

# Municipal Climate Volunteer Training and Skills Development Guide

## Agents of Change

A project of ICLEI Canada

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# Introduction

## Purpose

This guide is intended to help municipal staff design, organize, and deliver a municipal climate action volunteer training. It is intended as a tool to work through logistics and considerations of planning and running a volunteer training day. This guide provides key aspects, considerations, and checklists of materials for volunteer training along with best practices and lessons learned from the participants of the ICLEI Canada's Agents of Change program. While this guide provides guidance, it does not cover how to set up a volunteer program.

Additional guidance, case studies and lessons learned are provided on [the Agents of Change website](#).

## Background

In 2022, ICLEI Canada received funding from the Climate Action Awareness fund to develop the Agents of Change program. Over the course of 2022, ten Canadian municipalities worked with ICLEI Canada – through a cohort collaboration model – to design local volunteer engagement programs for climate action. The participating municipalities conceptualized programs, governance structures, partnership models, recruitment techniques, Indigenous engagement and equity considerations, approaches to social media, and explored many other considerations to build locally relevant engagement programs with lasting impact. Ultimately, each municipality designed a program tailored to their community and climate mitigation and/or adaptation action goals.

## Acknowledgements

We gratefully acknowledge that this project was undertaken with the financial support of the Government of Canada. We would also like to acknowledge the municipal staff and organizations who were instrumental in the creation of this resource.

ICLEI Canada's work happens across Turtle Island which has traditionally been and is home to many diverse First Nations, Inuit, and Métis peoples since time immemorial. We are committed to building relationships with Indigenous groups and knowledge keepers, knowing that Truth and Reconciliation requires ongoing learning, unlearning, reflection, and action. We endeavour to listen to and learn from Indigenous Peoples on an ongoing basis in the process of our work.

## About ICLEI Canada

ICLEI Canada is part of a global network working to achieve tangible sustainability results through cumulative local actions. We support local governments by providing them with expertise and resources to take action in their communities. To do this, we bring together a wide variety of stakeholders across government, industry, academia, and the non-profit community to build more sustainable, low-carbon, biodiverse, and climate-ready communities.



# Getting started: Conceptualizing climate action training

Volunteers provide important services for municipalities. They enhance social capital, strengthen the community, and help deliver services that would otherwise be more expensive or underprovided (Haski-Leventhal, 2009). Volunteers are also an important link between municipalities and the community that can help to reduce social exclusion, build trust with the community, and bring local knowledge of specific contexts and challenges (Eimhjellen, 2014).

In recognition of the value they provide, it is important for volunteers to feel satisfied with their role and get something out of their experience. Training has been shown to contribute to volunteer satisfaction and increase volunteer retention (Deslandes & Rogers, 2008). Providing a role that is appropriate for the skill level and interests of volunteers, as well offering opportunities for further training, makes volunteers more likely to feel appreciated and stay in a position for a longer period of time.

The primary purpose of a volunteer training program is to provide volunteers with the knowledge, skills, and resources to complete their tasks effectively, with confidence, and independently. A training program should at minimum:

- Outline role expectations, responsibilities, and tasks
- Establish volunteer objectives
- Acquaint volunteers with tools and procedures they'll encounter on the job
- Assess any knowledge and skills gaps, then work to fill these gaps
- Create a framework for further evaluation.

Volunteer training programs will look differently depending on the purpose and goals of any specific program, the work the volunteers will be doing, as well as the program's target audience. When it comes to climate action volunteering, there are a wide variety of ways for volunteers to take action ranging from raising awareness to taking pledges and even implementing concrete actions (e.g., tree plantings). Here are some important questions to consider before designing a volunteer training program for your municipality.

## As a municipality, what is your vision for mobilizing the community around your climate plan through volunteer engagement?



### Insights from Agents of Change participants

In New Glasgow, many volunteers were older adults and expressed a desire to get started with volunteer activities as soon as possible and see results of their work.

In Dufferin County, volunteer managers allowed youth an opportunity to engage in one-on-one and smaller group conversations before being asked to speak in larger groups in order to build comfort and confidence with one another.

Your vision will guide the direction of the volunteer program and must resonate with the community while supporting the objectives of your climate action plan. Training of volunteers should be conceived and designed as an opportunity to build a sense of community among volunteers and staff to enhance volunteer commitment and satisfaction. Providing opportunities for the volunteers to co-develop the program and ensuring they have a chance to meaningfully contribute and have their voices heard is important for building ownership over the program.

