



Building resilient communities

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Exploring how libraries and community-based organizations can work together to mitigate environmental and health-related concerns due to climate change

Project Focus

Strengthening partnerships between public libraries and community organizations to take locally relevant climate action and address environmental change.

Goal

Empower libraries and community partners to co-create resilient, thriving environments through teamwork and action.

Impact

Public libraries, alongside their partners, are leading efforts to help communities prepare for changing environments, unexpected disruptions, and new challenges—ensuring they can thrive no matter what lies ahead.

Today's Presenters



Rebekkah Smith Aldrich

Executive Director, Mid-Hudson Library System (NY),
Co-founder/Current President,
Sustainable Libraries Initiative
(SLI)



Matt Bollerman

CEO, Hauppauge Public
Library, Co-founder/Vice-
President, Sustainable
Libraries Initiative (SLI)



Rose Hendricks

Seeding Action Research
Director, Association for
Science and Technology
Centers (ASTC)

Climate Change Communication

Lessons Learned in the Past Decade

Rebekkah Smith Aldrich & Matthew Bollerman,
Co-Founders, Sustainable Libraries Initiative



**Sustainable
Libraries
Initiative**

Sustainable Libraries Initiative

Launched in 2015 as a community of practice for library leaders interested in addressing issues related to **climate change, community resilience and securing a vital, vibrant, and visible place** in the community/on campuses/in schools for libraries.



**Sustainable
Libraries
Initiative**

Sustainability = Core Value





Triple Bottom Line Definition:

- Environmentally Sound
- Socially Equitable
- Economically Feasible

See [Triple Bottom Line infographic](#), ALA

National Climate Action Strategy for Libraries

The Strategy

Climate Change Mitigation

Libraries align greenhouse gas emission reduction goals with those that international climate scientists and policy makers have indicated are necessary to prevent catastrophic cascading effects. This strategy recommends a goal for all libraries to reduce their institution's greenhouse gas emissions by 43%, from 2015 levels, by 2030 and to achieve net-zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050¹.

Climate Change Adaptation & Contributions Community Resilience

Libraries adopt both internal disaster preparedness plans and strategic goals that speak to the most likely climate hazards facing their area to contribute to their community's resilience.

Climate Justice Work

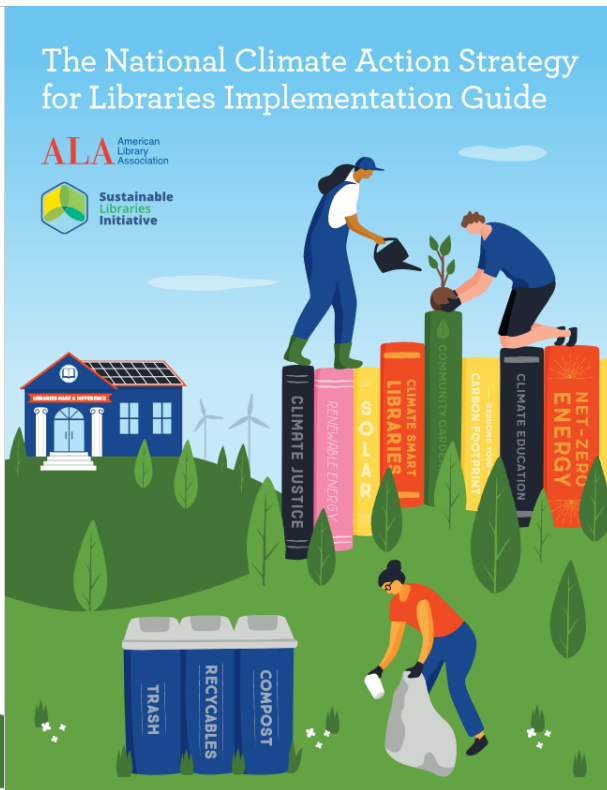
Libraries harness the transformative power of education for climate justice and develop relationships with local community organizations working on climate justice to embed a deeper awareness of the intersection of human and civil rights with climate stewardship than is presently found².

