

Climate Recovery Resolution Guide



WHAT'S THE POINT?

Our youth leaders believe if we don't dramatically confront the sources of the climate crisis, their future is endangered. A necessary step toward climate progress, *the passage of a climate recovery resolution puts a framework into place for local climate action.* In the process, young people not only study the science of climate change, its impacts, and solutions, but also how their local government operates.

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WHAT IS A CLIMATE RECOVERY RESOLUTION?

A climate recovery resolution creates a record of commitment that establishes a framework and a timeline for climate action projects to succeed in a city, county, or state. A resolution is a promise, whereas an ordinance is law.

HOW CAN THIS HELP MY COMMUNITY?

Getting a resolution passed will be a grassroots effort that solidifies commitment to climate action in your community. Climate action can include: establishing a sustainability commission, creating a climate action plan, passing a series of climate-friendly ordinances, demonstrating the need for a city staff member to focus on sustainability and climate-readiness—really, anything and everything a city or locality can do to increase resiliency and climate protection while reducing waste and carbon emissions. All of these actions can help your community prepare for a destabilized climate future.

In the course of getting this resolution passed, you will learn about how climate change is affecting your community. You'll inspire your community members to take an active role in the future of the climate. By gaining the trust of stakeholders, you'll get a chance to talk face-to-face with officials who represent you as a citizen and let them know about your concerns. Think of this process as the catalyst for making necessary changes in your community.

WHY SHOULD THIS BE YOUTH-LED?

Youth have a larger stake in the future of the climate than anyone else. Youth passion for this is infectious and unstoppable. Politicians who may not be willing to engage with adults on this issue are more willing to collaborate with youth leaders. In short, youth can make inroads where adults may not be able to.

HOW CAN WE MAKE THIS INCLUSIVE?

Throughout the process, you can invite members of communities from throughout your city or county, including residents in low-income areas and communities of color. For example, your resolution can establish a sustainability commission that includes community members from all sectors — and keeps the pressure on year-round. You can also set up your goals and check-ins with your own team to be inclusive and equitable.



HOW DO I GET A CLIMATE RESOLUTION PASSED?



DO THE RESEARCH

ESTABLISH YOUR TEAM

ENGAGE STAKEHOLDERS

WRITE A RESOLUTION

PRESENT YOUR RESOLUTION

**NEGOTIATE, COMPROMISE,
MOVE FORWARD**

CELEBRATE YOUR WIN!



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01

What you don't know can hurt you: *The discovery and research phase.*

Ahead of launching this project, you'll need to know the specifics of what this journey will look like in your community. We've collected a series of questions for you to explore. The answers to these questions will help you navigate the process, as well as help you become an authority on how climate is affecting your community.

Q *What is the legal purview of the local unit of government in terms of passing resolutions (or declarations or ordinances)? Will you be proposing this to your town council? The city/county council? The state legislature? What is the proposal process? When is the governmental body in session? What is the schedule for their meetings? How do you get on the meeting agenda?*

Q *Have there been previous attempts at climate action (sustainability plan, master plan, economic plan, etc.) with the local governmental body? Many cities pass and publish all sorts of sustainability plans, but they often sit on the shelf and gather dust. Find those plans or reports and those authors if you can; they could be key collaborators. Note: your resolution may need to combine all the plans into one document.*

Q *What have nearby cities, counties, or states done along the lines of a climate resolution? What was the reaction to it? What have officials done since passing the resolution?*

Q *What is the science of climate impacts on your immediate locale, as well as surrounding area? There are numerous resources to understand local climate impacts. A simple search on the internet may result in plenty of information, but make sure your resources are scientifically vetted. You may want to rely on a local college or university as well.*

Q *Find out who your city's electricity provider is: Are they amenable to renewable energy or are they holding on to antiquated forms of fossil fuel energy? Is there a local energy efficiency program for businesses and/or residents?*

Q *Is there a public transportation provider in your area? What are their future plans to increase ridership and service? Engage them.*

Once you've got these questions answered, you're ready to gather your team and put a plan together to get a resolution passed.

