

# Sustaining & Rebuilding Resilient Communities

April 8, 2026



LAWYERS FOR  
**GOOD**  
GOVERNMENT



Environmental  
Protection Network

# Join Us In This Next Phase

We are here to help you solve your community's most pressing environmental challenges

## *The Work Continues*

### **2026**

Sustaining & Rebuilding  
Resilient Communities, tax  
credits and capital stacks

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- Continue our organizations' longstanding work to provide local communities with pro bono support through technical assistance to address climate change and pollution. More details to follow!
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### **2025**

Safeguarding Federal Grants,  
Tax Credits & NGOs

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- Supported nearly 600 organizations facing grant funding freezes & terminations
  - Challenged (ongoing!) the Trump Admin in court
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### **2022-2024**

Accessing New Federal  
Funds

- Helped hundreds of communities navigate and apply for hundreds of millions of dollars in grants



- **Earth Day Advocacy & Organizing**
- **EPN Resources**
- **L4GG Resources – Focusing on How to Pay for Your Project**
- **Standing Updates**
  - Litigation
  - Federal Regulatory Actions
  - Funding
- **Open Q&A**

# Agenda



# Earth Day 2026

Strategies to Take  
Advantage of Earth Day  
for Organizing, Advocacy,  
and Communications



Earth Day is an opportunity  
to **break through the  
noise** and reach your target  
audiences.

# Organize



## Earth Day: A natural volunteer hook

Many people want to engage in local, tangible volunteer activities around Earth Day. You can be an **organizer** an **facilitator** or a **participant**.

**Organizer** – Plan a volunteer engagement in your community and aligned with your mission. Aim for something that is accessible and tangible such as a trash clean up, tree planting, or citizen science/community science.

**Facilitator** – Identify partner events in your community, then share them with your members and help facilitate participation (e.g., organize car pools, send reminders).

**Participant** – Joining other events is also a great way to build partnerships, recruit new members, and support each other.

*Don't forget to share what you do on social media! (Details follow)*



# Advocate



Join or  
Plan a  
Protest

Launch an  
Advocacy  
Campaign

Engage  
your  
Elected  
Officials

Questions about 501c3 advocacy & lobbying? Visit our friends at <https://afj.org/bolder-advocacy/> for resources & trainings.





# Communicate

## A "hook" to pitch reporters

Host a press conference or press call highlighting a local issue  
Reach out directly to reporters to share a potential story.

## A prime opportunity for social media

Social media is a "numbers game" -> volume and frequency + amplification.  
Strive for **authenticity, volume, and action.**



# Best Practices for Storytelling



1. **Focus on the impact to real people and local communities.** Emphasize challenges and threats to your community versus any disruption to your internal team/organization.



2. **Emphasize stories over aggregate numbers.** A powerful anecdote will travel farther and break through better than a story about “X tons of averted pollution” or “X dollars saved.”



3. **Keep your story streamlined.** A laundry list of challenges will lose your readership. Tie your work into big themes such as energy affordability, reducing pollution, health, or resilience.



4. **When ‘on the record’ try to provide pithy points.** Reporters are talking to you to (1) get the necessary context for their story; and (2) looking for a 1-2 sentence quote. Write down some of the quotes you would like to see in print before your call.



# Communicating with Reporters

Send a short pitch via email. This can be as simple as the following:



**SUBJECT: Local health impacts of recent EPA rollbacks**

Hi [Reporter Name] – I lead [Nonprofit Name], a community-based environmental justice organization in [Community/Region]. As we approach Earth Day, I wanted to share a recent and significant federal policy shift with local implications. EPA has announced it will no longer consider the monetized health benefits of reducing air pollution, such as avoided deaths, asthma attacks, and hospital visits, when setting air pollution limits. By focusing primarily on industry compliance costs in its analysis, this change could weaken future air quality protections.

In [Community Name], where residents already face [brief local pollution example], this shift raises concerns about increased health risks and reduced accountability. **I'd be happy to speak with you or connect you with community members about what this means locally.**

Best, [Name]

