to the coronavirus pandemic and economic inequality, the racism that is deeply embedded in our country's structures and culture mean that communities of color repeatedly bear the greatest burdens. Environmental injustices hit these communities hardest – resulting in higher rates of asthma and other debilitating illnesses, contaminated soil and water, infrastructure that crumbles in extreme weather, and job loss and displacement. Climate solutions that do not intentionally confront the racism upon which our democracy and its laws are built are bound to perpetuate injustices of the status quo.

Furthermore, directly causing and contributing to all of these challenges is a vast array of special interests, including the fossil fuel lobby, right wing media, and other corporate interests. In the pursuit of more power and to grow their profits, they continue to support, promote, and fund anti-environmental politicians, who champion dirty energy policies, sow distrust in our democracy and science, and uphold racist systems of oppression. Left unchecked, the influence of these pro-polluting forces will continue unabated and the damage they cause will worsen.

In recent years, public support for climate action has grown significantly – with people across the political spectrum demonstrating very strong support for significant investments in clean energy as part of an economic recovery. There is now an unprecedented opportunity to make major gains towards a just and equitable clean energy future, grow a healthy democracy, and shape the politics of climate for years to come. In short, we have this “now or never” opportunity to implement the transformational federal policies that are needed to avert climate catastrophe.

Additionally, since 2018, environmental leaders at the state and local levels have achieved remarkable progress on climate and clean energy – with 1 in 3 people in the U.S. now living in a place committed

to 100% clean electricity. And while some states are advancing measures to make our democracy fairer and more accessible, anti-democratic state legislators across the country have introduced hundreds of restrictive voting provisions that could significantly curtail voting rights, access, and processes.

**In many instances, the unprecedented opportunities for action at the federal level and the hard-fought progress at the state level are thanks to decades-long grassroots organizing, mobilization, and engagement by state, local, and community organizations, including our state LCV partners. While the next four years – and the next two years, in particular – will be extremely consequential in the fight for a more just, equitable, and sustainable planet, the groundwork laid during this same time will similarly be important for sustained progress over the next decade and beyond.**

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# THE PATH FORWARD

## FOUR-YEAR GOALS

Over the next four years, LCVEF must continue to elevate the urgent need for just and equitable climate action and good, well-paying jobs in a new clean energy economy. Despite this urgency, our approach to reducing emissions must be intentional – any effort to address climate change must advance racial, social, and environmental justice. We also know that achieving meaningful progress on climate change will be more difficult without a more just and equitable democracy that is responsive to all people.

Over the last decade, we have developed a highly sophisticated and effective nonpartisan voter participation program – and our national vote-by-mail, voter registration and get-out-the-vote efforts have made LCVEF the leading environmental group working to encourage citizens to participate in elections. In addition, LCVEF and our state affiliates have established ourselves as partners in critical fights relating to democracy policy at the state and local level. In concert with our state affiliates and other partners, we must continue to leverage our unique grassroots, advocacy and at-scale voter mobilization strategies to support democracy reforms, and organize and mobilize communities whose voting power has been historically underrepresented in the electorate because of voter suppression tactics.

At the same time, we can help bring other environmental groups into the fight for structural democracy reforms that will make our democratic systems fairer and more equitable. And while improving access to and trust in our democracy is an important climate strategy, it is also a core organizational belief. Voting rights rollbacks are fundamentally unjust and have wide-ranging consequences, including resulting in environmental injustices. What's more, the communities most affected by climate change, pollution and environmental injustice are the same communities that our country has systematically excluded from the democratic process.

In order to achieve our vision for a more just and equitable planet, this strategic plan outlines five overarching goals, all of which are critical to our success and many of which are familiar objectives that we have honed and sharpened to meet this moment.

## OUR OVERARCHING GOALS



**Increase participation in the democratic process by registering new voters and turning more people out to vote.**



**Strengthen and defend our democracy through just and equitable voter access and representation at all levels of government.**



**Advance and elevate just and equitable climate change action at all levels of government that will cut carbon pollution in our nation by at least half by 2030 (from 2005 levels) and reach net-zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050.**



**Build more powerful, active, inclusive, and anti-racist campaigns, programs, and Conservation Voter Movement.**



**Develop internal structures and systems that support people and a culture that centers inclusivity, transparency, sustainability, and accountability.**



## Key Contrasts from Previous Strategic Plans

1

### GOING ON OFFENSE

After four years of defending against a relentless onslaught of harmful and unjust actions, much of which emanated from the Trump administration, we are now on offense, positioned to advance just and equitable climate change policies at the federal level.

2

### STRENGTHENING AND DEFENDING OUR DEMOCRACY

Given the inextricable link between transformational climate action and fair and just voting systems, this plan more prominently elevates the need to strengthen and defend our democracy.

