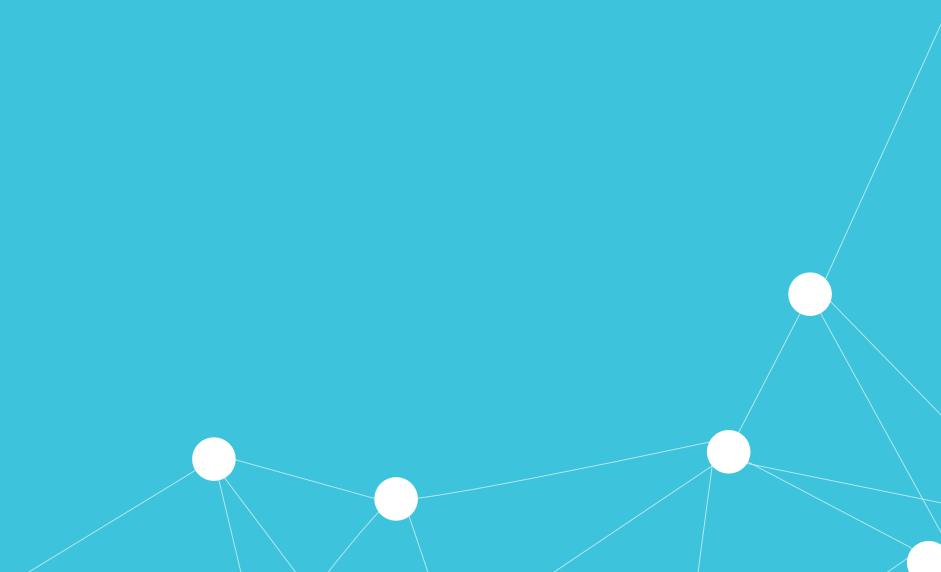




Ohio Environmental Council
[Action Fund]

DEFINING OUR FUTURE

**2024-2027
STRATEGIC
PLAN**





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Executive Summary

Since its creation in 2016, the Ohio Environmental Council (OEC) Action Fund has grown to be a well-recognized political force equipped with solutions to address the state's most pressing environmental and climate issues facing Ohio communities.

We continue to increase the political power of Ohio's environmental movement in order to accelerate climate action and the adoption of just environmental policies.

Our organization has grown stronger in many ways since the adoption of our last strategic plan in 2019 and the world around us has also changed in innumerable ways. To develop our forward-looking plan, the OEC Collective (including our affiliate organization, the OEC), engaged in a robust process including staff and board collaboration, stakeholder engagement, an analysis of our strengths and weaknesses, and an evaluation of our issues and the tools with which we engage them.

OEC Action Fund's 2024-2027 Strategic Plan outlines our organization goals, objectives and strategic priorities to achieve our collective vision of a clean, healthy Ohio where our democracy empowers all communities to thrive in harmony with the environment. The OEC Action Fund is prepared to elect leadership that will champion equitable, just, and sustainable policies and hold these decision-makers accountable to their voters who prioritize the environment. Building on this foundation work, we will advance the OEC Collective's policy goals, maximize federal climate investment, influence policy through direct democracy, and continue to grow our political power.

The OEC Action Fund is prepared to take the bold actions outlined in this plan to become the leading political agent driving Ohio's progress on climate change. We invite you to join us on this journey, because your voice, actions, and partnership are necessary in our shared efforts to build a clean, healthy Ohio for all.