¹ Paris Agreement, United Nations, https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/english_text_agreement.pdf

² Principles of Climate Justice, Mary Robinson Foundation, <https://www.mrfc.org/principles-of-climate-justice/harness-the-transformative-power-of-education-for-climate-stewardship/>



The National Climate Action Strategy for Libraries Implementation Guide



- Written by your peers
- “Every Job is a Climate Job”
- Making the Case: Why Libraries?
- Simple Ways to Get Started
 - **Talking About Climate Smart Libraries**
 - What Is Your Library Already Doing?
 - Look Around Before You Act
 - Be Deliberate in Future Goal Setting
- Core Concepts Unpacked
- Resources

Survey Says...

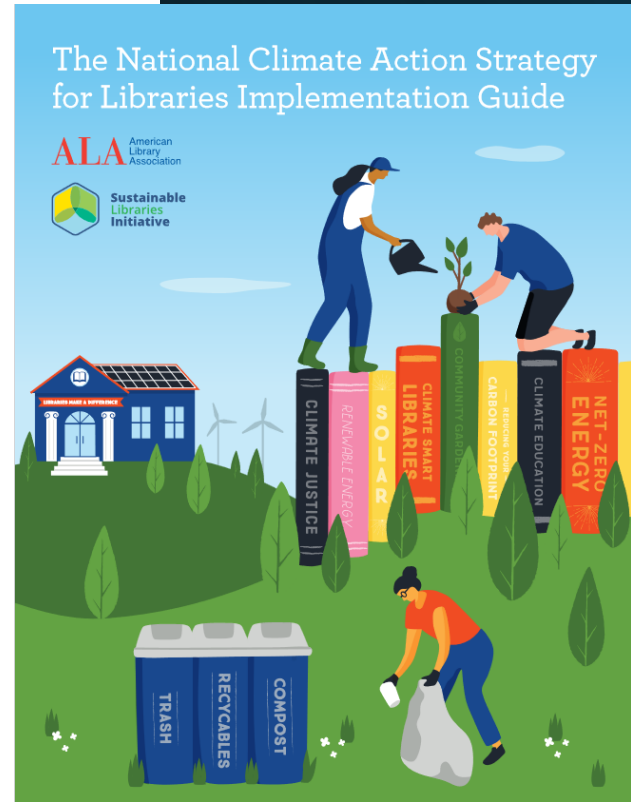
A super majority of registered voters, across political party affiliations, support public policy that will help address the reduction of greenhouse gas emission.

72% support tax rebates to people who purchase energy-efficient vehicles or solar panels

71% support tax credits or rebates to encourage people to buy electric appliances (e.g. heat pumps, induction stoves) that run on electricity instead of oil or gas.

Talking About Climate Smart Libraries

- Libraries are **non-partisan**. Full Stop.
- Everyone wants a **better future for the children** of your community.
- Everyone deserves a **healthy place to live**.
- We all want to help keep our families and neighbors **safe**.
- It is to everyone's benefit to **support local businesses** to ensure strong economic opportunities at home.
- No one government agency or nonprofit can address these issues alone; **we must join forces** to address the scale and scope of what is happening.



Pro Tips

- **Know your audience**
- Focus on the **local impact** of climate change they can relate to
- Talk about the **savings** achieved through using the triple bottom line
- Have examples that showcase **ingenuity and innovation**
- Emphasize **public health**





[Explore the Map](#)

[Learn More](#)

[Take Action](#)

[Get Help](#)

The National Risk Index

Discover the landscape of natural hazard risk in the United States.


The National Risk Index Map


Use the interactive National Risk Index Map to visually explore natural hazard risk data across the United States.

[Explore the Map](#)

<https://hazards.fema.gov/nri/>



 **Winthrop Public Library,**
Washington



Climate Smart Solution

The Winthrop Public Library prioritized being a place of refuge from wildfire smoke when designing its new facility. The HVAC system is a split heat pump for conditioning and an energy recovery ventilator (ERV) with a MERV filter for balanced ventilation. The ERV balances fresh air intake with stale air exhaust: it also maintains a humidity level in the building, for occupant comfort. The building employs destratification fans to keep hot air from pooling up high at the ridge.

