



# CIRCA Report Cover Climate Justice Community Conversations

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Make the Road Connecticut



Connecticut Institute for Resilience  
and Climate Adaptation



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**Make the Road Connecticut**  
**UCONN CIRCA Final Report**

**3-8 pages, organized with the headings below and answering the questions below**

**Summary**

Make the Road Connecticut is an organization made up of immigrant, Latine, Black, brown poor and working-class people who are impacted by environmental and climate justice issues both in the countries people come from as well as here in the United States. Our goal with this project was to provide political education for our members to enhance their understanding of the connections between environmental and climate justice issues and come up with some next steps that we can take as an organization on these issues and recommendations of changes that are needed within the community to achieve greater environmental and climate justice. We partnered with Save the Sound to develop workshops and had two successful community conversations that engaged over 40 people in a conversation about climate justice issues in Hartford and Bridgeport. Our members made many connections between the housing and health issues that we work on and the ways that environmental injustice impacted their communities. Members left feeling more aware of these issues and what can be done to change them.

**Grant Project Activities**

Make the Road worked with Alex Rodriguez at Save the Sound to put together a workshop for our Hartford and Bridgeport staff and members to better understand what climate justice is and how the work we do currently connects to climate justice. We held one workshop in Hartford and one in Bridgeport where over 40 members attended in total. These workshops took place at our offices and engaged members from across multiple neighborhoods in both cities. Members learned about the history of the environmental justice movement and the ways that Black and brown contributed to and shaped that movement. Members discussed local environmental and climate justice issues including where big polluters like trash incinerators and power plants are located in relationship to communities of color and why those decisions were made. Members also discussed ways that we could take action together to make changes to the way that environmental injustices are impacting their communities.

**Grant Project Outcomes**

Overall, we were able to partially achieve the goals outcomes that we listed in our application. As mentioned above, we did achieve our goals of having staff and members receive political education about climate and environmental justice so that they could

understand how it connects to the other issues that we work on. This political education resulted in our members having a better understanding of the history of the environmental justice movement, what injustices we are facing here locally, and what we can do together as a community to impact positive change. We partnered with Save the Sound to make these workshops possible and at the end of the workshop listed some next steps that we could take to better incorporate environmental justice themes into other campaigns, especially around housing and health. For example, our members made the connection between the way that asthma impacts kids in Hartford and Bridgeport and the number of environmental pollutants concentrated in those cities being near trash incinerators, highways, and other pollutants.

The community that we engaged through the project was our membership, Black, brown, immigrant, Latine, poor and working class members from Hartford and Bridgeport. Many of our members are directly impacted by the immigration system and come from countries that have faced climate disasters. These experiences give them a unique and powerful perspective on how these issues impact our communities and stories they can use to push for needed policy and long-term changes.

Our intention for this project was to have follow up conversations after the workshops to form a group of members who would make recommendations based on what was covered in the workshops. Instead we talked about recommendations during the workshop itself and did not proceed with any specific follow up yet. This was for a multitude of reasons including the increased threats against community members taking priority in terms of where much of our energy is currently focused as well as lost funding in 2025 that led to a need to focus on restructuring and reorganizing our work to be sustainable for the long-term. In response to the increased attacks on immigrant community members, we mobilized hundreds of people to get involved in accompanying immigrant community members to appointments and court hearings and formed a rapid response network to respond to ICE presence in the greater Bridgeport area. We also have connected many community members to legal resources. In terms of our restructuring, we created new, broader buckets for our work that included economic justice, health and immigration, and youth work. These broader buckets are allowing our work to be more connected across cities and within our statewide work and acknowledge the similar root causes that impact systems like housing, education, and health.

## **Capacity-Building Progress**

The education and conversation that we had with Save the Sound increased our members' understanding of climate and environmental justice issues impacting our communities and supported our members in thinking about how to connect these issues to our other campaigns. There were concrete examples given of how to use strategies our members are already familiar with, including legislative advocacy, municipal advocacy, and community education. This gave our members more confidence that they could have an impact on the climate justice issues impacting them locally. Save the Sound also developed a workshop that we can use to train and discuss with our members about climate justice issues and are now a stronger partner that we know we can call on when we have questions and to work together on shared advocacy priorities.

## Pictures



Our workshop with Save the Sound in Hartford. Over 20 of our members attended this workshop.