About the OEC Collective

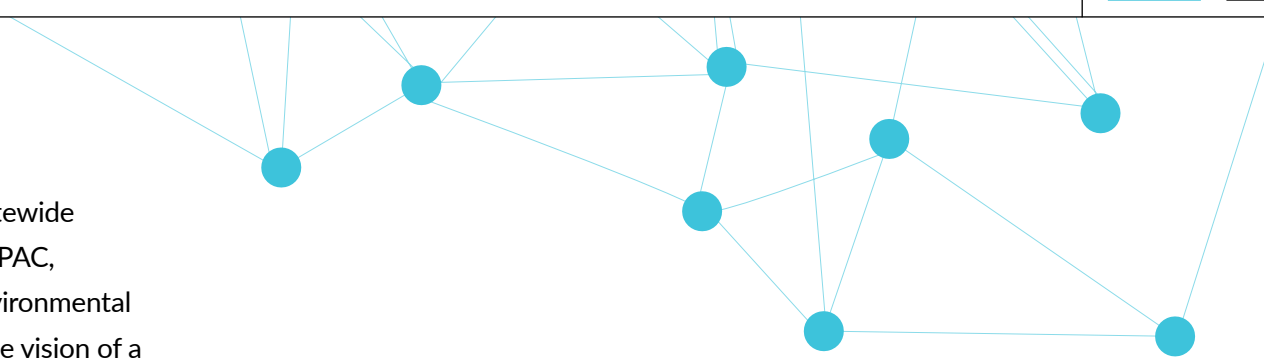
The Ohio Environmental Council (OEC) Collective is a family of statewide organizations – including the OEC Action Fund, OEC Action Fund PAC, Conservation Ohio, and our sibling 501(c)3 nonprofit, the Ohio Environmental Council – which work in tandem as legally permissible to secure the vision of a clean, healthy Ohio where our democracy empowers all communities to thrive in harmony with the environment. Each of these organizations play a critical role in advancing strategic goals and programs.

OEC Collective Vision

A clean, healthy Ohio where our democracy empowers all communities to thrive in harmony with the environment.

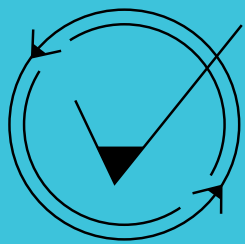
OEC Action Fund Mission

To protect the environment and health of all Ohio communities by electing climate champions, holding public officials accountable, and advancing environmental justice policies.



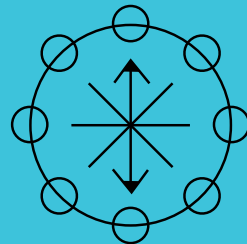
OEC CORE VALUES

Our core values are deeply ingrained principles that guide the OEC Action Fund’s actions and decisions. At the OEC Action Fund, we are:



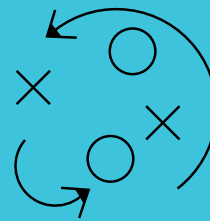
Science-based

Data-driven
Accurate
Dependable



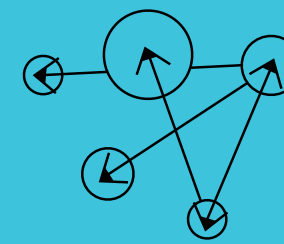
Equitable

Inclusive
Just
Community-focused



Strategic

Outcome-oriented
Innovative
Persistent



Collaborative

Trustworthy
Networked
Accountable



Pragmatic

Principled
Effective
Bipartisan



OEC Action Fund Organizational Goals

The urgency of climate change requires immediate action. At the same time, it is imperative that we fortify viable, long-term strategies in order to achieve the vision of the OEC Collective. The three core organizational goals outlined below guide our work over the course of our 3-year strategic plan, and into the future. **We invite you to join us as we strengthen these enduring foundations of our work.**

ONE

Drive urgency and action on climate change

Accelerate Ohio's progress away from harmful fossil fuels and toward an equitable, net-zero future by equipping Ohioans to take action as well as identifying, developing, and supporting climate champions in decision-making roles to advance sound policy.

TWO

Secure an environment that works for all Ohio communities

Advocate for healthy air, land, and water in support of thriving communities by centering environmental justice and maximizing the number and quality of climate champions in crucial decision-making roles to secure equitable and sustainable policies.

THREE

Amplify the power of the environmental movement

Engage our membership and voters across the state to elect climate champions, hold decision-makers accountable, mobilize communities to take political action, reform our democracy, and build a durable and robust environmental movement in Ohio.



OEC Action Fund Organizational Strategic Priorities

Building on our goals, our strategic priorities represent the key ways we plan to strengthen our mission-driven organizational work – to protect the environment and health of all Ohio communities by electing climate champions, holding public officials accountable, and advancing environmental justice policies – over the next three years.

#1

Equip staff and members to effectively influence policymaking at the local, state, and federal levels.

- Develop regular updates for staff and partners on legislative priorities and actions at the state and federal level.
- Build legislative champions for crucial issue areas and share progress across teams.
- Develop a running, accessible dashboard tracking legislative relationships, contacts, and bill carriers.
- Conduct testimony and lobbying training for staff across the organization.
- Create accessible sources of information for OEC Action Fund members through consistent action alerts, policy updates, and civic engagement opportunities.