### Insights from Agents of Change participants

In Cranbrook, a climate action advisory committee consisting of community leaders from different sectors was assembled to establish the guiding vision and overall direction and purpose of their climate action volunteer program.

## Who is your target audience?

How you approach training will vary depending on your target audience. Different demographic groups may have different appetites for different activities and session lengths. Agents of Change participants found that it was difficult to keep volunteers engaged during longer training sessions, particularly for youth. Adults with children at home or other commitments may also not be able to commit to long sessions. On the other side, providing training over multiple sessions requires more travel time and has higher costs. Depending on your audience, you will have to find the right balance between the length and number of training sessions to meet the needs of your volunteers.

Adults who are already motivated and educated may be willing to attend presentations and get right to brainstorming activities and discussions; however, for youth, traditional classroom-based approaches may be less effective due to the limited engagement they offer. Youth may require more encouragement to interact with their peers and the material presented. Peer-led approaches and the use of audio, video, and interactive elements can also help leverage trainee experiences within training, allowing their voices to be heard. (Varghese et al., 2020).

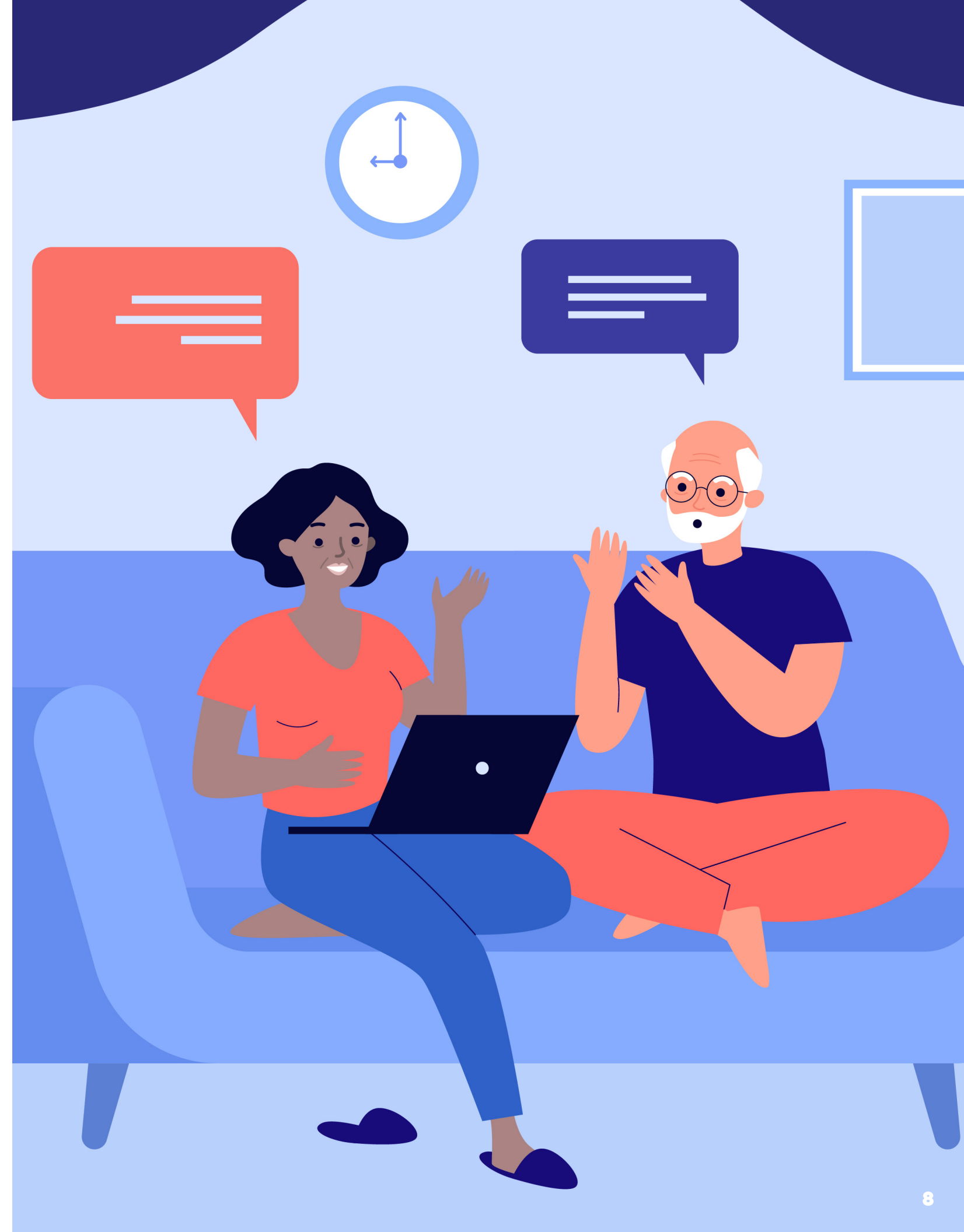
## What are you trying to engage volunteers on? What skills do you want them to have after this training? How will they apply what they've learned?

