

Social Change

Inspiring social change in support of the City of Albuquerque's climate change goals requires commitment and action from all residents, institutions, businesses and City government. In this context, a comprehensive communications strategy is needed to effectively educate and encourage all stakeholders to take action.

The City of Albuquerque's goal is to promote an ongoing commitment among residents and businesses in Albuquerque to reduce their greenhouse gas emissions in their daily lives and business activities.

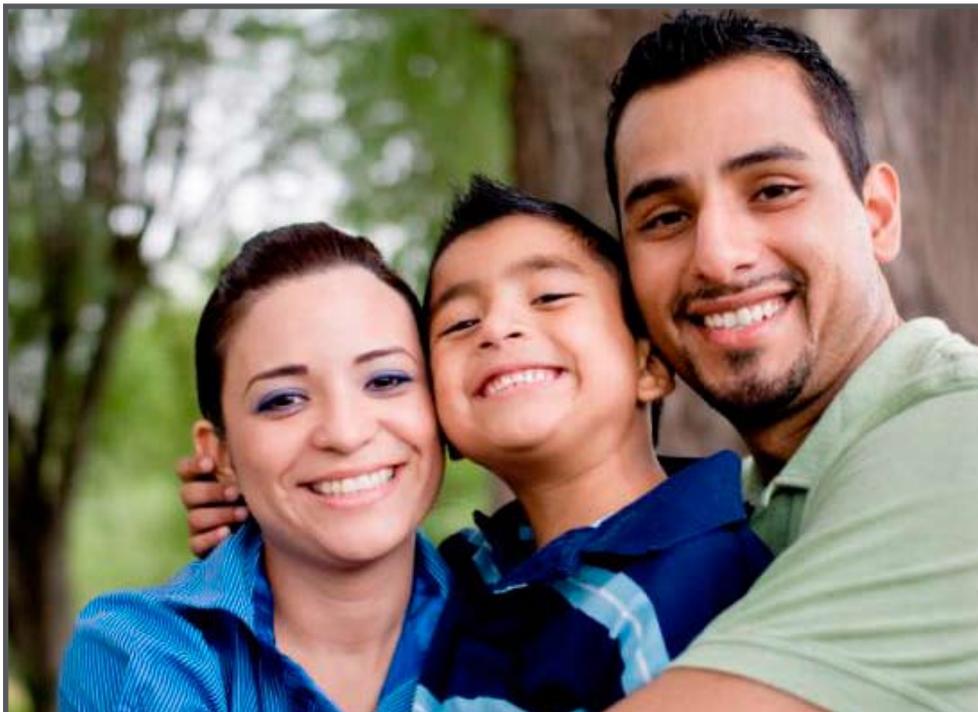
Our Goal is Behavior Change

The Social Change committee recommends four strategies to achieve its mission because effective education and social change require a model for implementation to reach targeted sectors in a systematic way.

Each of the four strategies are based on a communications process model that can be reduced to the RACE acronym: Research, Action, Communication and Evaluation.

The RACE model provides consistent plans and actions for each goal for their respective targets to ultimately achieve permanent change. This process has been successfully used by communications professionals in other public participation campaigns, including those aimed at eliminating smoking.

Ultimately, to sustain the changed behavior, the social change model must include rewards, role modeling, repeated behaviors resulting from changed laws, regulations and other incentives.



Strategy One

Awareness—Achieve a high public awareness of climate change issues and action opportunities, as identified by the Climate Action Plan.

Strategy Two

Understanding—Empower leaders from key stakeholder groups to work together and with the City to address climate change issues as identified in the Climate Action Plan.

Strategy Three

Action—Build many and diverse partnerships to assist in the education and social change agenda of the Climate Action Plan.

Strategy Four

Permanent Change—Deliver targeted campaigns to those people and points of intervention whose emission-reducing behavior can be most readily affected by education on issues identified in the Climate Action Plan.



1. Awareness—Achieve a high public awareness of climate change issues and action opportunities as identified by the Climate Action Plan.

This strategy targets the public.

Research

- Investigate other cities' or organizations' understanding of public awareness, methods to reach out to the public and key communication techniques. Survey the public's level of awareness of behaviors that affect greenhouse gas emissions.
- Investigate what is unique to Albuquerque in order to make the information relevant to our audience.
- Identify current levels or measurements for all topical areas and align to the Plan's short-, mid- and long-term GHG emissions reduction goals.

Action

Charter a learning and social change organization or department to design and develop a Climate Action Plan tool kit that follows the RACE model and the Social Change working group's strategies. Our goal is to motivate residents of Albuquerque to change behaviors in order to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

- Conduct a stakeholder analysis to provide specific community contacts to address Climate Action Plan's strategies.
- Identify key messages that can be structured or supported across all communications and with all stakeholders. For example, "reduce, reuse, recycle" is a key message that may be communicated to students differently than it would be communicated to a business group.
- Plan a marketing campaign.
- Draft concept documents for printed media.

Communication

Communicate to the public how addressing climate change ties into their own priorities. Emphasize how to incorporate the new behavior or changes into their daily lives.

- Broadcast to target markets such as the general public and organizations.
- Collect and integrate communication priorities of the eight Climate Action Task Force working groups.