3

### IMPROVING OUR INTERNAL OPERATIONS

While previous strategic plans included specific measures of internal progress, we have, also for the first time, made improving our internal operations its own standalone goal. Our staff powers this organization, and to meet this moment, staff need greater support, improved infrastructure, and a culture of inclusivity, transparency, sustainability, and accountability. This also means that the growth of our internal investments and capacity must be commensurate with the growth of our external programs and campaigns.

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### CENTERING RACIAL JUSTICE AND EQUITY

Although our last plan highlighted our commitment to racial justice and equity, this plan more intentionally centers racial justice and equity in all of our work and elevates our commitment to anti-racism as a core organizational value.

# CROSS-CUTTING STRATEGIES

Succeeding in these goals and achieving the subsequent priorities outlined in this plan will require us to leverage and use our power more forcefully. By evaluating our core strategies – retooling and improving where we have fallen short and innovating where we have not yet excelled – we can set LCVEF up to meet this “now or never” moment. In order to maximize our impact where we have the most ability to effect change, this also means that there are certain strategies, including corporate accountability, litigation, and expert policy analysis, that LCVEF will not lead on or prioritize.

While there are a set of detailed strategies for each of the overarching goals, this plan elevates a series of cross-cutting strategies that we must prioritize and focus on in order to achieve our goals:



➤ **Developing Deeper, More Authentic Partnerships.** While LCVEF is more powerful than ever before, the fact remains that we cannot achieve meaningful progress on our priorities alone. Central to this approach is an explicit intention to prioritize partnerships with climate justice and environmental justice organizations, other organizations led by people of color, and labor unions, as well as our partners in the Conservation Voter Movement. But forging genuine, authentic partnerships that are not transactional requires us to behave differently. This means leveraging our relationships with elected officials to expand opportunities for our partners, letting other organizations take the lead on and, at times, the credit for programs, engaging in deeper, more collaborative planning processes, and working on issues that in the past we neglected to recognize as deeply connected to our work.



➤ **Deepening Our Organizing and Mobilizing Programs.** We must prioritize and reaffirm our commitment to grassroots community organizing and mobilizing programs that center racial justice and equity and advance local, state, and federal priorities. We drive this work through our Chispa programs, Climate Action Teams, state affiliates, and other state and local programs and partners.



➤ **Integrating State and Federal Strategies Across the Conservation Voter Movement.**

We must continue to increase the integration and collaboration of state and federal programs and fundraising across the CVM to leverage expertise, relationships, and resources while building long-term state-based capacity through multi-year investments. This also includes partnering with our state affiliates to develop a shared vision and agreement for an anti-racist CVM that encourages movement-wide changes, including with regard to fundraising strategies, and sets us up to influence White-led environmental groups on anti-racism and equity.



➤ **Pressuring Elected Allies to Lead.** Given the urgency of the climate crisis and the assaults on our democracy, we must do more to ensure that our allies in the White House and Congress live up to the bold agenda that is needed. This means we must be willing to expend more political capital, engage more deeply with our coalition partners, and be unafraid to upset our friends. At the same time, this also means we must recognize those elected officials who back our priorities and share our values, while also continuing to hold accountable polluters and anti-democratic interests.



➤ **Developing Innovative and Effective Communications Strategies.**

The way our key audiences receive and engage with information is constantly evolving. We must continue to adapt in order to educate and enlist the key audiences who can help us achieve our goals. We can do this by developing creative narratives, messages, and strategies, engaging target audiences (public officials, reporters, influencers, partners, supporters, and volunteers) through trusted messengers, channels, and platforms they respond best to, and applying a clear voice and identity about LCVEF's programs across our various communications channels.

Ultimately, no single component of this plan is enough to combat the crises we're facing, but taken together, the external and internal goals, priorities, and cross-cutting strategies outlined here uniquely position LCVEF and our network of state affiliates to achieve lasting, transformational change for people, communities, and our planet.



# GOALS & PRIORITIES

**GOAL** Increase participation in the democratic process by registering new voters and turning more people out to vote.

## PRIORITIES

- ✓ Collect over 750,000 voter registration forms, with 400,000 forms coming from site-based nonpartisan voter registration efforts. Registration programs will be active in at least six states, with a focus on rural and hard-to-reach communities. Endeavor to collect 560,000 forms from communities of color and immigrant communities.
- ✓ Attempt 20 million nonpartisan GOTV contacts with low propensity voters, communities of color, and immigrant communities and have conversations with over 1 million individuals. In addition, we will generate plans-to-vote with over 100,000 individuals.
- ✓ Help election officials identify and recruit over 25,000 poll workers who are culturally competent and racially diverse.
- ✓ Build a base of 50,000 supporters/activists across the CVM composed of community members who have engaged in two or more mobilization actions, leveraging nonpartisan voter turnout efforts into sustained civic engagement.



**GOAL** Strengthen and defend our democracy through just and equitable voter access and representation at all levels of government.