#2

Develop effective and efficient pathways to identify, engage, educate, elect, and empower climate champions.

- Work across the organization to ensure that every engagement with supportive policymakers is part of a deliberate and cohesive strategy to create powerful climate champions across Ohio.
- Engage with the Ohio Recruitment Table and LEAD Ohio to recruit and train new climate candidates to run for office.
- Facilitate candidate education programming with partners to inform candidates on crucial environmental issues and solutions.
- Conduct a robust and strategic endorsement process and provide organizational support to candidates.
- Provide impactful electoral support through robust OEC Action Fund and PAC engagement with voters and campaigns.
- Engage voters through robust independent expenditure campaigns utilizing paid and earned communications and direct voter contact.
- Convene and administer regional and/or statewide elected climate champion networking and policy collaboration cohorts.

#3

Ensure sustainable resourcing and continue building a respected reputation for year-over-year success unrestrained by cyclical funding and support.

- Develop a diverse and durable donor base for year-over-year growth in funding for the OEC Action Fund PAC.
- Develop a robust in-state donor base for the OEC Action Fund and Conservation Ohio to reduce reliance on federal investment.
- Host a statewide event for the OEC Action Fund to raise funds and award champions.
- Maximize funding for long-term advocacy and implementation to ensure sustained support for climate action in Ohio.
- Expand OEC Action Fund-specific communications with members and the public to build an engaged channel of information and engagement opportunities.
- Expand capacity to develop and execute a long-term donor prospecting and engagement plan to fund electoral and advocacy work.



OEC Action Fund Organizational Objectives

Our Next Steps

Over the next three years, the OEC Action Fund will create the necessary political circumstances for electoral success and advocacy engagement to achieve local, state, and federal environmental policy goals. Our Organizational Objectives outline the OEC Action Fund's most pressing and essential next steps that cut across multiple program areas and directly support our organization goals. We will focus on developing climate champions, capitalizing on opportunities created by federal legislation, influencing policy through direct democracy, and building an influential and effective organization for years to come.

CULTIVATE CLIMATE CHAMPIONS

Develop a growing class of climate champions in key decision-making roles to secure equitable environmental policies.

MAXIMIZE FEDERAL INVESTMENT

Maximize the impact and awareness of key federal legislation, like the Inflation Reduction Act, to promote climate action in Ohio.

GROW OUR POLITICAL POWER

Establish the OEC Action Fund as a powerful and respected operator for political and legislative advocacy in Ohio.

SECURE EFFECTIVE POLICY WINS

Execute a cohesive and impactful advocacy and lobbying strategy that advances our water, energy, lands, and democracy policy goals at all levels of government.

MOBILIZE OHIOANS

Mobilize all those who call Ohio home to secure environmental justice policy wins at the statehouse and the ballot box through lobbying and direct democracy.



OEC Action Fund Programmatic Key Results

CULTIVATE CLIMATE CHAMPIONS

We know that a majority of Ohioans want their elected leaders to act on climate change. And as a result of the OEC Action Fund's intentional efforts to identify, engage, educate, elect, and empower climate champions from diverse backgrounds across the state, Ohio voters will see an increase in the number of candidates running for and elected to office – at all levels of government – who vocally support pro-environment agendas. Over the next few years, our work will support the following outcomes:

100+

elected officials identified, recruited and developed as climate champions

30

newly-elected (or endorsed) climate champions at the state level

75

newly-elected (or endorsed) climate champions at the local level

Climate champions relationships grow across the state as a result of OEC Action Fund's networking and policy collaboration cohorts.





OEC Action Fund Programmatic Key Results

SECURE EFFECTIVE POLICY WINS

The OEC Action Fund will host elected official briefings, deliver testimony, and hold decision-makers accountable for their actions through public communications in order to positively influence policy outcomes and block harmful legislation in support of the OEC Collective's climate, democracy, energy, public lands, and water policy objectives at all levels of government. As a result of our efforts over the next few years, we will:

Establish an Environmental Issues Caucus at the Ohio Statehouse, as well as develop and celebrate state and federal leaders championing environmental policy issues.

Secure equitable democracy policies that increase civic participation, expand voter access, and empower Ohio voters to combat environmental injustice at the ballot box.

Reduce greenhouse gas emissions and increase Ohio communities' access to and ownership of reliable, affordable, and clean energy.