Examples of Framing to Values & Strategic Goals

Reduce Operating Costs

- The triple bottom line definition of sustainability includes **economic feasibility** and therefore intrinsic respect for taxpayer and donor dollars.
- Sustainable design and renewable energy sources reduce long-term operating costs.

Community-Based Preparedness

- Increase local capacity
- Neighbors helping neighbors
- Self-sufficiency
- Lowers mental stressors
- Helps community recover faster



Growing Community of Practice

- 44 Certified Libraries
- 197 Libraries Pursuing Certification
- 175 Sustainable Libraries Initiative Members
- 6,826 Newsletter Subscribers



**Sustainable
Libraries
Initiative**



<https://www.sustainablelibrariesinitiative.org/>



SEEDING ACTION

Cultivating a culture of action
to improve planetary health

Seeding Action...

Catalyzes and supports science centers, museums, and public engagement networks to **cultivate a culture of hope and action to improve community and planetary health**



Pollution



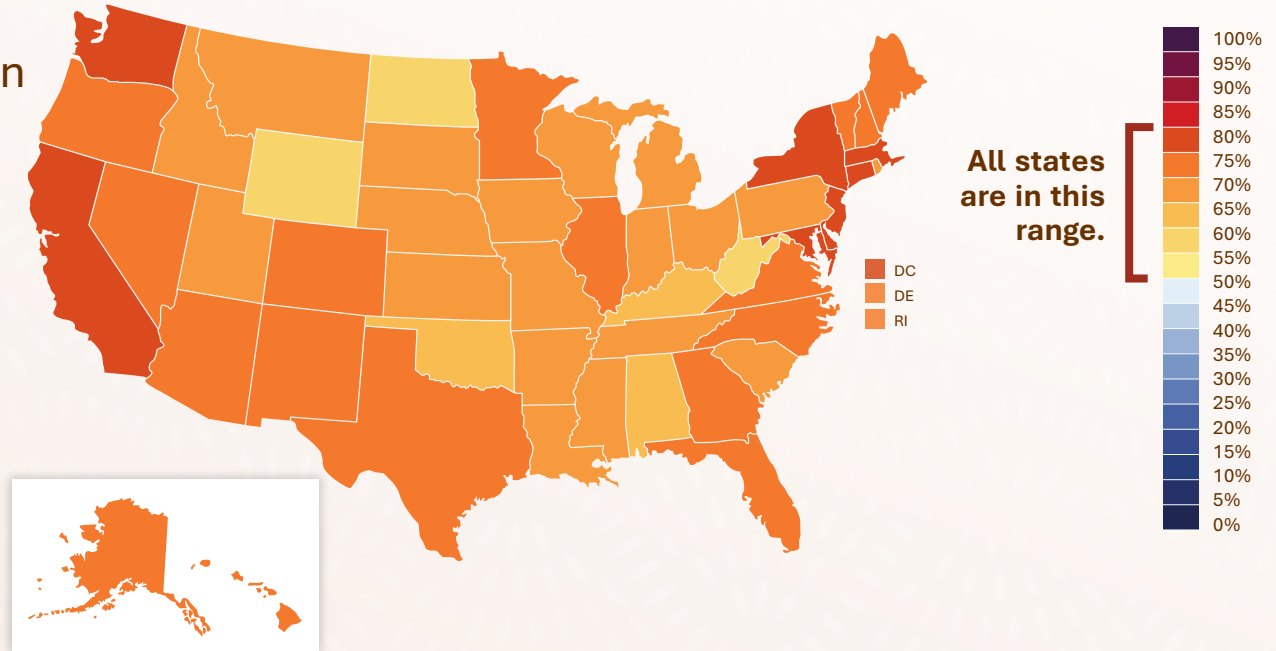
Climate Change



Biodiversity Loss

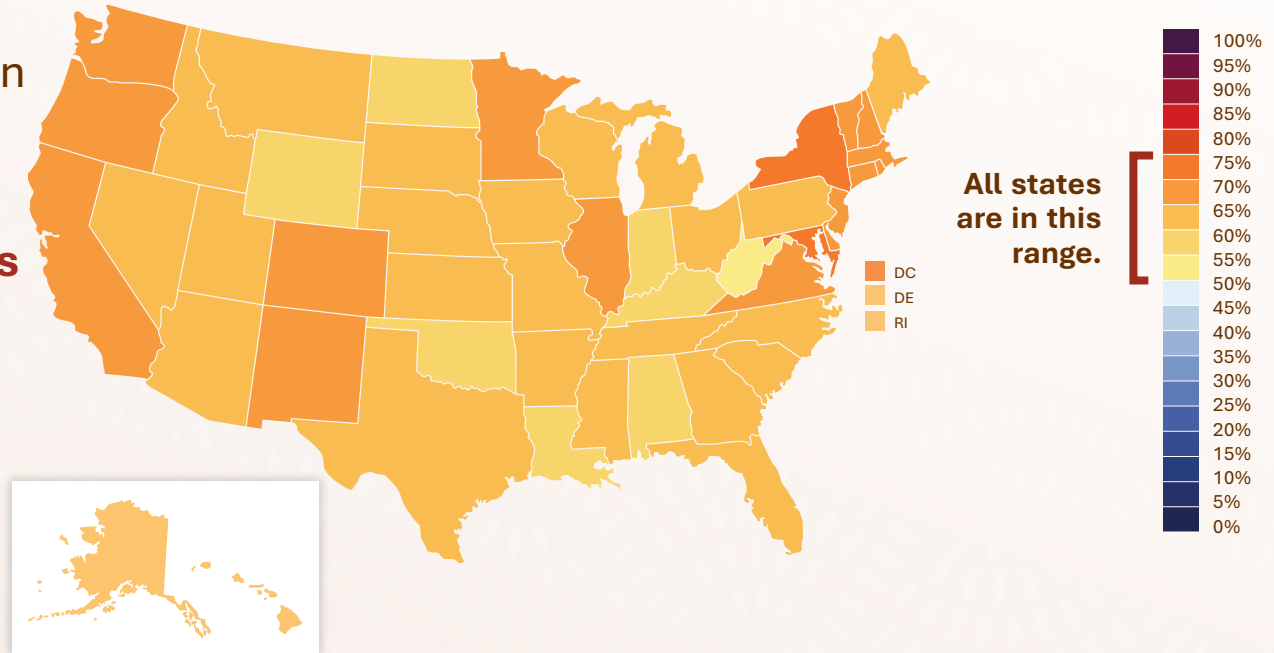
The public agrees that the **climate is changing**

72% of the American public agrees that **“Global warming is happening”**



The public agrees that **citizens should do more**

65% of the American public agrees that
“Citizens should do more to address global warming”



Yet, widespread action is **not taking place** in the U.S.

In the past 12 months, only...