Is your volunteer program seeking to engage the community on a specific aspect of your climate plan such as residential energy efficiency, solid waste, or increasing electric vehicle uptake? Or are you looking to engage the community more generally on climate change awareness and education? When working within a budget, training programs need to be specific and targeted based on the desired skill and/or knowledge being developed. This is particularly important for climate change related programs where volunteers need a general understanding of climate science. While volunteers may be highly motivated and eager to find ways to help, they may lack crucial background information on climate change, primary global and local emissions sources, as well as examples of potential actions and climate solutions. Since talking about climate change can sometimes be a contentious topic, most climate action volunteer programs centered around education and awareness will also benefit from climate communications training including strategies to speak about climate change with other community members effectively and conflict resolution techniques. Applying newly learned skills in practice or role-playing sessions or testing volunteer knowledge through a short quiz can also be an effective way to reinforce new skills and knowledge.

### Insights from Agents of Change participants

In Victoria's training sessions, participants found that staff had to be involved in brainstorming sessions to ensure volunteers stayed focused and on topic. Volunteer discussions often led to higher level actions that were needed but difficult to implement by volunteers. In future sessions, starting with a list of concrete actions is expected to improve outcomes of group discussions and brainstorming activities.

In Colchester, volunteer trainers asked volunteers to complete a baseline knowledge survey before and after the training to help reinforce the concepts learned during the training and to understand the effectiveness of the training.





## Who will deliver the training?

Will you deliver the training or be a fly on the wall? If the training is not delivered by you, then who will deliver it? Does your municipality have the expertise and capacity to provide training or will you need to bring in experts from the community and/or other organizations? For specific aspects such as Indigenous perspectives, context-specific communications training, and local climate science, local experts may be best suited to deliver the training. As mentioned above, peer-led approaches to training can provide a better experience for volunteers, allowing them to feel more comfortable expressing themselves, and can improve engagement if the information is coming from a trusted voice.

### Insights from Agents of Change participants

In Dufferin County, a municipal councillor attended their climate training to speak about the municipality's climate work, visions, and the importance of youth. This helped lend legitimacy to the program and build a sense of purpose and confidence in youth participants. Local Indigenous elders delivered a workshop on Indigenous knowledge, and municipal staff along with community leaders delivered guest presentations on various topics throughout their training sessions.



## How will the training be delivered? In person or virtually?

With an increasing shift to virtual meetings and events, many people may now prefer the convenience of virtual events and associated cost and time savings. However, when it comes to training and engagement, in-person events offer many benefits such as hands-on interactivity and the ability to have more organic conversations and to build relationships. You will need to weigh the pros and cons of each approach while considering the needs of your target audience and the type of training being delivered. In rural areas where participants may need to travel longer distances to attend the training sessions, virtual sessions may be an attractive option. However, virtual sessions also require good internet connections which may be limited in certain areas. Trainers can consider reimbursing volunteers for their travel costs to help encourage in-person sessions where deemed necessary.

### Insights from Agents of Change participants

In Colchester and Dufferin County, program organizers brought in experts to deliver workshops on climate anxiety for youth.

## In-Person Events

### Pros

- Allows for hands-on, interactive training
- Event organizers can ensure volunteers are actively engaged
- Provides the opportunity for volunteers to network and interact with each other
- Allows for a wider range of activities
- Can make it easier to speak one-on-one with individuals

### Cons

- Costs associated with travel, catering, and venue booking
- Less flexibility in scheduling

## Virtual Events

### Pros

- Can reach a wider audience
- No travel, catering, and venue booking costs
- Allows for more flexible scheduling
- Easier to record and share the event
- Some people may feel more comfortable sharing in virtual spaces compared to in-person events where big personalities can dominate conversations

### Cons

- Limits options for engagement
- Engagement can be less meaningful
- At home distractions
- More difficult to read body language and ensure participants are engaged
- Technical difficulties can impact the quality of the training



### Insights from Agents of Change participants

In Dufferin County, virtual sessions with youth were found to be less successful as participants did not turn on their video and it was difficult to keep participants engaged.

