

## **The Climate Initiative's Commitment to Belonging, Diversity, Equity, Justice, and Access**

At The Climate Initiative (TCI), we know that climate change at its core is an equity and justice issue that disproportionately affects underserved populations. These populations include, but are not limited to: the voices of Black, Indigenous, Latine, Asian, Pacific Islander, low-income, disabled, LGBTQ+, undocumented and other historically excluded and marginalized communities. We aim to amplify the individual and collective voices of these groups by working closely with them to confront the systems that prevent them from being heard. Communities that have been historically marginalized are often made up of individuals with various intersecting identities and climate change exacerbates the inequalities that these communities face. TCI's mission is to empower youth voices for climate action. To do this we must reach and empower youth from all walks of life. To reach and empower youth of all walks of life, we must bridge the gaps among generations through conversations and actions that facilitate understanding and encourage solidarity to create more meaningful impact.

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### **Commitment, Plan, and Action**

#### **Internal Operations**

We believe that our efforts to address these inequities begin from within the system that we create in our organization. We recognize that this is a journey and embrace continuous learning, reflection and growth. Below are a few of the efforts we are taking to develop an internal culture which prioritizes inclusivity, equity, and belonging as our organization grows.

#### **Inclusive Recruitment Approach**

- TCI Action Example: Consider educational barriers when hiring and be flexible about job qualifications to increase staff diversity.
- TCI Action Example: Advertising open positions on a variety of job boards and social media platforms so that job listings reach a more diverse candidate pool

#### **Flexible Benefits Tailored to the 21st Century**

- TCI Action Example: Unlimited Leave: All federal holidays off, as well as unlimited time off to be used as you see fit, with consideration in mind towards parents, cultural holidays and health needs
- TCI Action Example: The amount of time and scheduled hours spent on a project is less important to us than the completion and quality of the work. In

other words, what matters to our organization is that the work is completed and not the duration of time in which it was completed.

### **Team Stipends**

- *TCI Action Example:* Providing monthly wellness stipends and yearly financial support for staff to pursue professional development opportunities. Work stipends which include \$300 for home office investments, \$1000 for a work computer and a \$1000 per year budget per employee that can be applied toward paid professional educational and development opportunities of your choosing.

### **Diversity and Workplace Experience**

- *TCI Action Example:* Prioritizing diversity in identity and experience through the selection of Staff, Board Members, and Advisory Council Members. Actively recruiting to fill remaining seats with voices missing from our table.
- *TCI Action Example:* Complete the “Whiteness at Work” training series hosted by The Adaway Group, regarding how the norms of whiteness and anti-blackness show up in our workplaces, and how to confront them and build a more equitable workplace moving forward. (2021)
- *TCI Action Example:* Hosting monthly staff- or guest speaker- led lunch and learn sessions on topics of interest for staff, and providing materials necessary for participation, such as books.

### **A Culture of Feedback, Checking In, and Calling In**

- *TCI Action Example:* Converse openly about the current makeup and policies of our workplace and ways to foster a sense of belonging as we grow.
- *TCI Action Example:* Choosing the 15Five platform which enables staff to share with their direct supervisors how they are feeling, what would help them succeed, what improvements could be made to the organization, and more.
- *TCI Action Example:* Cultivating a culture of accountability while simultaneously providing all employees the space to grow and educate each other on how to unlearn harmful language and behaviors.

### **External Operations**

With regard to programming, we will work from the evidence by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change report (IPCC), focusing our efforts on the education, empowerment, and activation of youth, particularly those of underserved, underrepresented, marginalized, and vulnerable populations. We are committed to the continuous learning journey that is evolving and based on trust-building. We emphasize co-creation and are taking steps to:

## **Provide Funding to Frontline Communities**

- *TCI Action Example:* Providing individuals with grant-funding opportunities to execute climate-projects that are centered around climate issues they see in their own communities. This includes connecting and investing in frontline communities that are facing the impacts of climate change today.
- *TCI Action Example:* Commit 60% of our funding opportunities to underserved populations. For example, hosting climate webinars with the Immigrant Welcome Center (2021) and partnering with Kids Making Sense to provide air quality kits to underfunded schools and groups to enact citizen science projects in their communities (2022).
- *TCI Action Example:* Community Conversations. TCI is committed to co-organizing spaces with young leaders for intergenerational exchanges with community members to discuss the impacts of climate change in their region and solutions that can be applied locally.

## **Provide Accessible and Free Climate Education**

- *TCI Action Example:* Lower barriers to entry through free and open source materials, and scholarships to youth events. % of Learning Labs used with underserved populations (2021 - 2022)
- *TCI Action Example:* Co-created an online Climate Justice and Equity Learning Lab with six climate activists to help spread the understanding of how climate change is also an equity conversation (2022)
- *TCI Action Example:* Policy Institute where youth received funding in order to attend and access climate policy education (2022)
- *TCI Action Example:* Provide teachers who utilize learning labs with a \$300 stipend in order to diminish the financial burden from teachers that comes with integrating new curriculum into their classrooms.
- *TCI Action Example:* Provide stipends for Youth and Adult Allies that partner with TCI to co-create community-focused events.

## **Build Reach through Representation**

- *TCI Action Example:* Develop and scale a Youth Ambassador Program to reach high school and college age youth to augment their sense of agency, provide them a supportive community, and combat climate change together
- *TCI Action Example:* When partnering with influencers for TCI campaigns, ensuring representation of a diverse cross-section of backgrounds, experience and knowledge.
- *TCI Action Example:* #SpeakClimate, a social media campaign to get people talking about climate change impacts, and #ClimateCareer, a competition for youth to jumpstart their climate solutions (2021, 2022).
- *TCI Action Example:* Tidal Shift Art Competition, a climate focused art competition for youth (2022).