33%

Made climate-driven purchases

From companies that are taking steps to reduce global warming



19%

Signed a global-warming-related petition

At least once



8%

Volunteered to work on global warming

Volunteered for organizations working on global warming at least once



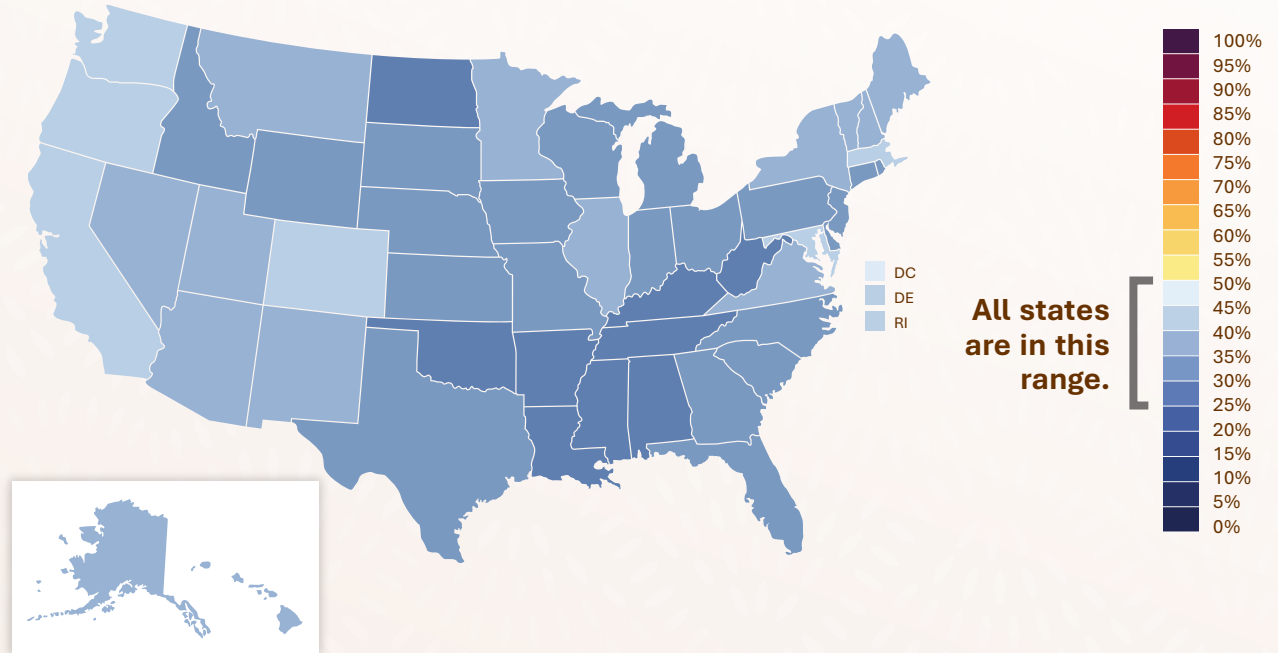
9%

Contacted government officials about global warming

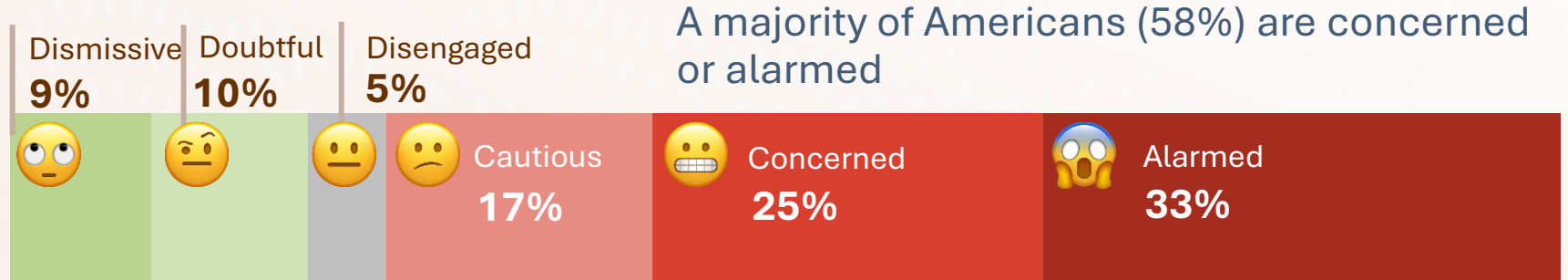
At least once

We are **not even talking** about global warming

35% of the American public
Discusses global warming at least occasionally



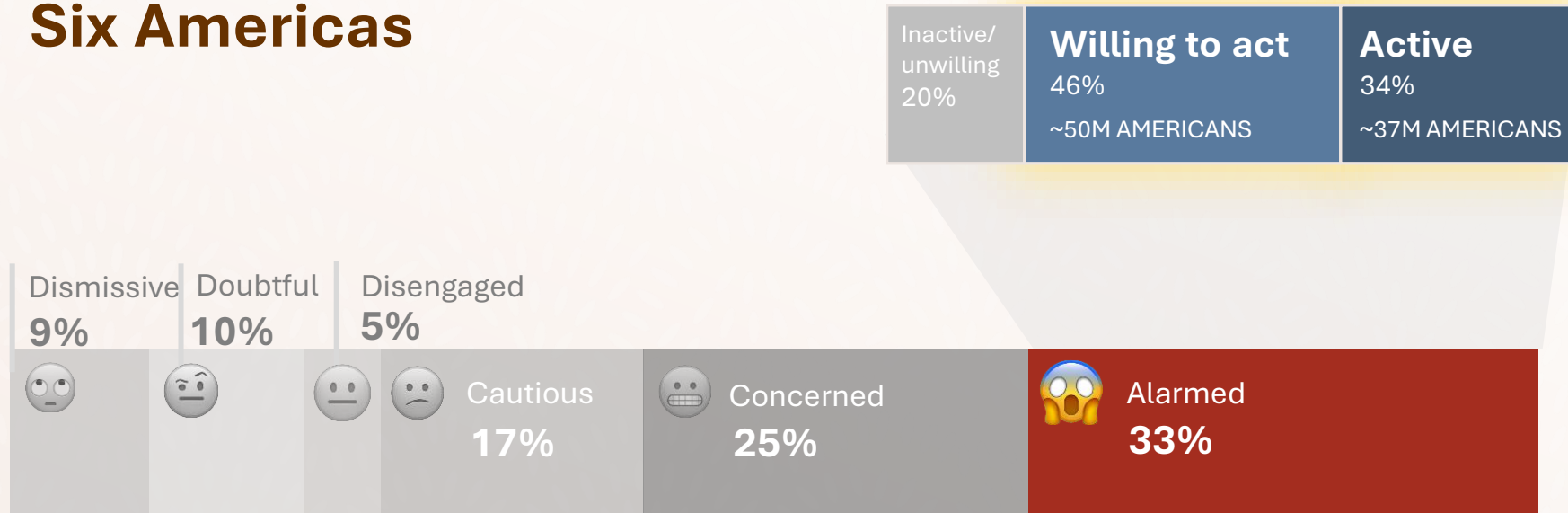
Global Warming's Six Americas



Data from 10 waves of the *Climate Change in the American Mind* national survey.
June 2017–September 2021
n=11,664

Global Warming's Six Americas

The majority of those alarmed are willing to act



Goldberg, M., Wang, X., Marlon, J., Carman, J., Lacroix, K., Kotcher, J., Rosenthal, S., Maibach, E., & Leiserowitz, A. *Segmenting the climate change Alarmed: Active, Willing, and Inactive*. Yale University and George Mason University. New Haven, CT: Yale Program on Climate Change Communication.

Many people understand and are concerned about planetary health

But few translate their concern into demands for change and meaningful action.