Expand and protect Ohio's public lands as well as leverage new approaches to invest in land protection by seizing opportunities at all levels of government.

Ensure all Ohio residents have access to a clean Lake Erie, healthy water bodies, and safe, affordable drinking water through increased state and federal investments and regulatory protections.



OEC Action Fund Programmatic Key Results

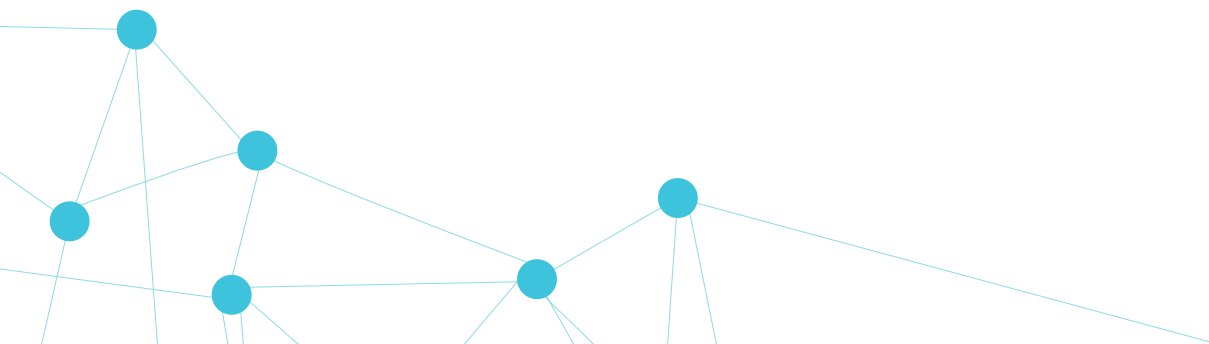
MAXIMIZE FEDERAL INVESTMENT FOR OHIO COMMUNITIES

Federal legislation including the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law and Inflation Reduction Act have provided historic investments for Ohio communities to address long standing environmental justice issues and advance climate action. The OEC Action Fund is committed to helping communities effectively implement these once-in-a-generation investments and showcasing the impact legislation can make for everyday Ohio residents. To do this, we will:

Host at least 10 events with elected officials per year to highlight community projects

Ensure media coverage across the state in support of federal climate action, including placement of at least 6 op-eds

Develop a Resource Hub for Ohio residents to access IRA Tax rebates and benefits



OEC Action Fund Programmatic Key Results

MOBILIZE OHIOANS

We'll build the action-taking power for Ohio's environmental movement by equipping more and more Ohioans with the information they need to take action – whether writing to their lawmaker, providing testimony, or voting in favor of ballot initiatives that strengthen our democracy and secure a healthier environment. Over the next three years, our work will support the policy outcomes outlined above, as well as:

