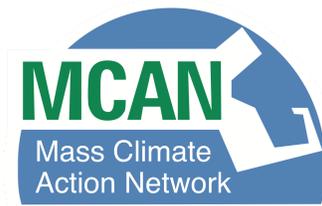
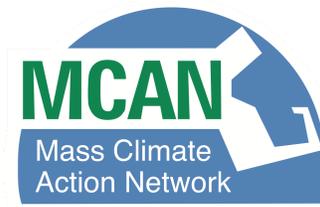


# MCAN

## Chapter Handbook



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## Welcome

We're glad you've decided to become an MCAN chapter. We know this means that you care about climate change and want to take action in your town. MCAN chapters exist in all corners of the Commonwealth, due to a greater need for local climate action among community members.

We are here to help you, including structuring your group, thinking about focus areas, and leveraging opportunities for learning from other towns. We also support your voice at the state level, helping you engage to shape and utilize programs and policies.

This handbook will serve as a guide to help you through the process. Our chapters are mostly community-based groups of volunteers that pursue projects or activities in their homes and communities. They address climate change through a combination of town level policies or activities, personal actions, and support for state and federal policies that will reduce global warming pollution.

We are always in the process of collecting information and are happy to hear about your organization's best practices. For example; strategies for influencing your board of selectmen or a great solar energy program you've implemented.

## Benefits

- Consultation from MCAN staff to help with organizational planning and campaign organizing, publicity, strategy development and strategic planning.
- Group listing, link and/or page on MCAN's website.
- Statewide legislative representation and networking opportunities.
- Training for local members in energy efficiency, renewable energy, and advocacy at MCAN Annual Conference and at training sessions, roundtables, and webinars.
- Resources available to chapters include: sample plans and other materials, guidance in locating additional sources of funding and case studies available on: community outreach, energy efficiency and clean energy development projects.
- Frequent updates provided by email and phone conference on important policy action at state and regional levels and collaborative and grant opportunities.
- Invitations to events and tours that educate on climate change and renewables.



## Obligations

- Commitment to at least meeting the economy-wide mandatory carbon cap in Massachusetts that reduces global warming pollution 80% by 2050 with a preference for emissions reductions of 100% by 2050 based on the [newest available science](#).
- Commitment to focus on local advocacy and education, so that our individual communities and state meet these carbon cap obligations.
- Share information and resources with other groups, so we gain from each other's experience and efforts.
- Participate in statewide policy advocacy, on selected occasions when authorized by MCAN Board.
- Provide annual updates of group mailing list and activity report to MCAN.

## Steps to Successful Action

Our chapters have learned from experience and have found that these four steps were helpful for them in building a movement in their town with tangible results. If you would like help with creating a team or determining the structure please reach out to us and we can help you. This is our suggested framework for concepts to think about when creating and strategizing for your group and actions.

1. Do your research
2. Set some goals
3. Determine your messaging and communication
4. Dive in!

## Research

### Do some research and inventory

- Conduct initial information gathering to explore areas where the community might save energy.
- Ask your town administrator/ manager or a member of your board of selectmen or your Mayor about the energy saving and emission reduction actions that may be underway or planned in your community. Be sure to check with community officials and decision makers to identify opportunities and problems. An easy way to do this is to use the [checklist](#) that we created for Mass Power Forward.



- Find out who is responsible for decisions and how to plug into existing or planned processes. We have some great assessment tools you can use! And don't forget to ask us about what other MCAN local groups have done with the problems and opportunities you have identified.

**We have a [toolkit](http://bit.ly/localclean)** ([bit.ly/localclean](http://bit.ly/localclean)) that provides a [checklist](#) for communities to see where they fall in their goals to be a green city. This toolkit includes ways to approach your city officials, provides attainable goals, and outlines necessary steps your chapter can take to ensure success.

## Goals

**Set achievable goals and stick to them.**

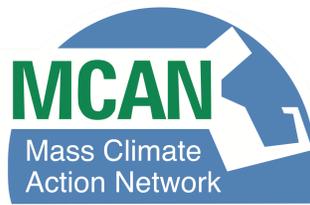
- Think about both short and long-term goals. We suggest starting with the long term goal of moving your community to be 100% carbon free by 2050, and then working backwards to think about what actions you need to take when to achieve that.
- Keep the list of goals short and to the point. If you are unfamiliar with SMART goals, we suggest reading [this](#).
- As much as possible, align your priorities with the priorities of the governing body you are trying to influence (ie ask them for decisions they are authorized to make).
- Finally, it is helpful to make connections to broader sustainable development goals and projects at the regional and state levels. MCAN staff can really help you here!