**Understand
the problems**



Concerned



**Desire
change**

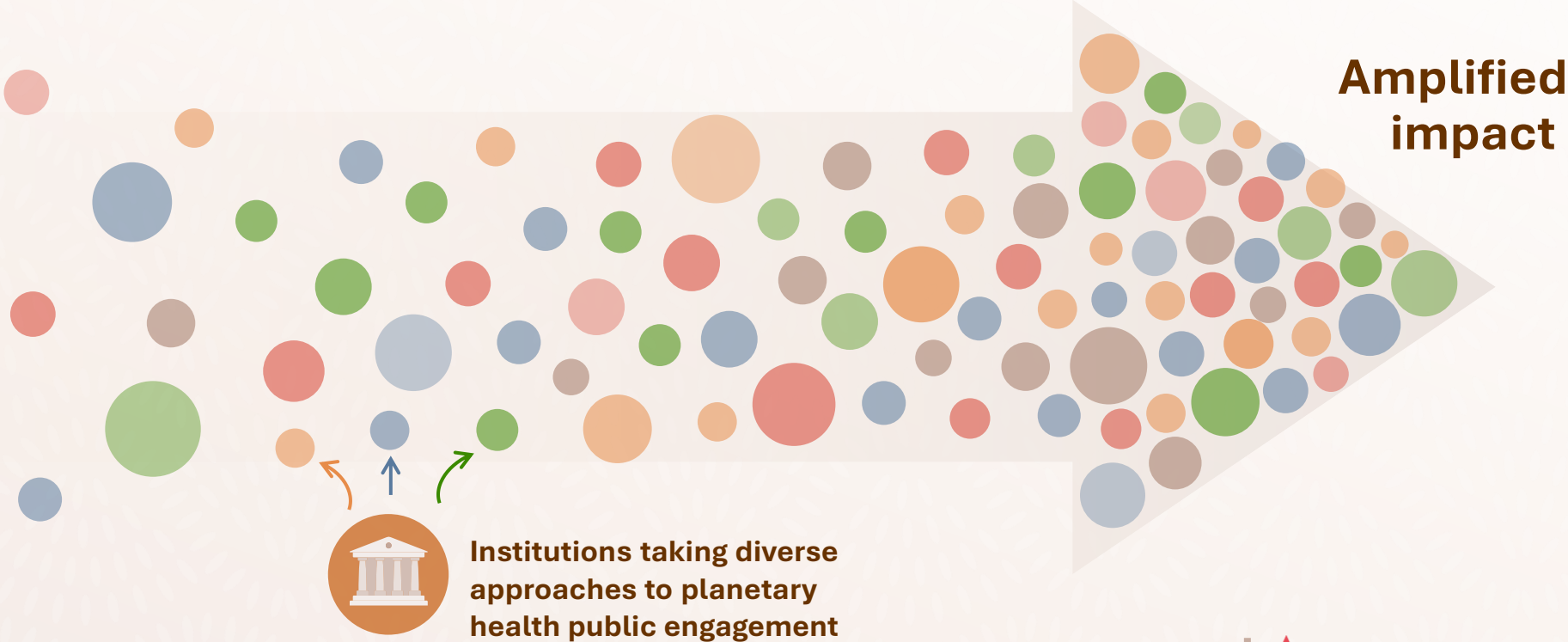


**Take
action**



**Embody
action**

Networked collective impact approach



What does **Seeding Action** do?

Seeding Action provides the scaffolding that supports members to build capacity for impact through:



Relationships

Within and beyond the Seeding Action network



Resources & Information

Funding, exhibits and programs, data, evaluation tools and guidance, training, coaching