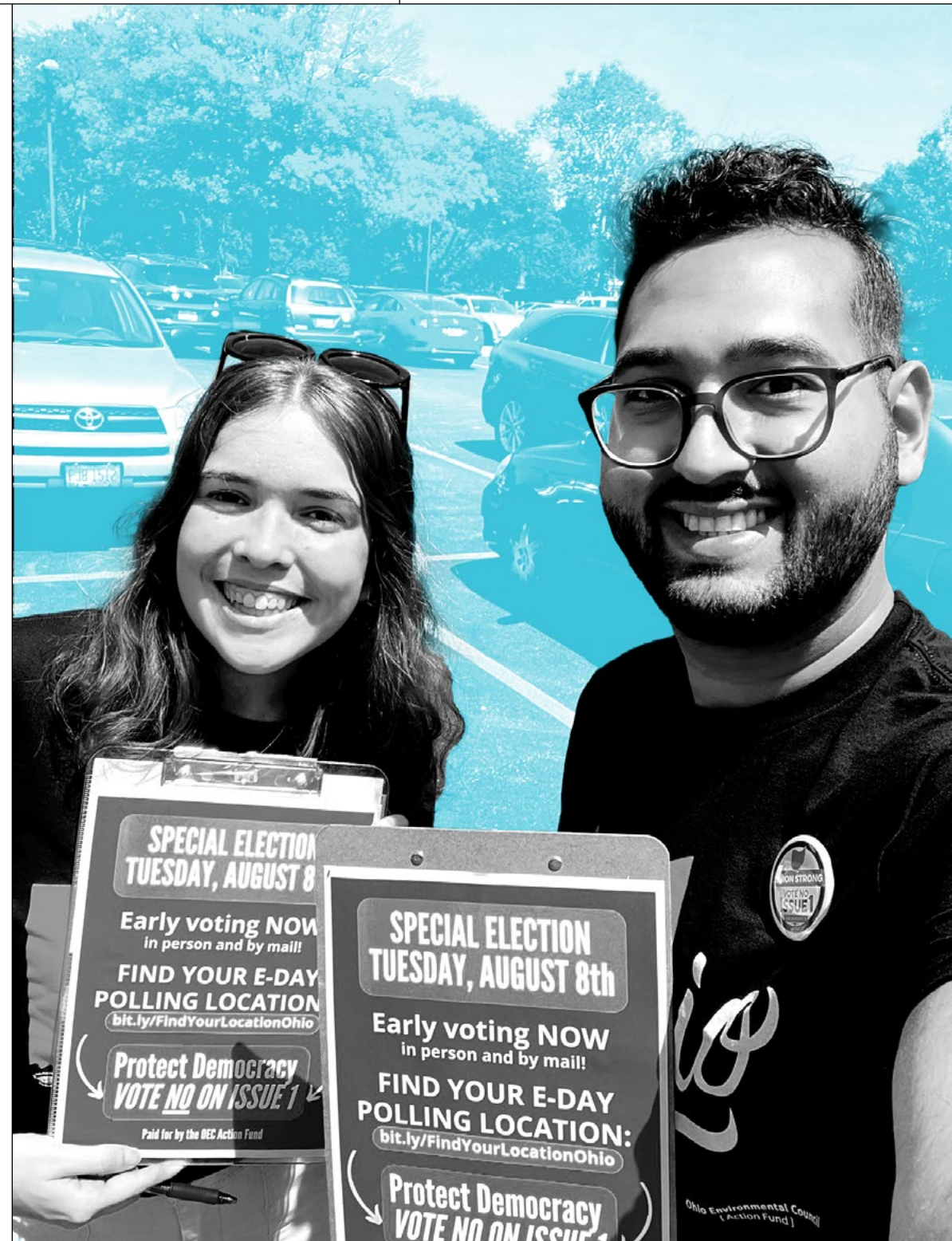
3

Support and win 3 successful statewide ballot initiatives

12

Support and win 12 successful local ballot initiatives

Engage a greater number of voters each year through robust independent expenditure campaigns and direct voter contact.



OEC Action Fund Programmatic Key Results

GROW OUR POLITICAL POWER

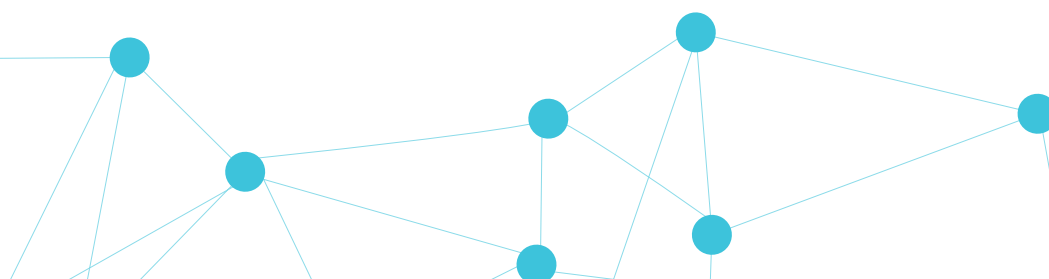
Finally, in order to sustain and grow the OEC Action Fund's impact, we will increase and diversify our membership and funding over the next three years. We will:

Host an annual event to raise fund and recognize Climate Champions starting in 2025.

Increase year-over-year funding for the OEC Action Fund and our affiliated PAC.

Expand OEC Action Fund membership and increase digital engagement (including email and social media) utilizing data-informed communications strategies to develop multimedia content.

Hire two new positions to support OEC Action Fund's expanded work.



Theory of Change

Climate change is an existential threat directly impacting our daily lives. Despite Ohio’s massive contribution to global emissions, state lawmakers’ resistance to taking bold climate action remains a significant barrier to the just future we envision for all Ohio communities. Gerrymandered districts shield lawmakers from accountability and remove guardrails to prevent corruption. Entrenched, deep-pocketed opposition further prevents climate action and sensible environmental regulation.