# Before the training: Key tasks and considerations

In thinking about the actual delivery of your climate action volunteer training program, the more attention you can give to the details in advance, the better. This may seem obvious but taking the time to review logistical tasks and considerations will help the training event(s) run smoothly from start to finish. This includes all the small details related to inviting and hosting participants for the training. Logistical considerations are highly time dependent and need to be thought of well in advance. The following are some of the key logistical considerations needed to plan training events.



## Invitees and invitations

- What is the target size for the training event? Keep in mind that groups under 20 can generally be accommodated with one facilitator but larger groups will require additional facilitators.
- Who will be invited to the training event?
- Will you be inviting a specific individual and/or representative of an organization to present or participate in the event?
- Which organizations and individuals will be represented at the event? Are there any missing and, if so, why?
- Are special considerations needed in terms of timing, accessibility, and inclusion? (e.g., business or school hours, provision of childcare, accessibility of the event venue, etc.)
- What is the length of the event?
- Is this going to be a single event or a series of events?
- Will the event be held in person, virtually, or both (i.e., hybrid event)?
- When will the invitations be sent out? Keep in mind that invitations should be sent out with a minimum lead time of three weeks for in-person events.
- Who will send the invitations and is this person known to potential participants? Keep in mind that people are more likely to attend

an event when they are invited by someone they know or trust. Be sure that all required materials (e.g., agenda, background resources, etc.) are ready to be sent out along with the invitation.

- How will the invitations be sent and do you have all the information needed (e.g., email addresses, direct mail addresses, etc.)
- How will the invitations be sent and how will participants RSVP?
- How will participants RSVP and will there be a deadline? What information do you need to collect from participants (e.g., dietary restrictions)?

### Insights from Agents of Change participants

In New Glasgow, volunteer organizers found that matching the room to the group size and atmosphere they wanted to create was important. Initial meetings were held in the council chamber which was found to be too large for the group and conveyed an intimidating atmosphere.

## Venue

- Do you have a room that can accommodate your target audience group size?
- Have you booked the room and covered any of the costs associated with room rental?
- What are the venue's requirements surrounding catering? Keep in mind that some venues may require you to use an in-house caterer, have minimum food/beverage spend requirements, require advance catering notice etc.
- Can the venue accommodate both in-person and hybrid participation?
- Does the venue meet accessibility and/or security requirements you may have such as language translation, sight/hearing impaired interpretation, room security, etc.?
- Can the venue accommodate your audio/visual requirements? (e.g., laptop, projector, microphone/speaker, printed materials, flip charts/markers, etc.)
- Can you access the meeting room early to set-up and do a quick audio/visual test?
- What are the venue's requirements in terms of take-down and clean-up?

## Catering

- Have you contacted a caterer with the details relating to your event?
- Have you confirmed the number of people attending the event?
- Have you confirmed the date, time, and location for the catering?
- Have you confirmed details related to returning containers, glassware, cutlery, etc.?
- What type of refreshments will you provide? (e.g., water, coffee/tea, snack, lunch, dinner)
- Do participants have dietary requirements?
- Have you considered the greenhouse gas emissions associated with catering? If not, consider exploring locally sourced, zero-waste, and plastic-free catering options.

### Insights from Agents of Change participants

Many of the Agents of Change communities found that providing even simple refreshments such as pizza went a long way towards keeping volunteers happy and engaged throughout the training.

## Staffing

- How many staff will you need at the training event?
- Who will lead the training and act as an emcee?
- Who will deliver presentations and have they been involved in the planning, or do they need to be briefed?
- Do you have sufficient facilitators to host small-table dialogues and activities?
- For hybrid events, do you have sufficient staff for both in-person and virtual breakout sessions?
- Do you need to involve external collaborators as presenters or facilitators? If so, have you reached out to them with sufficient notice and background information?
- Will you host a practice event for presenters and facilitators? If so, have you scheduled this with sufficient notice? Keep in mind that, while helpful, practice events may be burdensome for collaborators.