02 It's about time: *Create a timeline for your project.*

Deadlines are key to getting the work done and holding everyone involved accountable. As you get ready to present to your city/county council or other local government entity, make sure your team sets and meets the deadlines outlined in the timeline. Note: Every local government entity is different; this timeline is based on our experience; your experience may result in a different process. The dates of meetings and specific process are things you should research in your discovery phase.

Lets get started.

06 MON

SIX MONTHS BEFORE:

- Identify your core team, assign roles, and set the cadence of meetings; bi-weekly might work in the beginning, but weekly meetings will be necessary as this project evolves.
- Conduct initial research for drafting the resolution and what actions have been taken in your community before.
- Identify key advocates and obstacles in your local government. Will the mayor be supportive? Will a city council member be your resolution's sponsor?
- Start a petition to support your efforts.

05 MON

FIVE MONTHS BEFORE:

- Begin considering your resolution by viewing other cities' versions.
- Gather contact information for representatives (council members, assistants to the mayor, county commissioners, etc.)
- Meet and secure community partners' support for the resolution.
- Draft and send introductory letters to city/county representatives.
- Try approaching your mayor with a request to "coach" you on your resolution; find out how they would suggest you do it, who they think would be your allies, etc. You're not asking the mayor to support you just yet, you are looking for coaching and advice as someone who knows the ins and outs of the process.



NOTE: Somewhere in the six-to-three month range, there will likely be one or more city councilors who demonstrate their desire to take on this project. At that point, this timeline may be adjusted according to their recommendations. They are the inside experts and their recommendations are essential.

04 MON

FOUR MONTHS BEFORE:

- Create a list of journalists/reporters to whom you will be sending communications.
- Secure a representative's support for the resolution. Work to get bi-partisan support; i.e. a member from each party.
- Begin hosting public meetings—live and/or virtually—to educate on the resolution.

03 MON

THREE MONTHS BEFORE:

- Identify a spokesperson or spokespersons and create speaking points for on-camera interviews.
- Secure any community partner organizations that will speak publicly in support of the resolution.
- Organize signature-collecting walks in your neighborhoods or at community/school events.
- Finish first draft of resolution; get input from your co-sponsors and other members of the council. Start revising the resolution to address concerns; don't be afraid to push back!
- Meet with the mayor if you haven't done so already.

02 MON

TWO MONTHS BEFORE:

- Work to secure interviews with journalists to raise awareness about the resolution and why it's important for your community.
- Distribute a script for people to call or write to their representatives in support of the resolution.
- Finalize the resolution. Make sure it is shared with the lawyer assigned to your governmental entity for review.
- Some groups may opt for regular public protests, akin to Fridays for Future actions.

01 MON

ONE MONTH BEFORE:

- Advertise the meeting date and time you will present the resolution.
- Write or have community partners submit opinion pieces to your local newspaper in support of the resolution.
- Make t-shirts or stickers that you will wear to the meeting that will demonstrate the strength of your group.

2 WEEKS

TWO WEEKS BEFORE:

- Alert print publications when you'll be presenting at the council meeting with a press release.
- Continue advertising the meeting date.
- Gather to practice reading testimonials, finalize powerpoint presentations, etc.

1 WEEK

ONE WEEK BEFORE:

- Alert television stations, with a reminder 1-2 days before, when you'll be presenting at the council meeting.
- Gather before the meeting to practice one more time.



03 Get yourselves together: *Inviting people to your team.*

THE DREAM TEAM.

Involve a diverse group of youth, ages that span from 7-18 from different backgrounds, willing to take on the project. Start with a core group, anywhere from 3 to 12 young people, who are interested in leading the team.

INVITE THE COMMUNITY.

Schools, after school clubs, Girl Scout and Boy Scout troops, church youth groups, etc. Climate change affects all of us, so you will be able to find passionate people everywhere.

DIVERSIFY THE SKILL SET OF YOUR GROUP.