As Ohio communities continue to confront the current realities of climate change and the legacy impacts of environmental injustice, the OEC Collective’s policy advocacy and legal efforts at all levels of government are more important than ever. Specifically, the OEC Action Fund develops political power at all levels of government to advance strong policies.

The OEC Action Fund identifies, engages, educates, elects, and empowers climate champions across Ohio. We advocate for effective policies to reduce greenhouse emissions, expand clean energy access, improve water quality, and protect our public lands. We pursue foundational reforms to repair Ohio’s democracy and directly address obstacles to climate action. We educate and hold decision-makers accountable. We mobilize Ohioans – including our members, community partners, and coalitions – to take action and influence local, state, and federal policies.



The pressure to protect our environment and our democracy is building – but so is the momentum. We continue to strategically seize opportunities to make accelerated progress on Ohio’s most pressing environmental issues. After successfully advocating for historic federal climate investments, the OEC Collective is making sure that funding is implemented equitably across Ohio. And after successfully coming together across issue areas to defeat the attack on Ohio’s direct democracy in the August 2023 Special Election, we’re working together again to ensure a fair redistricting process. **This important work continues.**

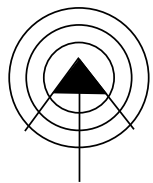
Together, we can secure a clean, healthy Ohio where our democracy empowers all communities to thrive in harmony with the environment.

As a result of the OEC Action Fund’s efforts over the next three years:

- Climate champions are embedded in decision-making roles
- Ohio’s democracy will be more representative of our population given fair maps and increased voter participation
- Key environmental justice policies are secured through lobbying, direct democracy, and advocacy:
 - Ohio’s greenhouse gas emissions decrease
 - Access to and ownership of reliable, affordable, and clean energy increases statewide
 - Access to protected public lands expands
 - Water quality improves from source to tap across the state
- Ohio’s environmental movement grows

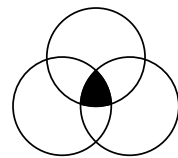
The OEC and OEC Action Fund work together for a clean, healthy Ohio where democracy empowers communities to thrive in harmony with the environment.

In order to achieve our vision, the OEC Collective takes a multifaceted approach to address the pressing and interconnected issues of climate change, environmental injustice, and democracy reform. Our approach to change involves:



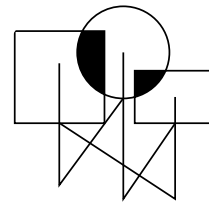
Community Mobilization

The OEC Collective engages and equips Ohioans with the skills and resources they need to take action for a healthier environment and stronger democracy.



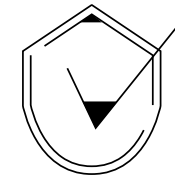
Partner and Coalition Building

Utilizing our Principles of Engagement, the OEC Collective cultivates community- and issue-based partnerships. We convene and collaborate with coalitions to advance shared policy priorities at the local, state, and national level.



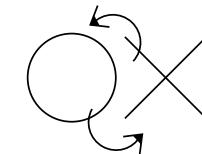
Civic & Political Engagement

The OEC supports opportunities to increase civic engagement in government decision making that impacts the health of our environment.



Accountability

The OEC Collective holds decision-makers accountable for their actions that affect our environment and our democracy. When needed, the OEC Law Center takes legal action to ensure our environment and communities are protected.



Strategic Policy and Legal Advocacy

The OEC Collective utilizes its expertise to advocate for policies and programs in support of our organizational goals to drive climate action and secure a healthy environment for all Ohio communities. We work at all levels of government and through various avenues – legislative and rulemaking bodies, administrative agencies, and the courts.



Conclusion

The OEC Action Fund, as a key part of the OEC Collective, is prepared to build the political power necessary to create a clean, healthy Ohio where our democracy empowers all communities to thrive in harmony with the environment. Through our strategic roadmap detailed in this plan, we aim to overcome the challenges posed by the urgency of climate change, gerrymandering, and voter apathy. Our success requires a profound focus on maximizing the political power of the OEC Action Fund and the broader Ohio environmental movement.

By 2027, the OEC Collective envisions an Ohio where:

Local climate champions lead the way

OEC Action Fund-endorsed elected officials understand and prioritize environmental and climate justice issues, ensuring diverse representation in key decision-making roles.