## Workshop resources

- What are the various resources you'll need to deliver your training? This may include:
  - Workshop agenda (internal and external versions)
  - Land acknowledgement
  - PowerPoint slides
  - Activity templates (e.g. worksheets, maps, posters, etc.)
  - Note taking forms
  - Sign-in or attendance sheets
  - Background documents (eo either be shared in advance or left of tables)
- Who will be responsible for creating the required resources, and how far in advance do you require these materials?
- Will the training materials be made available to participants following the training workshop? If so, how will they be accessed and for how long?
- If required, have you thought of an appropriate "Icebreaker" activity? Keep in mind that Icebreaker activities should be designed to make people feel comfortable with each other. Depending on the activity, you will need to schedule sufficient time for it.
- Have you identified what volunteer materials will be required in addition to those used during the training? (See the appendix for a checklist of "must have" and optional materials.)
- Have you considered providing additional training on communications to equip your volunteers with the skills they need to effectively communicate about climate change? Keep in mind that a Climate Communications "Workshop in a Box" is available on the [Agents of Change website](#) which includes detailed climate communication training instructions, PowerPoint slides, activity templates and more.

# Facing facilitation: Tips and tricks for presenting and facilitating

Using a facilitator for meetings and workshops can help equalize the playing field by providing a neutral third-party to help keep the event running smoothly and without bias. Effective facilitation can also help to promote dialogue and interaction within a group, balance participation, and ultimately enhance innovation and the creativity of collective ideas. In order for facilitation to be effective, a workshop should be grounded in three core assumptions:

- Everyone in the room has relevant information to share
- Each participant may see and or identify things that others cannot
- Differences in perspectives and opinions are opportunities for shared learning

## Role of the facilitator

A facilitator is someone who helps an audience understand their common objectives and how to achieve these objectives without taking a particular position in the discussion. This last element is crucial to help make participants feel comfortable contributing equally towards the objectives. A successful facilitator is one that:

- Assists participants in getting acquainted and feeling welcome (particularly in small groups)
- Sets ground rules and explains the purpose of a meeting, the ideal outcome, and the responsibilities of each person involved (where appropriate)

- Encourages participation and draws out knowledge, expertise, and opinions
- Helps the audience feel involved in knowledge development and key decision-making
- Actively listens and stays neutral
- Manages challenging behaviours
- Keeps the discussion moving and stays on schedule
- Ensures participation is evenly distributed amongst participants

## Considerations for facilitators

### Voice

As a facilitator, the voice used (in terms of tone, style, and volume) can show the amount of authority and control you have on the subject you are speaking about. Be aware of the nuances of voice, how you are projecting your voice, the vocabulary you choose (it should be tailored to your audience), your articulation, and speed. All of these facets of voice should be adjusted according to the audience you are engaging and the content you are presenting.

### Stance and mannerisms

Appearance and body language are cues to participants (and any audience). Being too rigid and/or too comfortable can be distracting and off-putting. Your stance, similar to voice, can portray your confidence in and authority on the materials you are presenting. Be aware of the way you stand, move around, use your hands, and use your body language.

### Eye contact

Making eye contact is an important part of facilitating and presenting. Sweeping the audience with your eyes, staying approximately two to three seconds on each person, can help to make the audience feel as though you are speaking to them directly. Eye contact is of equal importance in a virtual setting where you should be sure to look directly into the camera that is being used for the meeting and avoid looking down or sideways at notes.

## Engagement

Including frequent opportunities for audience interaction is a cornerstone of facilitation and the difference between a top-down presentation and an interactive meeting or workshop. One of the simplest ways to engage participants is through group discussion. Group discussions can be an effective way to encourage participation and self-discovered learning. These allow individuals to express opinions, ask questions, and generate their own answers. In a group discussion, the facilitator should ask questions simply and directly, pause so participants have a chance to think of answers, then seek out answers from the group. If no one volunteers an answer, the facilitator should rephrase the questions to clarify, and then look to ask someone by name or visual cue.

## Workshop atmosphere

A positive atmosphere encourages participants to absorb information and participate throughout a workshop and/or meeting. Elements such as the venue and tactile features of the room (which affect the physical atmosphere) and the tone and style set by the presenter and facilitators (which affect the instructional atmosphere) should be considered.