Bring together team members with a variety of skills and interests. Passion for the environment is a must of course! But many skills go into this process: social media, event-planning, public speaking, strategic thinking, design, etc. Having many talents in your group will help you in the long run.

INVITE ADULTS ON YOUR TEAM.

Include diverse community stakeholders: A lawyer can help you draft or review your resolution, environmental justice activists or professionals can attest to the needs in your community, public health professionals can speak to the health effects of climate change, and business and faith leaders can help you rally support. Team up with college students, college/university faculty, scientists, environmental leaders, sustainability officials, organic farmers, renewable energy entrepreneurs, artists, athletes, and others to gain diverse perspectives and voices behind your cause before taking this to your political leaders.



04 From the grassroots up: *Engage your community.*

Find ways to make your community more ecologically resilient while also getting to know community members, raising awareness about your cause, and building up your social media presence. Invite your student team and adult partners to join you for events throughout your resolution campaign. Talk about the benefits to the community and to the environment at each event.

- **Hold public events that involve planting pollinator habitats, cleaning up parks, etc.**
- **Make the resolution process public, including public art (like murals), plays, poems, posters, songs, or videos.**
- **Consider pairing your project with one that supports an increase in climate education at every level. For example, youth in one community started working with the city government as well as their school superintendent and school board simultaneously.**

- **Ask for support from local environmental organizations, they can often help you book spaces for events and promote your work.**
- **Invite a climate scientist or public health expert to present on climate science.**
- **Document everything! Use social media, plus get coverage in traditional media (newspapers and local TV/radio stations) to raise awareness.**
- **Create your own website, social media platforms and identity, complete with logos and even a theme song. T-shirts and bumper stickers can be effective too.**



05 Put action into words: *Write your resolution.*

A climate resolution involves these basic parts:

- **Recognition that the greatest burden of the risks of the climate crisis fall on the youth of this city/county/state.**
 - **Recognition that climate impacts often affect low-income communities and communities of color first — and most of all.**
 - **List of the negative impact of climate change to your community.**
 - **Scientific imperative for immediate action.**
 - **Recognition of positive actions taken in the past and the present; celebrate the work others have accomplished to create climate mitigation and resilience.**
 - **Desire to determine/complete/update a climate action plan, establish a sustainability commission.**
 - **Include any additional desired outcomes. For example, including provisions such as the need to educate First Responders on climate impacts.**
- **Commitment to continue to involve youth in creating and executing climate-related policies. In one city in Indiana, youth played a leadership role in 1.) passing a climate recovery resolution, 2.) passing a climate emergency declaration, 3.) establishing a youth member of the city’s sustainability commission, and 4.) establishing a youth to join the city council.**

We have plenty of samples and examples in the **Additional Resources** section, but make this your own! Alter and compromise wherever it makes sense to do so. Before you present this to the city council or governmental body of your choice, be sure to have a lawyer review it. The most important thing to include is that you are advancing climate action in your community. Remember: Your local government entity will definitely have their lawyer look at your resolution, so plan on receiving lots of feedback from them.

RESOLUTION NO. 2019-19

A PROPOSAL FOR A SPECIAL RESOLUTION TO REDUCE CARBON EMISSIONS, INCREASE ENERGY EFFICIENCY AND RENEWABLE ENERGY USE, TO CREATE A CLIMATE CHANGE-RESILIENT CITY OF GOSHEN MUNICIPAL GOVERNMENT (HEREINAFTER REFERRED TO AS THE CITY OF GOSHEN) THAT WILL PROTECT THE FUTURE MEMBERS OF OUR COMMUNITY.

1 Establish the science of climate change generally, using references from trusted national or international sources.

WHEREAS the Purdue Climate Change Research Center has determined that under continued business-as-usual “no action” carbon emissions, the Midwest should expect increased risks to public health, infrastructure and agriculture due to increased heat wave intensity and frequency, more extreme droughts, increased heavy rain events and flooding, decreasing agricultural yield, and degrading air and water quality.