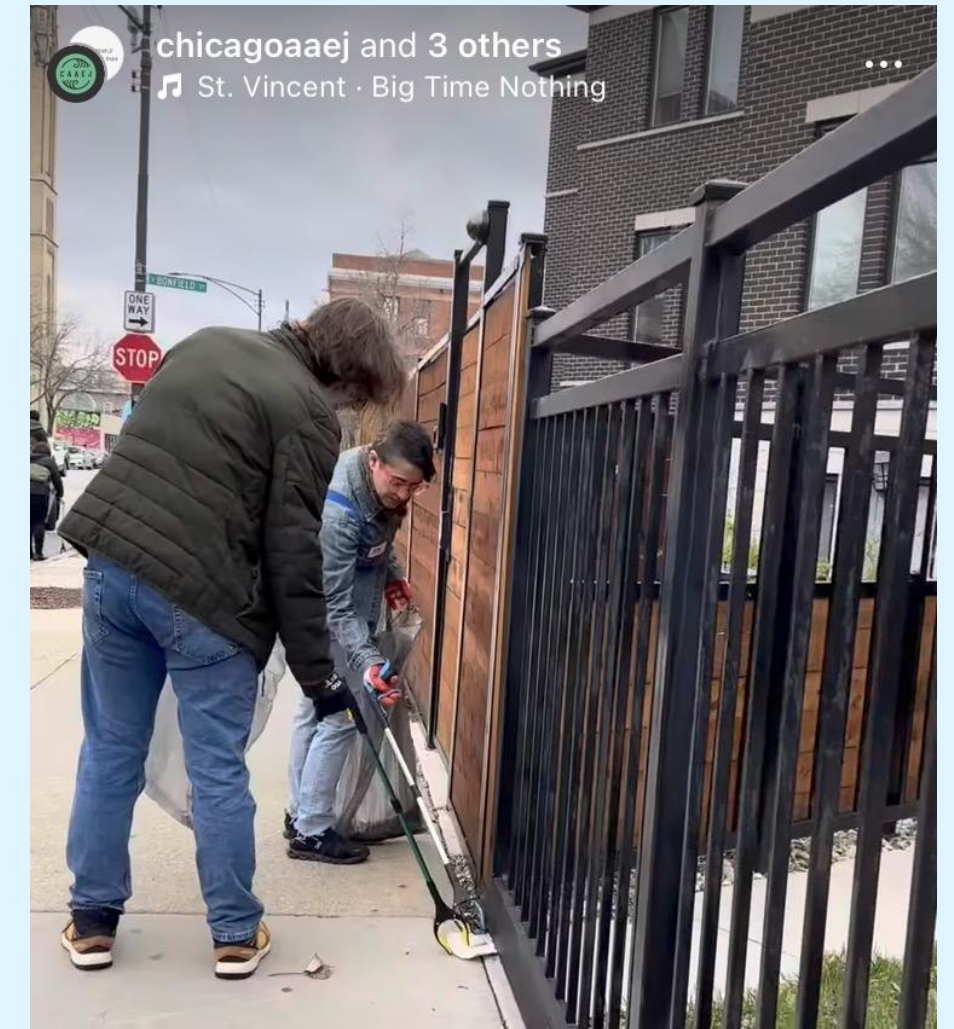


**Speak to the reporter by phone** if they are interested. Focus your conversation on your scope of expertise (i.e., what work you had planned that is being prevented, what new challenges your community will face, what new resources or benefits your work will bring to your area.)

# Social Media Guidance

1. Strive for **authenticity, volume, and action**. Authentic messages from you and your allies will resonate better than national slogans or campaigns. Do not worry about your photo or video being perfect – perfect photos and editing can just as often turn audiences away.
2. Social media is a **numbers game**. Getting ten allies to each post in support of your work is a better use of your energy than trying to get one post “just right.”
3. **Push your audience towards action** by empowering them with the right information. Include facts about what is happening along with an ask to re-post, call an elected official, or sign onto a letter.
4. Make your posts as **interactive and engaging** as possible.
  - Include photos and video.
  - Tag allies and elected officials.
  - Include links to your website, recent news stories, and tools to take action.

## Example from Chicago Asian Americans for Environmental Justice:



chicagoaaej and 3 others  
St. Vincent · Big Time Nothing

263 8 25

Liked by [chicagoaaej](#) and others  
[trashpeopleofmckinleypark](#) We don't say this lightly:  
YOU ALL ARE THE RADDEST, BADDEST.

Starting with a bang with our biggest cleanup yet!  
Thanks to [@mariasbar](#) for always being a gracious  
host and for the badass teamwork of four local  
community groups.

Questions?