### Physical

When possible, plan for a room layout that allows for maximum eye contact and participation such as using round tables and positioning them close to the front of the room. It is also important to think about where and with whom people will be seated, and how that might contribute to the success of the workshop. Ensure that you have sufficient time to prepare the room in advance by setting up equipment, table materials, and name cards accordingly. If budgets and timing allows, consider arranging for refreshments (e.g., coffee/tea, snacks, and/or lunch) as these are invaluable for attracting participants and creating a friendly and warm atmosphere.

## Pacing

The average adult has an attention span of approximately 20 minutes – after this, the ability to retain information is vastly reduced. Adults require a complete change of scenery or subject every 45 minutes to re-stimulate their interest. The following are ways to maintain attention during sessions longer than 45 minutes.

- Change the topic
- Tell a story or anecdote
- Give a demonstration
- Introduce a new delivery method (e.g. PowerPoint to Video)
- Break out into smaller discussion or activity groups
- Have a break

## Instructional

The mood of the workshop can be heavily influenced by the atmosphere set by the facilitator and presenters. Coming across as an approachable “real person” is an important character trait for facilitators and presenters. Including an icebreaker activity to help relax participants and make them feel welcome can help set the ambiance of the workshop. It is also important to watch for participants’ passive or subtle feedback (e.g., body language, gestures, mannerisms, etc.) and adjust your style accordingly while staying aware of your own verbal and non-verbal cues. Encourage elements of light humour and the sharing of experiences in an effort to make everyone feel welcome and heard.

## Potential obstacles

As a facilitator, there are a number of obstacles that you should be aware of and prepared to troubleshoot.



### Time pressure

Allow for enough time in a meeting for issues to be dealt with adequately. If needed, prioritize what can be dealt with right away and what can wait.



### Lack of focus

Each workshop should begin with a clear objective statement. Remind participants of this objective, why it matters, and the desired outcomes of the workshop (e.g., identifying actions, making a decision, etc.) throughout the workshop.



### When groups can't reach a decision

Disagreements often stem from misunderstanding. To avoid letting misunderstandings derail a workshop, listen carefully for agreement or concern, and periodically check in to see whether everyone is on the same page. It can help to summarize and recap what has been said.



### When no agreement can be reached

Explore alternative suggestions with those who are in disagreement, propose a break, or postpone the decision. Consider discussing a new process if an agreement still cannot be reached.



### Challenging behaviours

When participants exhibit behaviours that can lead to a lack of decisions or agreement, consider rephrasing or reframing the question or issue. If this does not lead to a resolution, you may have to take the person exhibiting the behaviour aside to explain how their actions are impacting the workshop.



# During the training: What to do and what you will need for a successful training

This next section outlines key aspects to include within the climate action volunteer program training along with key considerations for each agenda item. At this point in the training development, all the logistical planning of your training event should be completed – the more thoroughly this is done, the smoother the training will be. Refer to the comprehensive lists of logistical tasks and considerations included in the **Before the Training: Key Tasks and Considerations** section in this training guide before moving onto this section.





## Welcome and icebreakers

The volunteer training and orientation will be the first opportunity to show how much you value the volunteers and is an important step in helping them feel motivated to begin the work. Be sure to introduce staff, review any administrative procedures, and give a tour of the facilities if needed. While icebreakers can sometimes be underestimated, using them to provide a warm welcome can help participants to relax, ease into the training, and set a positive tone for the rest of the training. It also serves as a way to facilitate introductions between trainers and other participants.

Ask your volunteers to introduce themselves and share their passions, strengths, and previous experiences. This will be a good opportunity to get to know your volunteers more and start building relationships. It also allows them to start to build a rapport with one another and become comfortable expressing themselves in a new group of people. This will be particularly important if your volunteers will be working alongside one another rather than performing tasks individually.

## Introduction of the volunteer materials

Each volunteer should be provided with an orientation package including all training materials and onboarding documents. A volunteer handbook can be a good way to package this information, providing a “one-stop shop” for everything a volunteer will need to know about the program and how to perform their duties and tasks. A handbook also provides a resource volunteers can refer back to once the training is complete. At minimum, volunteers should be provided with a document outlining the vision and purpose of

the volunteer program, and a step-by-step guide for how to be a volunteer including a description of their role and duties, general guidelines for how to perform these, as well as any logistical information they should have on-hand. This resource should also include the terms of reference, code of conduct, safety and human resources information, liability forms, non-disclosure agreements, and any other forms that volunteers need to sign. Including a page for notes and ideas can also be a good way to encourage volunteers to stay engaged throughout the training as well as log their experiences and learnings in the field. See the appendix for a checklist of content to include in this resource.