Communities are more resilient to climate impacts

Landmark federal legislation like the Inflation Reduction Act is maximized at the local level to drive climate action and build community resilience to weather climate impacts.

Advocates shape environmental justice policy

Ohio's environmental movement, equipped with OEC Action Fund's advocacy tools and knowledge, is empowered by direct democracy to influence policy-making at every level.

The OEC Action Fund drives political progress

The OEC Action Fund is a sustainable advocacy tool of the OEC Collective financed by diverse funding and recognized across the state and region as a powerful and respected political force for change.

A healthy environment sustains us all

Ohio's beloved natural landscapes are protected, our water resources are abundant and clean, and biodiversity flourishes.

The OEC Action Fund's plan is ambitious and comprehensive in its aim to create positive change through strategic policy influence, political engagement, and community mobilization. The OEC Action Fund is prepared to take the bold actions outlined in this plan to become the leading political agent driving Ohio's progress on climate change.

We invite you to join us on this journey, because your voice, actions, and partnership are necessary in our shared efforts to build a clean, healthy Ohio for all.



Appendix

This section houses supplemental information, bibliography, definitions, and other similar information used to provide additional context to the strategic plan.

Defining The OEC Collective

The Ohio Environmental Council (OEC) Collective is a family of statewide organizations that work in tandem as legally permissible to secure the vision of a clean, healthy Ohio where our democracy empowers all communities to thrive in harmony with the environment. Each of these organizations play a critical role in advancing strategic goals and programs:

Ohio Environmental Council: The 501(c)3 organization that sets the policy priorities and tone for engagement on environmental advocacy and action for the OEC Collective. The OEC conducts public education on its strategic plan priority issues, initiates and maintains legal actions to support those policy priorities, as well as public policy advocacy to executive agencies.

Ohio Environmental Council Action Fund: The 501(c)4 organization that leads on all lobbying at the local, state, and federal levels, ballot measure advocacy, and elected-official and policymaker accountability campaigns. The OEC Action Fund is governed by a separate Board of Directors and is an affiliate of the League of Conservation Voters.

Defining Elements Of Our Strategic Plan

Vision: A vision statement presents the organization's optimal goal and ultimate reason for existence; it looks forward and creates a compelling image of the ideal state that the organization wishes to achieve. It answers the questions: What problem are we seeking to solve? Where are we headed? If we achieved all strategic goals, what would we look like 10 years from now?

Mission: A mission statement presents the organization's purpose and reason for being; it is a concise explanation of an organization's purpose, intention and overall objectives. It answers the questions: What is our organization's purpose? Why does our organization exist?

Core Values: Core values are deeply ingrained principles that guide all of an organization's actions and decisions, and inform its culture. Core Values are NOT aspirational principles an organization hopes to achieve, nor are they comprehensive beliefs of everything the organization or its employees value.

Organizational Goals: Goals that go beyond the timeframe of the strategic plan and which guide the work in the strategic plan and are in furtherance of our vision. These are the long-term, quantifiable goals with metrics that advance the OEC vision (within or) past the timeframe of the strategic plan. High-level, long-term, outward impacts. The "what" of our long-term impacts.

Organizational Strategic Priorities: Strategic priorities are the "how" of what the OEC does, are more achievable in our plan's timeframe, and are more internal-facing in impact. These are strategies, connected with our mission and values, that drive the OEC toward our long-term objectives of legal and policy advocacy, decision-maker accountability, and civic engagement.

Organizational Objectives: Organizational objectives are activities the OEC can achieve in the timeframe of the strategic plan and are more outward-facing in impact. These represent more of "what we do" rather than "how we do it" at the OEC.

Programmatic Objectives: Short-term achievements that employ the OEC's Organizational Strategic Priorities and help achieve the OEC's Organizational Goals accomplished by each program team within the scope of our strategic plan.

Programmatic Key Results: Programmatic key results are how each program team will monitor and demonstrate progress. They answer the question: How will we know we have achieved our objective? Importantly, while these can be quantifiable, they are not the same as metrics.

Program/Program Team: For this plan, Programs (also referred to as Program Teams) are defined as the core "departments" within the OEC that work to accomplish legal and policy advocacy, decision-maker accountability, and civic engagement.

Theory of Change: A logical explanation of what is required to bring about our desired changes and how the OEC expects to reach these long-term goals.



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