# Environmental Protection Network

Pro Bono Capacity Building Technical Assistance Program





# Environmental Protection Network (EPN)

*Leveraging our network of 700+ EPA Alumni volunteers*



**Advance policies** to address climate change and environmental justice

Provide pro bono capacity-building **technical assistance**

Work to **diversify EPA's** workforce by recruiting and mentoring



## Local Initiatives

Permit, ruling and environmental data interpretation; assistance with public comments



## Grant Applications

Grant program navigation, proposal scoping and review



## EPA Award Support

Ensuring funds are properly committed to selectees, safeguarding funding to grantees when necessary



## Partnership Building

Identify agency contacts, Connect groups with others for peer learning or support beyond EPN





# Technical Assistance in Action: 1:1 Support



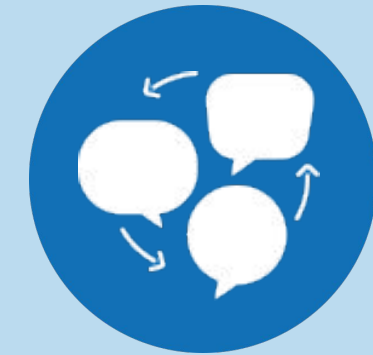
1. **Fill out** EPN's **Technical Assistance Request Form**



2. **Meet** with regional EPN outreach associate to discuss goals and assistance needs



3. **Get connected** to volunteers or external technical assistance partners



4. **Continue** communications with EPN outreach associates as long as needed



## COMMUNITY-ORIENTED

We have significant experience supporting capacity-constrained organizations



## ACCESSIBLE RESOURCES

We take complicated information and break it down into digestible resources



## TA IN SPANISH

We can provide limited TA assistance in Spanish.



## TIMING

Our response time is within one or two weeks



# Main Subject Matter Topics



## AIR

- Air Monitoring
- Air Monitoring Grants
- Air Quality Modeling
- Air Quality & Climate Change
- Air Quality: General, Mobile, and Stationary Source
- Radiation/Indoor Air
- Air Permits
- Particulate Matter (PM)



## WATER

- Flooding
- Drinking Water
- Wastewater
- Water Infrastructure
- Water Quality: General, Point Source, and Nonpoint Source
- Water Utilities
- Waters of the United States (WOTUS)
- Stormwater Mgmt
- Clean Water Act (CWA)
- Clean Water State Revolving Fund (CWSRF)
- Lead in Water



## SUPERFUND AND BROWNFIELD

- Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act (CERCLA)
- Brownfields
- Cleanup Process
- TAB Programs
- Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA)



## COAL, OIL, AND GAS

- Coal Ash
- Coal Fired Power Plants
- Fossil Fuels
- Oil Refinery
- Petrochemicals
- Carbon Capture and Storage (CCS)



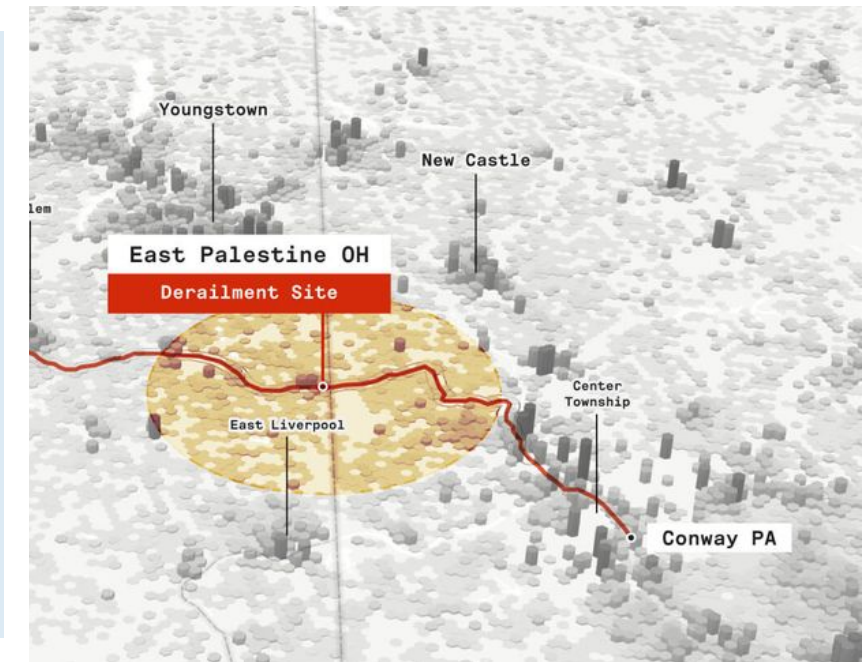
## OTHER TOPICS

- Quality Assurance Project Plans (QAPP)
- Climate Action Plans (CAP)
- Federal Grant Support
- Enforcement and Compliance at EPA
- Soil Contamination
- Solar Projects

# EXAMPLE: Concerned Citizens in East Palestine, OH

**TA Request:** Community leaders in East Palestine, OH connected with EPN for guidance as they submitted **comments on the Norfolk Southern train derailment settlement.**

The community had questions regarding the settlement's plan and budget for resident health and well water monitoring. The community wanted to learn more about what it would mean for EPA to declare a public health emergency due to the incident.