WHEREAS the average temperature trend analyses from NASA Goddard Institute for Space Studies Surface Temperature Analysis show significant average temperature rise.

WHEREAS the American Meteorological Society has declared there is unequivocal evidence of a changing climate since the 1950s.

WHEREAS the American Meteorological Society has also determined that the dominant cause of the warming is due largely to the burning of fossil fuels.

WHEREAS numerous respected agencies and organizations including the American Lung Association, the National Academy of Sciences, and the Department of Defense Quadrennial Defense Review have determined that climate change is a serious risk to life, a threat multiplier, and a threat to national security.

2 Establish the science of climate change locally, using references from trusted local authorities.

WHEREAS localized risks to Hoosiers affecting human health, infrastructure and agriculture have included costly and dangerous extreme heat and drought conditions (2012), record-breaking rains and subsequent floods (2015 and 2018), and overall chaotic weather extremes.

WHEREAS in 2008, 82 of Indiana’s 92 counties were declared Presidential disaster areas due to winter weather, severe storms, and flooding, and incurred over \$1.9 billion in damage to public infrastructure, housing, and agriculture.

WHEREAS on February 21, 2018, the Elkhart River reached record flooding levels of 12.49 feet, affected 250+ structures, caused several areas of our community to be evacuated, public safety mobilized and performed dozens of water rescues, 3 of the city’s 5 river crossings were closed and resulted in a State of Emergency.

WHEREAS in February 2019, the Community of Goshen experienced the coldest record days with wind chills reaching -58°F. Creating potentially deadly conditions for our homeless residents, causing water pipes to burst, and forcing several businesses, nonprofits, schools, and the City Government to close.

WHEREAS extreme weather and temperature changes associated with climate change, cause accelerated damage to Goshen’s infrastructure of roads and paths, and to our water utilities.

3

Celebrate local solutions you've identified and previous community successes to be built upon.

WHEREAS the City of Goshen contracted with the Goshen Resilience Guild to complete an Environmental Perspectives Assessment of the Goshen Community, by engaging a diverse range of residents, and business and community leaders.

WHEREAS further increasing the efficiency of our buildings, vehicles, and electrical usage, our Community will save money, conserve energy, reduce waste, reduce pollution, and promote jobs in the clean energy sector.

WHEREAS a shift to clean renewable energy is inevitable due to the finite nature and non-renewable fossil resources.

WHEREAS the effects of a healthier environment will substantially reduce health costs, especially for those suffering from asthma and emphysema and other lung illness associated with poor air quality.

WHEREAS the City of Goshen has been recognized as the 40th community in the nation to receive the Gold Level of SOLSMART, awarded Green Community of the Year in 2010 and the Green Project of the Year in 2018 both for the State of Indiana, recognized as a Sterling Tree City for the last 20 years and Bicycle Friendly Community.

WHEREAS a local individualized climate plan will allow Goshen to continue to show leadership in improving the quality of life for its residents.

WHEREAS NIPSCO has made a public commitment to phase out coal usage in favor of renewable energy resources and multiple local businesses and non-profits have taken measure to reduce waste and utilize renewable resources.

WHEREAS the City of Goshen is already working to better our environment through stormwater management, cleaning of brownfields, reducing City Structure utility costs, setting internal policies for fossil fuel usage, and being forward thinking in lining up several assessments to be completed in 2019.

WHEREAS recycling significantly reduces carbon emissions throughout the supply chain of consumer goods while creating new green jobs in our community.

WHEREAS the total annual ecological benefits which Goshen's 13,500 public trees provide is more than \$1.46 million in 2018, comprised in part by energy savings of \$409,000 (1.95 million kWh saved), \$438,000 in stormwater mitigation (16 million gallons avoided), \$45,000 in carbon dioxide sequestration and mitigation (3.6 million lbs. sequestered and 2.6 million avoided), and \$509,000 in benefits to private property value; and whereas these values can be increased by planting more trees.

WHEREAS various economic analyses have shown that it is possible to introduce climate mitigation at a low cost, and the benefits would outweigh costs.