Evaluation

Measure and communicate progress in reducing emissions citywide and publicly celebrate accomplishments with Albuquerque residents.

One key issue in managing the negative is the naming of this effort. While we may believe "climate change" is the right "framing" of the concept, some people disagree that human activities contribute to the climate change.

Rather than fight this perception, we recommend that we reframe the campaign in terms of sustainability and quality of life.



2. Understanding—Empower a movement of leaders from key stakeholder groups to work together and with the city to address climate change issues identified in the Climate Action Plan.

This strategy targets people who are already invested in climate change issues.

Research

Identify stakeholders with the necessary expertise and commitment to achieve the Social Change workgroup's first strategy of achieving a high level of public awareness on climate change issues and action opportunities identified in the Climate Action Plan.

Actions

Assemble a standing stakeholder group that includes City staff, which will take the following actions to affect positive education and social change.

- Take actions that implement the Climate Action Plan's recommendations.
- Build partnerships and gather resources.
- Produce educational materials and reach out to key constituencies.

Communication

Communicate clear and consistent messages to key constituencies. Messages describe each group's responsibilities and resources for taking action. Engage constituents in designing their own plan and in mapping their plans' goals to action.

- Broadcast with targeted marketing to increase involvement of other related constituent groups.
- City communicates expectations, budget and resources.
- Constituents share information via their own communications channels and by tying into common channels such as the City's website.

To begin designing communications tools for each key constituency, the stakeholder group should identify the extent to which each constituency is currently practicing emissions-reducing behaviors.

Evaluation

Assess stakeholders' ability to link to and influence other partnerships and collaborations, stakeholder goals, actions and productivity. This networking effort will spread the messages and engage new stakeholders.

- Evaluate effect of GHG reduction efforts on public awareness and implementation of GHG reduction techniques.
- Assess stakeholder participation.
- Assess the effectiveness of partnerships, resources, materials and outreach.



Influential people who support the mission and have a following can contribute towards achieving these strategies by building momentum and support.

3. Action—Build many and diverse partnerships to assist in the education and social change agenda of the Climate Action Plan.

This strategy targets local leaders who have influence and resources.

Research

Identify needed resources.

Action

Develop a list of potential partners; provide stakeholders with a tool kit of communications messages and media (such as a website, Q&As, key facts and 10 easy ways to make a difference). These tools can support the key influencers in building partnerships, spreading the word and leading the changed behavior.

Communication

Stakeholders reach out to target groups and individuals to build partnerships.

- Broadcast to target markets such as the general public and organizations.
- Collect and integrate communication priorities of the eight Climate Action Task Force working groups.

Evaluation

- Determine whether key opinion leaders have reached the appropriate stakeholders.
- Assess the efficacy of partnerships and work to educate and develop understanding of climate change issues among people of influence and resources.
- Evaluate whether or not partners are committing their resources to the campaign.

Identifying Stakeholders

Below are some of the stakeholders identified by the Climate Action Task Force working groups. While communications to the general public will be ongoing, we recommend that the stakeholders be identified by their “readiness to change” to prioritize communications. Some stakeholders already identified are shown below.

<p>Residents</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> General public Parents and students Seniors Neighborhood associations Sports parents Hikers and bicyclists Homeowners Landlords Farmers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Greenhouse builders Grocery shoppers <p>Businesses</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Utility leaders Business owners Green energy business owners Local farmers Grocery store owners <p>Media</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Key local leaders, reporters, editors 	<p>Schools</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> University researchers Thought leaders <p>Institutions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> NM Dept. of Health NM Dept. of Agriculture <p>Development industry</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Future urban farmers 	<p>Transportation industry</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> NM Department of Transportation City Transportation department Others <p>Designers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Urban planners City inspectors Landscape architects Design engineers 	<p>Association leaders</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> New Mexico Solar Energy Association Rebuild NM Sierra Club
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Stakeholders can be reached through several means. Mass communications via traditional media, social media via Internet sites, the City website and partners’ websites should weave through all the communications. In other words, these media serve as the “drumbeat” for building and sustaining support.



4. Permanent Change—Deliver targeted campaigns to those people/points of intervention whose emissions-reducing behavior can be most readily affected by education on climate action issues identified in the Climate Action Plan.

This strategy targets people whose behaviors affect greenhouse gas emissions, such as commuters and residents.

Research

- Identify priority people and points of intervention. For example, determine the one thing commuters can easily do to improve the environment, such as planning their day's traveling. Determine one thing residents can do, such as replacing incandescent light bulbs with compact florescent light bulbs.
- Gather data about people and points of intervention from the Climate Action Task Force working groups to establish baseline behaviors.

Action

- Motivate target audiences to change behaviors that affect greenhouse gas emissions.
- Work through the City's legal and executive offices to create incentives and develop regulations designed to guide behaviors that will help reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

Communication

Provide target audiences with necessary information that will help them adopt behaviors that contribute towards reduced greenhouse gas emissions.

Evaluation

Measure, quantify and communicate the effects of the changes by comparing changes from original baseline behaviors to new behaviors adopted as a result of the program.

This change process will take time. This is not an overnight or month-long advertising campaign.

Social change takes years of concerted effort. In our case, this is only the first phase of the effort.