## TIMELINE

June 2024



Community leaders got in touch with EPN via a 'Beyond Petrochemicals' Coalition weekly update call.



EPN gathered information from leaders timing of the public comment period and on their specific questions, which included the viability of well and health monitoring and the impacts of an EPA public health emergency declaration.



Based on information gathered, EPN staff did outreach to the volunteer network and was able to match the community with a volunteer.



August 2024



The volunteer reviewed the settlement and the communities concerns. He was then able to provide some guidance for their public comment submission.

# SOUTH RIVER WATERSHED ALLIANCE

## TA Request:

The Georgia Environmental Protection Division issued a Consent Order to the City of Atlanta, December 2024 for violations of its NPDES permit at the Custer Avenue Combined Sewer Overflow Facility in southeast Atlanta. The Consent Order does not require the city to meet water quality standards and will not bring the facility into compliance with the Clean Water Act. SRWA would like to submit comments before GA EPD's approval of the city's Corrective Action Plan showing the plan doesn't meet state water quality standards and won't meet the criteria of no more than an average of four overflow events per year."

## TASK TIMELINE



South River Watershed Alliance requests assistance in navigating the Public comments

EPN staff matches SRWA with EPN Partners who have expertise in Civil Engineering and water quality

These initial volunteers provided a briefing for SRWA who could review documents, scope of work and communicate concerns

Expands capacity to include briefing with SRWA lawyers to submit comments to DEP

SRWA finalized the response for Public comments and utilize materials for ongoing outreach on the Clean water Act



# Find Your Next Source of Funding

*EPN's Beyond Federal  
Funding Monthly Bulletin*

70+

National and  
regional funding  
opportunities



*Examples Include:*

- Grants and low-interest loans up to \$25K for community solar projects via the Hammond Foundation.
- Rapid-response grants and loans to support Tribal leaders addressing long-term energy sovereignty and resilience via the Indigenous Power & Light Fund.
- Funding opportunities for specific geographies such as Dayton, OH's Climate Resilience Fund and the Chesapeake Bay Trust's Community Engagement grants.

*To find funding opportunities relevant to your organization, please visit [EPN's Beyond Federal Funding Monthly Bulletin](#)*



# Any Questions?

## *Request Technical Assistance Here*



*Requests for technical assistance are divided by region and are sent directly to each region's designated outreach associate.*

**<https://bit.ly/EPNassist>**





# Lawyers for Good Government

Climate Change and Environmental Justice Program





# Presenters



## **Jillian Blanchard**

*Sr. Vice President, Climate Change & Environmental Justice*

- Nationally recognized attorney in energy and regulatory.
- 25+ years experience in all levels of government, nonprofit, and the private sectors on environmental, infrastructure, and climate change issues.
- Has managed over 600 lawyers in providing guidance to cities, states, and nonprofits expediting equitable green economy and address environmental justice.



## **Katherine Christopher**

*Supervising Attorney, Environmental and Climate Justice*

- Oversees L4GG's Fund Protection Clinic, including directly advising grantees, writing guidance briefs, and leading trainings on current issues.
- Previously served in EPA Office of General Counsel, advising on IRA grant fund programs. Prior to EPA, worked in private practice, specializing in corporate governance and compliance.



## **Carol Khalil**

*Supervising Attorney for Clean Energy and Green Finance*

- Carol is Supervisory Attorney for Clean Energy & Green Finance in the Climate Change & Environmental Justice Program at L4GG.
- Previously served as Vice President and Corporate Sustainability Officer at Freddie Mac, where she founded and led the company's first Sustainability Office and advised executive leadership on climate risk, sustainable housing finance, and environmental strategy.



# A Different Kind of Legal Services Organization

*L4GG was built specifically to provide 1:1 assistance to a variety of clients across the country - including the climate change and environmental justice space.*

## **Frontline Nonprofits**

Community-based organizations in EJ communities — often the only legal resource their constituents have, with no in-house counsel.

## **Local Governments**

Municipalities that accepted federal climate grants in good faith and need legal backup when the rules suddenly change.

## **Tribal Nations**

Indigenous governments facing outsized climate harm, now battling unlawful terminations of funding built on sovereign commitments.