WHEREAS the greatest burden resulting from an inadequate response to address climate change will be carried by the youngest generation and all who follow.

NOW, THEREFORE. BE IT RESOLVED that:

4

Point out the economic and other significant community impact of your solutions.

5

Resolve to set forth the specific aspirations and commitments to climate resilience of the community.

(1) The City of Goshen will work to achieve carbon neutrality by 2035 and take all appropriate actions to do so, which include obtaining a baseline measurement of emissions, writing an emissions management plan, setting short term benchmark goals, establishing proper measures to ensure the plan is being implemented, pursuing a tree canopy goal of 45% by 2045, and incorporating energy efficiency and renewable energy standards where possible.

(2) To the extent possible, the City of Goshen will promote and encourage initiatives throughout the County of Elkhart to reduce carbon footprint, ensure water and air quality standards, encourage locally and responsibly grown food, waste reduction, reuse, recycling and composting, and augment transportation strategies like walking, biking, carpooling and using mass transit.

(3) The City of Goshen will work to create and implement a Climate Action Plan by 2021 and investigate the viability of creating an Office of Sustainability.

(4) The City of Goshen will work to engage business leaders, faith leaders, youth leaders, and community leaders from diverse populations to ensure all voices are included in the long-term sustainability planning process.

(5) The City of Goshen will move forward with the IU Extern Greenhouse Gas Assessment Program, the GLISA Stormwater management Assessment, the Mayor's Environmental Advisory Committee, the 45% Tree Canopy 2045 goal, and other programs that can help bring more; data and knowledge and about environmental efficiencies and help to create a Greener Community of Goshen.

PASSED by the City of Goshen Common Council on April 23, 2019.

ATTEST:

Angie McKee, Clerk-Treasurer

Presiding Officer

PRESENTED to the Mayor of the City of Goshen on April 30, 2019 at 11:17 a.m./p.m.

Angie McKee, Clerk-Treasurer

APPROVED AND ADOPTED on April 30, 2019.

Jeremy P. Stutsman, Mayor

SCANNED

06 Get into the room where it happens: *Meet with stakeholders.*

Once you've drafted your resolution, you're ready to meet with key stakeholders. The stakeholders you'll need are:

- **One or more city councilors to sponsor your resolution. Meet with them early and often. You'll want to meet with them individually and also attend a few council meetings to get a feel for how meetings are run. Establish a presence.**
- **The president of the city council is key: He or she can either accelerate or slow down your resolution process. It's important to establish a connection with this person ahead of time.**
- **Try approaching your mayor with a request to "coach" you on your resolution; find out how they would suggest you do it, who they think would be your allies, etc. You're not asking the mayor to support you just yet, you are looking for coaching and advice as someone who knows the ins and outs of the process.**
- **Endorsements are essential! Get your local chamber of commerce, NAACP chapter, faith groups, and college/university to endorse the resolution.**
- **Use your community engagement events as opportunities to invite stakeholders and endorsers to meet you and see what you're doing to help the community.**
- **Start a petition or letter writing program or some other campaign that demonstrates to stakeholders an outpouring of community support.**



07 Stand up, speak up: *Present to the council.*

Prepare your presentation well in advance of your meeting. Practice giving this presentation and reading through testimonials multiple times. Try to confirm your time limit, or plan to keep the whole presentation to 20 minutes or less.

Work together to prepare your presentation using the sample presentation in the **Additional Resources** section. It includes an outline and basic template.

Gather your testimonials. Your youth team is passionate about this and the council needs to know why. Ask for volunteers to share a personal story about how climate change affects them. You'll want some kids to focus on science, some on civics, some on the potential for ecological devastation. And remember, stories are important. That's often what people remember long after and is often what motivates people to change their perception of an issue.

Ask a key local scientist and/or recognized leaders in the faith, business, or racial justice communities to speak. Again, keep it short as the majority of presentation time should be taken by the youth team.

Focus on the problem, but end with the solution. What change can this resolution kickstart, if passed? How can everyone benefit?