## Purpose of the municipality’s climate action volunteer program

Once the volunteers have been introduced to each other and have their volunteer materials in hand, it is time to introduce to the volunteer program including:

- Mission, goals and objectives
- The rationale for the creation of the program
- Work that has been done to date including, the municipality’s greenhouse gas inventory, climate action plan, and targets
- The “whos” of the program (who the program is for, who can participate, and who will benefit)
- Program timelines

Program deliverers should be careful not to be too top-down in their approach here. This is a good place to give volunteers the opportunity to express why they joined the program, what they want to get out of it, and to gather input on what they would like to see the program achieve. This is also a good stage to bring in municipal councillors, senior staff members, or other prominent community leaders to speak about the municipality’s climate work and vision for the community. This can help to inspire and build excitement and momentum with volunteers as well as lend legitimacy to the program.

## Overview of how to be a volunteer

This portion of the training will walk volunteers through the logistics of being a volunteer. Going through these details step-by-step will ensure all volunteer requirements and implications of the work involved are understood, and provides a chance to review the resources available to support them in this work. In addition to a description of the types of tasks volunteers are expected to perform, this part of the training should include a review of the:

- Policies and procedures
- Clarification of key terms
- Terms of reference
- Code of conduct
- Waivers
- Safety, and human resources considerations

Volunteers should clearly understand what commitment is expected of them including how many hours they are expected to commit over the course of the project and how many group sessions, meetings, and/or check-in sessions they need to attend (if any).

Volunteers should also walk away from this portion of the training knowing how to act and dress appropriately for their role and what tools, equipment, or supplies will be required for their position.

Volunteer trainers should ensure volunteers understand the resources and support available to them, who their primary contact is for general questions and support, and know who to contact if they run into any problems or have an emergency. You may want to get volunteers to sign the code of conduct, terms of reference, and any other documents that require a signature to show the material has been read and understood.

## Background information (Climate 101)

In order to effectively engage the wider community on climate action, volunteers need a good foundation of background information on climate science and climate action as well as how municipal, provincial, and federal government's work and their roles in climate action. Not only is this information essential for volunteers to perform their duties, but it can also help establish a foundation for future brainstorming sessions and ultimately help inform collaborative volunteer action planning activities. This part of the training also provides technical background information volunteers can refer back to when communicating about climate change within the community. This should include the basics of climate change including an explanation of:

- The greenhouse gas effect as well as primary greenhouse gases (carbon, methane, and nitrous oxide) and their sources
- Examples of various climate actions globally and locally



- The difference between climate mitigation and adaptation
- Climate equity/justice
- Climate myth Busting
- Indigenous knowledge and perspectives on climate change

Municipal staff can deliver this presentation but, if expertise exists among the community such as from local experts or academic institutions, it can be helpful to draw on local trusted voices and community leaders to deliver this information.

### Climate myth busting

The background information on climate science provided to volunteers should include a list of common myths and misconceptions about climate change science as well as climate solutions. Despite consensus in the scientific community, climate skeptics and deniers still have strong influence and propagate misinformation. In addition to misinformation about climate science, many myths regarding climate solutions abound such as the environmental impact and feasibility of electric vehicles and renewable energy technologies.

### Climate equity/justice

Volunteers should be made aware of the concepts of climate equity, climate justice, and how the impacts of climate change disproportionately affect marginalized and racialized communities. In addition, not all people are socially or economically able to take action on climate change and not everyone a volunteer speaks to will be in a position to help take climate action. Volunteers should be briefed on what the municipality is doing to integrate equity, diversity, and inclusion into their climate plans and what resources and supports are available for marginalized communities. At this point in the training, volunteers can also be introduced to the appropriate language to use when discussing equity issues – a topic that can be further explored during the communications training.

### Indigenous knowledge and perspectives

Indigenous knowledge and perspectives need to be presented with an equal degree of validity and credibility as western scientific climate information. Unfortunately, Indigenous knowledge and perspectives on climate change are often overlooked in favour of western scientific perspectives. However, climate action cannot move forward without partnership, collaboration, and weaving together of western and Indigenous knowledge systems. While many solutions to climate change lie within Indigenous perspectives on our relationship with nature and land reciprocity, these should not be sought or used in an extractive manner. It will be important that a local indigenous community members organization, knowledge keeper, and/or leader delivers this part of the training.