Goals don't have to be anything huge, some are as small as changing all the lightbulbs in the public libraries for energy saving ones. Other larger, long-term goals can be installing electric car charging stations in public parking areas, installing solar panels on municipal buildings, and/or encouraging residents to change their electrical provider.

## Messaging and Communication

**Develop effective messages and a communications plan to disseminate them.**

A good communications plan will most likely be multi-layered, long term and involve several stakeholders and a broad selection of community audiences. This will help to insure more legitimacy among the public, more direct connection with select boards, and greater access to financial support from the community and beyond.



Your message will be critical too. The most powerful messages are clear, concise and compelling. Positive, persistent and proactive communications always work best. Think about inclusivity here, and make it about people. Ask MCAN for messaging and communications advice, there has been a lot of research done on what kind of frames work best for various climate change issues. Since you have also identified your decision makers and stakeholders, think about how your specific local circumstances combine with larger research.

**We suggest building a website and social media pages.** This allows visitors to track your progress, attend events, and have an easy way to reach out to your organization to get involved. Wordpress is a free and easy to use platform for website building. Facebook and Twitter have been found to be the most successful when promoting organizations and events. You might find the recording of our webinar for chapters about tips for using facebook [here](http://bit.ly/2kAIIA7): <http://bit.ly/2kAIIA7>

## Dive in!

**Win Campaigns, implement strategies, encourage action.** As you implement your plan, always be on the lookout for:

- Additional sources of funding
- Potential partner organizations (ie faith groups, organizations that serve the low income community, etc)
- Ways to recruit new members and broaden your network of partners (places to look: business owners, faith-based organizations, environmental & health organizations, Chambers of Commerce, Rotary and other service organizations.)
- Chances to periodically re-evaluate your progress, goals and new opportunities
- Opportunities to celebrate your progress and recognize employers and others who are making great strides toward achieving shared goals

**MCAN staff can put you in contact with other groups around your community who may be willing to join forces on certain projects. We can also connect you to other chapters who have already done the types work that you want to do.**

Progress comes in many forms and the more people you can dedicate to a cause, the larger those outcomes are likely to be.

### **WHO DO I CONTACT FOR COACHING AND ADVICE ON CHAPTER PROCESSES?**

Contact MCAN at [info@massclimateaction.net](mailto:info@massclimateaction.net).



## Memorandum of Understanding

Between

Massachusetts Climate Action Network (MCAN) and CHAPTER NAME

This Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) sets for the terms and understanding between the Massachusetts Climate Action Network and CHAPTER NAME

### Background

A coordinated effort across the state is important to increase the scale of local climate action while respecting the local autonomy of initiatives. That is why MCAN's network of local chapters is vital to fighting climate change. The partnership of MCAN and each chapter is important for the continued vitality of this network.

### Purpose

This MOU will describe the mutual obligations and benefits between MCAN and its chapters in a partnership that will invigorate a network of local climate activists across the state. MCAN empowers its local chapters by enhancing communication, promoting town-level projects that improve communities, decreasing climate change-causing pollution, and reducing development time for those projects.

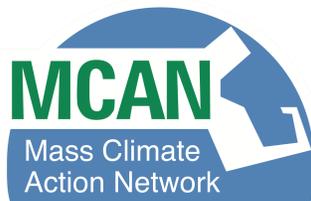
The above goals will be accomplished by undertaking the following activities:

a. Services to be rendered by MCAN include:

Group listing, and link on MCAN's website, Statewide legislative representation and networking opportunities, Consultation with organizational planning, campaign organizing, publicity, strategy development and strategic planning, and training for chapter leaders and members in clean energy and climate advocacy issues and skills.

b. Responsibilities of CHAPTER include:

Commitment to economy-wide mandatory carbon cap in Massachusetts that reduces global warming pollution 80% by 2050 with preference of 100% by 2050, Commitment to focus on local advocacy and education, so that our individual communities and state meet these carbon cap obligations, Share information and resources with other groups, so we gain from each other's experience and efforts, Participate in statewide



policy advocacy, on selected occasions when authorized by MCAN Board,  
Provide annual updates of group mailing list and activity report to MCAN

**Duration**

This MOU is at-will and may be modified by mutual consent of authorized officials from MCAN and CHAPTER NAME. This MOU shall become effective upon signature by the authorized officials from the MCAN and CHAPTER NAME and will remain in effect until modified or terminated by any one of the partners by mutual consent.

**Contact Information**

- Chapter name
- Chapter representative
- Position
- Address
- Telephone
- E-mail

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Executive Director  
14 Beacon St., Boston, MA 02108  
(617) 953-4954  
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Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(Partner signature)

(Partner name, organization, position)

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Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(Partner signature)

(Carol Oldham, MCAN, Executive Director)