# The L4GG Model

*A national network with local roots, built to serve the clients who can't wait.*

## 125K

**Lawyers in Network**

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Our pro bono attorney network means we can mobilize at a scale that matches the scale of the problem — not just the cases that pencil out financially.

## \$50M+

**Pro Bono Legal Services in 2025**

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We measure success in communities served, not billable hours. Our model gets legal resources to grantees who would otherwise go unrepresented.

## 600+

**Communities Served**

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From Tribal nations in Alaska to community solar co-ops in Rhode Island — L4GG's reach is national, and our client list reflects who actually needs us.



# L4GG Pro Bono Legal Services Available

## Safeguarding Federal Funding

### Fund Protection Clinic (FPC)

Provides legal support to communities and grantees navigating federal funding

### Courts of Federal Claims Clinic (COFC)

Offers legal defense for grantees facing federal grant terminations through the U.S. Court of Federal Claims.

## Collecting Tax Credits

### Elective Pay Sprint Hub (EPSH) & Clean Energy Tax Navigator

Assists nonprofits access direct pay tax credits under the Inflation Reduction Act.

## Fighting Back

### Pro Bono Litigation Corp (PBLC)

Mobilizes experienced litigators to defend entities in high-impact federal cases.

## Moving Forward

### Green and Equitable Communities Clinic (GECC)

Assists local governments and nonprofits with legal strategies to implement climate infrastructure projects.

**Focus today: How these services help YOU BUILD Clean Energy/Resilience Projects**



# Services for Clean Energy/Resilience Hub Projects

From planning to completion, L4GG can help.

Pre-Development / Planning	Construction	Operation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Community engagement</li><li>● Capital stack assistance</li><li>● Site control</li><li>● Design, permitting, &amp; interconnection agreements</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Approvals</li><li>● Engineering, Procurement, and Construction</li><li>● Notice to proceed</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Tax credit filing</li><li>● Program compliance</li><li>● Utility</li></ul>

L4GG resources to help you meet critical project milestones:

[Green and Equitable Communities Clinic](#)

[Elective Pay Sprint Hub](#)



# How do I fund my project?

## Capital stack planning (and flexibility)

Example			Not every capital stack will include all types of funds
Type of Funds	Characteristics	Examples	
Grants (federal/state/local/philanthropic)	Not repaid	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>State program grants</li> <li>Philanthropy</li> <li>Local</li> </ul>	
Incentives & Offsets	Not repaid - typically granted in exchange for project meeting some policy objective	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Utility rebates</li> <li>Mission-aligned fund incentives</li> </ul>	
Equity	Owner contributions in exchange for earnings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Investors</li> </ul>	
Green Finance			Project needs should drive decisions



# Green Finance: One part of the capital stack

Financial products or services that fund projects with positive environmental impacts

Category	Type of Funds	Characteristics	Examples
Green Finance	Credit Enhancements	Repayable, but flexible and usually lower rate financing that acts to absorb risk	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• unsecured loans</li><li>• conditional repayment loans</li><li>• guarantees</li><li>• loss reserves</li></ul>
	Construction Financing	Repayable, typically relatively short-term	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• bridge loans</li></ul>
	Operation Financing	Repayable, typically longer term	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• construction-to-permanent</li><li>• long term loans</li></ul>



# Federal Updates

*Major developments across environmental & energy agencies right now*



## **President Trump Released the FY27 Proposed Budget on April 3. Proposals include:**

- **Cutting the EPA budget in half (53 percent)** – similar to the proposal he made last year that was rejected by Congress on a bipartisan basis. [More details here.](#)
- **Eliminating the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP)**, which would raise costs & shut off heat and cooling for 6 million American households.
- **Further cuts to research and innovation** for clean energy and other scientific research.



## **EPA Continues to Advance Its Deregulatory Agenda. Active right now:**

- **Risk Management Plan (RMP)** – Proposing to revoke many components of a 2024 regulation to ensure certain facilities had plans in place to prevent and mitigate the release of toxic chemicals. Comments are due May 11. [See EPN's comments here](#) and L4GG's comment template [here](#).
- **Ethylene Oxide (EtO) Sterilizers** – Proposing changes to increase EtO emissions that cause cancer and prohibit EPA from reassessing risks for air toxics standards when new scientific evidence becomes available. Comments are due May 1. [See EPN's comments here](#) and L4GG's comment template [here](#).



- **Lee Zeldin allegedly under consideration to replace Pam Bondi as Attorney General.**



***Any Questions?***





**For the most up-to-date  
resources & recommendations,  
check out our Federal Funding  
Updates**

*Scan Here*