## PRIORITIES

- ✓ By the end of 2021, create a coordinated, CVM-wide 10-year state-level Democracy for All campaign, grounded in a set of guiding principles, a specific set of pro-democracy and anti-voter suppression policy priorities, and nonpartisan voter mobilization opportunities aimed at closing the racial voter participation gap.
- ✓ Develop a comprehensive community-based civics and voting rights curriculum that supports, engages, and graduates at least 500 community super activists.
- ✓ Establish democracy in the strategic plans of all state affiliates by the end of 2024.



**GOAL** Advance and elevate just and equitable climate change action at all levels of government that cut carbon pollution in our nation by at least half by 2030 (from 2005 levels) and reach net-zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050.

## PRIORITIES

- ✓ Ensure that the Biden-Harris administration adopts a suite of strong rules, standards and programs that center equity and justice while achieving the following goals: cut carbon and toxic pollution from the power, transportation, building, industrial, and other sectors; protect and manage U.S. lands and waters in a way that reduces carbon and fosters resilience; and phase out the production and use of fossil fuels while supporting impacted workers and communities.
- ✓ Enact in 2021 and then defend and implement a transformational national infrastructure and economic recovery package that puts us on the path to 100% clean electricity by 2035, electrifies the transportation sector, decarbonizes buildings, advances nature-based climate solutions, supports union and other high-quality, well-paying jobs, ensures at least 40% of the investment benefits flow to environmental justice communities to build healthy, thriving, pollution-free communities, and invests in research development and demonstration of solutions in difficult to decarbonize sectors.
- ✓ Help drive 12 innovative policy solutions at the state or local levels calling for the phase out of fossil fuels in electricity, transportation, or buildings by 2035 – such that 1 in 4 people in the U.S. live in places calling for the elimination of fossil fuels, with implementation that strengthens public processes and drives investment into communities of color, low-income communities, and those most impacted by fossil fuel transition.



**GOAL** Build more powerful, active, inclusive, and anti-racist campaigns, programs, and Conservation Voter Movement.

## PRIORITIES

- ✓ Advance by the end of 2021 (and then regularly review a comprehensive) an organization-wide partnership plan with shared definitions, values, and priorities, and include a strategy of supporting state affiliates' partnerships with communities directly impacted by environmental inequality.
- ✓ Build sustainable power throughout the CVM by increasing investments in state affiliates consistent with increases in overall revenue growth, or by at least 30% (as compared to total investments from 2017-2020).
- ✓ Deepen our grassroots community organizing and mobilizing programs in at least 10 states in order to support and develop priority federal, state, and local issues – prioritizing Black, Indigenous, Asian American and Pacific Islanders, Latinx, and other communities of color, as well as immigrant, youth, low-wealth, and low-income communities.
- ✓ Significantly increase the visibility of our programs among targeted audiences in earned, social, and owned media, as measured by key communications metrics, in order to ensure our programs receive more credit for and awareness of our role in public education and advocacy.
- ✓ Ensure that support for climate, democracy, and environmental justice issues, as determined by public opinion research and news coverage, is recognized and widely publicized.
- ✓ Raise as much money as possible to further our mission and at least \$340 million across the CVM (30% increase over previous 4 years), in a way that is consistent with our values.
- ✓ Create a more inclusive fundraising strategy that secures at least 500 Jay Harris Society members.



**GOAL** Develop internal structures and systems that support people and a culture that centers our core organizational values.

## PRIORITIES

- ✓ Recruit, retain, and develop a community of staff who share our values where at least 40% of each of these key personnel groups – staff, managers, and executive leaders – identify as Black, Indigenous, Latinx, Asian American and Pacific Islander, and other communities of color (staff of color); the annual voluntary turnover rate for staff does not exceed 15% and staff of color do not have a disproportionately higher turnover rate; and the promotion rate for staff of color is at least comparable to that of staff who identify as White.
- ✓ Develop our leaders and hold them accountable so 85% of staff agree that our managers and executive leadership across the organization are skilled at management, responsive to feedback, and model our values, based on the staff engagement surveys.
- ✓ Ensure 95% of staff across the organization are effectively using the internal systems provided by our Human Resources, Administration, Finance, and Legal teams, based on internal user surveys and reporting from our platforms.
- ✓ Build an organizational culture where staff are highly engaged, feel they belong at LCVEF, and are actively participating in learning and growth opportunities, as measured by an index score of at least 8.5/10 in our staff engagement surveys.
- ✓ Develop a high functioning and inclusive board by recruiting and retaining a welcoming community of leaders where at least 40% of board members – and 40% of Executive Committee members – identify as Black, Indigenous, Latinx, Asian American and Pacific Islander, and other communities of color and 90% of board members agree that they feel valued and are contributing at the best of their abilities, as measured by an annual board survey.
- ✓ Ensure that the LCVEF board is committed to best-in-class governance practices. The board will evaluate and, if necessary, restructure the composition of LCVEF's board committees and consider term limits and other structural changes by the end of 2021 in order to ensure board oversight aligns with current organizational goals and helps position us to achieve long-term impact.

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For more information or to get involved, visit [lcvef.org](http://lcvef.org)

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