## Task-specific training

Depending on your volunteer program approach, task-specific training will vary widely and can take on many forms. For example, if part of your program is to go door-to-door to raise awareness around specific climate action initiatives, providing training on door-to-door canvassing and communication strategies will be important. If your program involves the implementation of more concrete actions such as tree plantings or establishing community gardens, task specific training will likely be undertaken in the field where volunteers can shadow and learn from experienced practitioners.

Many climate action volunteer programs provide volunteers with a range of potential actions and allows them to select those that match their interests and skills. In order to build community ownership of the volunteer program, you may want to use your initial training sessions to get volunteers to identify the climate actions they feel they are best suited to implement. This is also an opportunity for volunteer organizers to draw on local knowledge from volunteers to identify the best ways to work within the community, and what might be local barriers to climate action implementation.

## Communications training

Education and awareness will play a key role in any local climate action volunteer program, regardless of the area of focus. Providing training to your volunteers on how to effectively talk about climate change will be an integral part of your program. Communications training should include Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion/sensitivity training (e.g., inclusive communications, anti-harassment guidelines, etc.) as well as strategies on how to tailor messages to different target audiences.

The Agents of Change Climate Communications “Workshop in a Box” resource provides detailed climate communication training instructions, PowerPoint slides, and activity templates. In addition, if your volunteer program involves a significant public engagement aspect, you may want to provide volunteers with conversation starters, templates, and scripts as well as the opportunity to practice their communication skills through role playing activities.



# Climate Communication Workshop in a Box

The Climate Communications Workshop in a Box is designed to enable users to develop and deliver a Climate Communications Workshop in their community. It is a suite of products designed to help you deliver a climate communications module as part of your volunteer training program. The Workshop allows participants to practice identifying target audiences, framing key messages, and choosing messengers. Workshop resources include a:

- PowerPoint presentation
- Instructions and facilitator guide
- Workshop breakout group activities
- Note taking/reporting form
- Participant evaluation survey

Visit [icleicanada.org/project/climate-communication-workshop/](https://icleicanada.org/project/climate-communication-workshop/) to learn more and download the workshop resources.



## Wrap-up

As your training comes to a close, be sure to thank volunteers for their time and reiterate their importance to local climate action. The wrap-up should also include next steps and a reminder of any future training sessions or events. Allow time for questions that weren't addressed during the training, and make sure volunteers know who to contact if they have any questions, advice, or ideas and are comfortable sharing these. Sending out a post-training feedback survey can also be a helpful way to collect feedback from participants and gauge the success of the training.

## More information and resources

Visit [icleicanada.org/project/agents-of-change/](https://icleicanada.org/project/agents-of-change/) to learn more about the Agents of Change project and access more resources to support the development of a climate action volunteer engagement program in your community.



## Appendix

# Volunteer training materials checklist

### Required

- 1-pager on the municipal climate action volunteer program which includes:
  - The program goal
  - The program purpose
  - Why the program is important
  - Who the program is for
  - Who can participate
  
- Terms of reference
  
- A welcome package for volunteers including:
  - Commitments and expectations
  - Roles and responsibilities
  - What to wear (if relevant)
  - Required tools and equipment (if relevant)
  - Primary contact directory
  - Code of Conduct
  
- Safety considerations
  - List of potential safety risks and processes in place to mitigate these
  - Who to contact with safety questions
  - Conflict resolution tips including how to act
  
- Waivers and forms including:
  - Liability form
  - Non disclosure agreement (if relevant)
  - Photo release form (if relevant)

### Optional

- 1-2 pager on “Climate change 101” including:
  - Definitions
  - Climate science basics
  - Climate Impacts
  - Mitigation and adaptation
  - Potential climate actions and their relative impact
  - Climate equity/justice
  - Climate myth busting
  - Indigenous knowledge and perspectives on climate change
  
- Communications tools and resources including:
  - Conversation starters/templates
  - Scripts
  
- Pens and paper or a notebook to write down notes and ideas

# References

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ICLEI Canada's work happens across Turtle Island which has traditionally been and is home to many diverse First Nations, Inuit, and Métis peoples since time immemorial. We endeavour to listen to and learn from Indigenous Peoples on an ongoing basis in the process of our work.

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