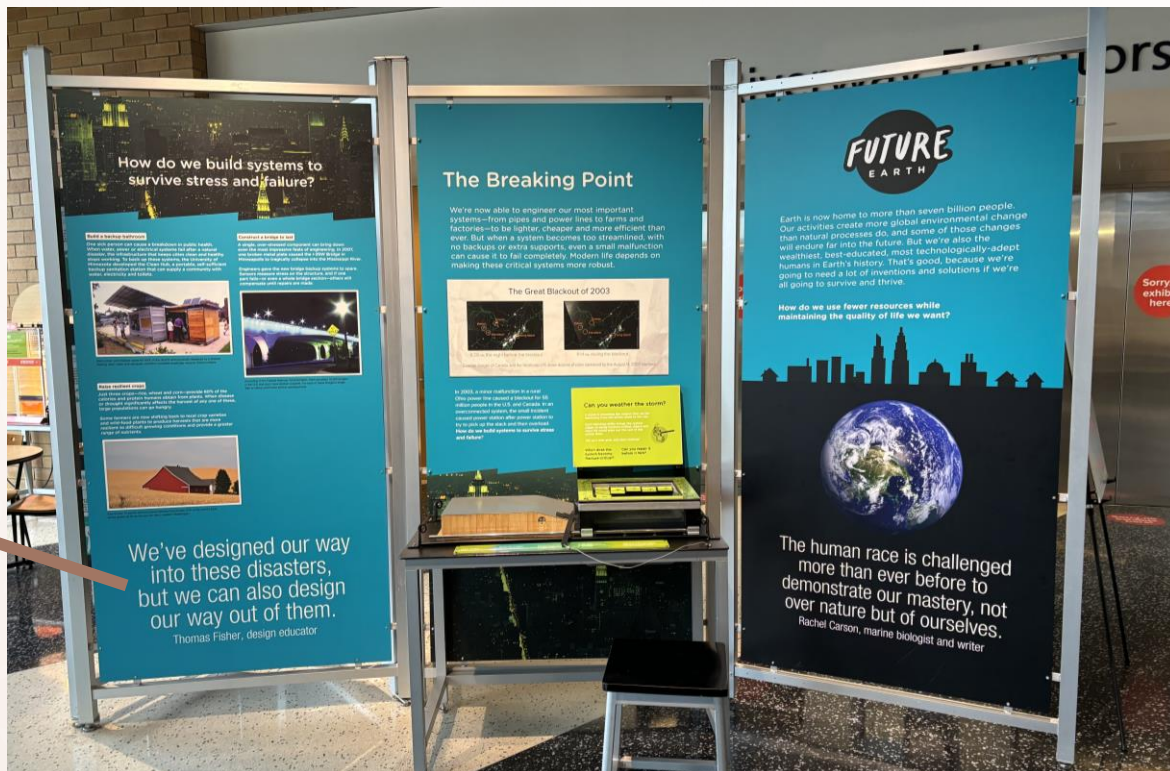
Collective efforts

Network evaluation, advocacy, publicity, content co-creation

Active hope

We've designed our way into these disasters, but we can also design our way out of them.

-Thomas Fisher, design educator



Science Museum of Minnesota

Shared values

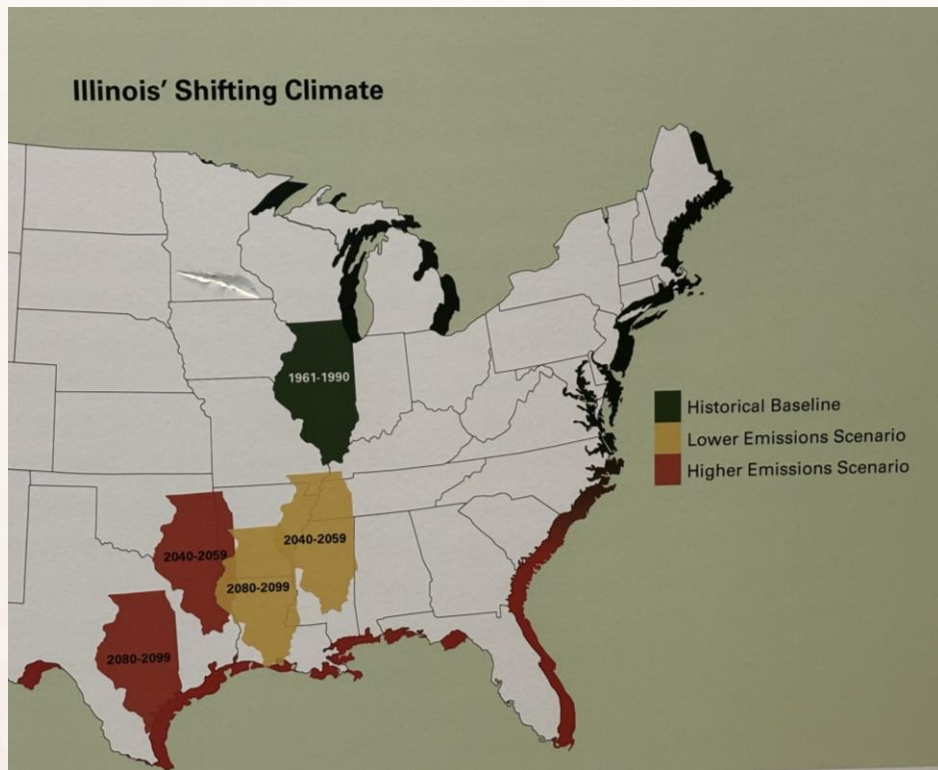
Examples:

- Fairness
- Health
- Resourceful
- Innovative
- Future generations



National Aquarium

Spotlight local



The problems are here and now AND the solutions are, too.

Natural History Museum of Utah

- Telling stories of climate **progress** happening every day in **Utah**
- Inspiring the rational **hope** needed to forge lasting solutions



SEEDING ACTION

seeding-action.org

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Building Resilient Communities

webjunction.org/news/webjunction/building-resilient-communities.html



Rose Hendricks
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- Webinars
- Project background reports
 - How a health narrative can enhance communication of six key truths about climate change with diverse audiences* by John E. Kotcher
- Forthcoming call-to-action report
- National Climate Action Strategy for Libraries



**Building
Resilient
Communities**