



RACE CLASS
NARRATIVE ACTION

CLIMATE COHORT 2020

CLIMATE JUSTICE AT THE FOREFRONT



In 2018 and 2019, climate organizing hit its stride, making climate the number two issue for Democratic voters, and a more or less constant source of public debate. In 2020, the climate movement built on these successes.

In the face of a global pandemic, historic mass protests, a turbulent 2020 election season, and major natural disasters — from an intense hurricane season to widespread wildfires — Americans continue to support urgent action on climate change.

Climate movement organizers have made the issue a public and political priority for President-Elect Joe Biden, who named climate as one of the top four focus areas for his administration. We will likely accomplish noteworthy climate actions, like rejoining the Paris Climate Accord, in the very early days of his presidency.

THE CLIMATE COHORT IS BORN

Given the 2020 context, the Midwest Race Class Narrative (RCN) Climate Cohort focused on accomplishing three things:

- Improving the quantity and quality of RCN-informed climate communications produced and shared by grassroots organizations in the upper Midwest;
- Researching and improving race and gender-explicit climate communications, and sharing those learnings with the wider field of climate advocates in the Midwest and beyond; and

- Producing and sharing model-planning, organizing, and digital media content for partner organizations.

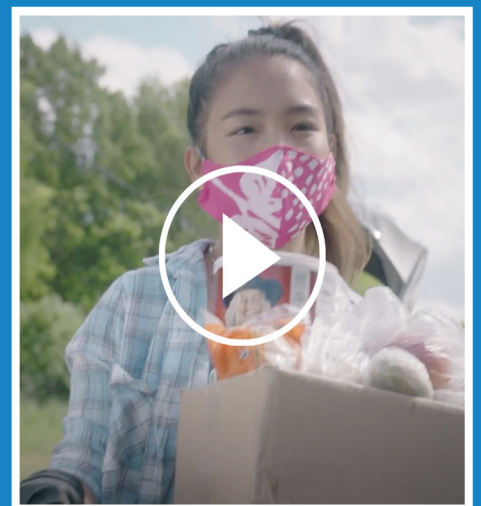
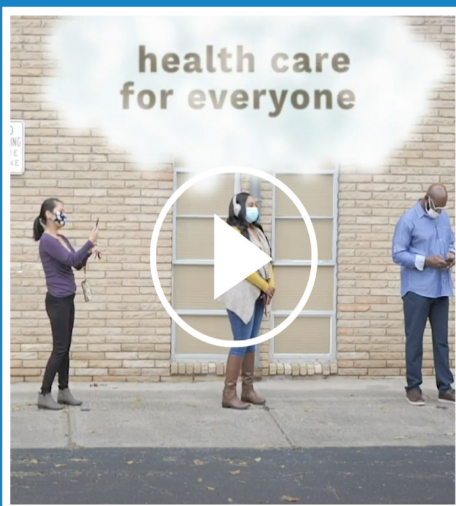
From August to November of 2020, the Midwest RCN Climate Cohort assembled and on-boarded interested organizations, contracted with a videographer and eight visual artists to produce unbranded, shareable content, and began creating state-by-state plans for post-election communications work.

We started by assembling key research, including a [2018-2020 polling round-up](#) featuring thirty-five national and regional polls on climate and 2020 [weekly tracking polls](#) from The Economist / YouGov. In consultation with ASO Communications we created a [Midwest RCN Climate Communications Messaging Guide](#). We shared all of this with cohort members during a webinar with Anat Shenker-Osorio in September, gathering 53 organizers from Colorado, Indiana, Minnesota, Ohio, Pennsylvania, and Wisconsin.

BUILDING THE CLIMATE CHORUS

After the Midwest RCN Climate Cohort’s launch, we developed customizable content that participating organizations could use for civic engagement and public education work on climate-related issues.

This content took two forms. First, we contracted [SunnyBlu Art Agency](#), a Cincinnati-based videographer who created three videos using RCN-informed “Be A Voter” messaging guidance. They were designed to be 2020-relevant, multi-issue ads that presented the climate movement in relationship with the movement for Black lives and efforts to address the COVID-19 pandemic. [Watch them here:](#)



Second, we contracted with [Pollen Midwest](#), a Minneapolis-based media arts organization that commissioned and managed [seven visual artists](#) who produced manipulatable graphics that are licensed for usage by all RCN Midwest cohort members.

We shared these graphic “ingredients” with cohort members using Figma, a user-friendly, shared design platform that gives communications staff access to the basic design elements so they can use and reuse them in the future. We also created and shared sample work customized for each state using [slideshow graphics](#) for Facebook and Instagram about equitable climate solutions.

Finally, we have started to work with RCN Midwest Climate Cohort members in five states to create state-specific workplans to develop RCN-based, equity-focused climate content. We will develop plans for 2021 in Michigan, Minnesota, Ohio, Pennsylvania, and Wisconsin. These plans will build on our planning and orientation work in 2020, the technical assistance capacity of the RCNA team, and our standing contracts with SunnyBlu and Pollen.



We all want to leave future generations a healthy and beautiful Michigan.

So why do some politicians keep standing in the way?

An illustration of various flowers, including a large orange daisy-like flower, a blue flower, and a red flower, set against a yellow background.

Clean energy jobs are the future.

From manufacturing to installation, from research to sales, it's an industry that's growing. How can we make sure that everyone, of every gender, is part of our clean energy economy?

An illustration of a diverse group of people in a community setting. A woman in a yellow shirt is speaking into a megaphone. There are signs for 'SAFE HOUSING FOR ALL', 'DEFUND', and 'VOTE'. A hand is shown putting an envelope into a mailbox. The text 'FIGHT FOR MINNESOTA TOGETHER!' is at the top and 'OUR VOICES ARE OUR POWER!' is at the bottom.

FIGHT FOR MINNESOTA TOGETHER!

OUR VOICES ARE OUR POWER!



2021 AND BEYOND

The RCN Midwest Climate Cohort is laying the foundation for sustained movement-building on climate justice in the years to come, rooted in a multi-state, multi-racial coalition of organizers and activists.

Our goal for 2021 is, first and foremost, to build capacity in states, so that our partner organizations can design, build, and distribute RCN-informed climate communications. We also want to advance RCN within the emerging national conversation about equitable climate solutions by relating to the national tables and campaigns that will be moving work in 2021. Lastly, we will continue to create and share model content in relationship with and in response to our in-state partners and national allies.