Thank everyone who helped you and showed up for your presentation—your stakeholders matter!

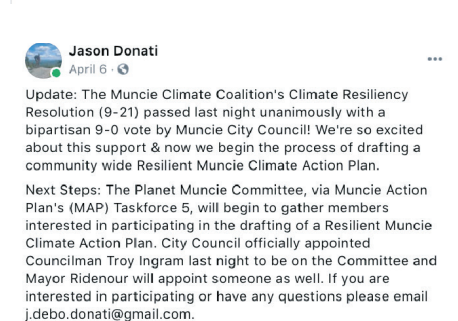
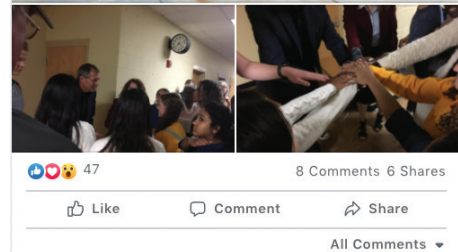
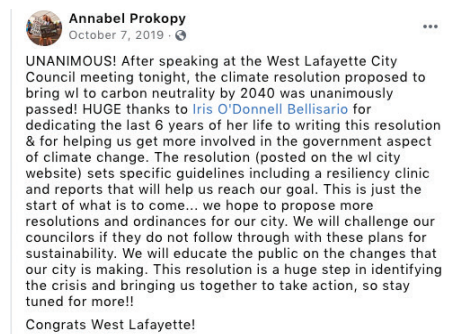


08 Celebrate: Social posts.

A press release is a great way to share your accomplishment with local media outlets. Best practice is to keep the press release to one page with 1-2 sources quoted and follow Associated Press Style guidelines.

If you've created official social media channels, share the news with your followers. Thank the city/county representatives, business/organizations, other stakeholders, and the community for their support. Be sure to tag these groups! See examples on this page.

If you don't succeed on the first try, keep at it! Unfortunately, extreme weather events are going to motivate even the biggest skeptics to start paying attention. If your resolution is voted down, regroup and make a plan to keep working until you achieve victory.



09 Additional Resources.

There's more to know and share. Use these additional resources to guide and inspire your team.

- **Sample timeline**
- **Sample letter**
- **Sample press release**
- **Media outreach guide**
- **Social media guide**
- **Presentation guide**
 - Simple agenda/outline in bullet points
 - Content suggested for presentations
- **Flyer template**
- **Citizenship guides**
 - SMARTIE goals and SMARTIE Worksheet
 - How to hold effective meetings



Research links:

- **Short films:**
 - **Trust the Climate Kids:** <https://www.ourchildrenstrust.org/trust-the-climate-kids-short-version>
 - **Little Warriors** (short documentary on Indianapolis' climate recovery resolution): <https://vimeo.com/215367824/59148be314>
- **Websites:**
 - **iMatter:** <https://www.imatteryouth.org/>
 - **Our Children's Trust:** <https://www.ourchildrenstrust.org/>
 - **Earth Charter Indiana:** <https://www.earthcharterindiana.org/climate-recovery-resolutions>
 - **Yale Climate Communication Center:** <https://climatecommunication.yale.edu/>

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INDIANA

FROM THE SOIL TO THE STATEHOUSE

At Earth Charter Indiana, we work with youth at the juncture of climate stewardship and civic leadership. A 501(c)3 nonprofit organization, we promote the education of youth regarding climate impacts, and to support them in expressing themselves to make their voices heard.

We are guided by the principals of the Earth Charter:

- 1) RESPECT AND CARE FOR THE COMMUNITY OF LIFE;**
- 2) ECOLOGICAL INTEGRITY;**
- 3) SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC JUSTICE; AND**
- 4) DEMOCRACY, NON-VIOLENCE AND PEACE.**

Our focus is on intergenerational action and education in the face of our climate crisis, what we can do to mitigate the crisis, and how we can adapt with dignity and resilience.

Learn more about our programs and how you can help at

www.earthcharterindiana.org.