## Create flyers, banners, or art installations

Displaying posters or banners and distributing flyers or leaflets can be a great way to spread your message to a large group of people. Your materials can convey your message in a straightforward, informative way, or you can tap into your creative side and take action using art. You could also combine both approaches and design an infographic or illustration with text. By using material that is both creative and informative, you can inspire people to really listen to your message and in doing so appeal to your audience on a deeper level.

* **Where** will you display and distribute your materials? Pick an area where lots of people will stop, look at, and talk about what you’re distributing (the cafeteria, school entrance, or quad, for example).
* Think about **when** you will distribute your materials. You want to find times of day when people will be able to stop and spend time with your materials (before or after school, or at lunch) and when there aren’t competing distractions (such as at a sports event or performance).
* **Whom** will you connect with ahead of time? School or local newspapers can cover your action and supporting clubs or organizations can share your work on social media.
* Do you have an “**ask**” of people who view your action? Consider sharing resources with more in-depth information, or asking people to take a specific step connected to your topic.

Making people aware of climate-change issues through art can take many forms, depending on your interests and talents. Develop a plan to share your materials at an event, on social media, or in another forum. Types of art can include:

* Illustrations, designs, or infographics on your flyers, posters, other physical materials, or digital art
* Paintings or large-scale murals
* Short films
* Performance (spoken word, comedy, or poetry)
* Photography
* Any other medium that speaks to your skills and interests!

## Write an article for your school or local newspaper

Articles, letters to the editors, and op-eds (opinion pieces) are great ways to raise the profile of climate issues in your community. You have the opportunity to explain—in your own voice—the importance, impact, and areas for innovation and change. You can encourage others to take action as well. Many media outlets have a way for readers to submit content.

* **Identify your issue** and explain why it is important. What is the historical context for your issue and how does it connect to other issues important to your community?
* Explain how the issue impacts you personally and how it **impacts your community**. Consider including examples from your personal experience.
* Include **evidence** from secondary sources to support your information. You can use materials from the course or seek outside sources—make sure to cite the sources of your information.
* Offer ways for readers to **get involved, learn more, or recommend a specific action** to take.
* Research which types of public submissions are typically published and make sure you know the **guidelines for submission**.
* Ask a peer to read and edit your article or letter before you submit it.

## Host a documentary screening

Share information with your community by hosting a documentary screening on a particular solution, one that offers opportunities for your community. Hosting an event like this is a fun way to share information, plus you will be able to connect with community members to build continued support for your issue.

* **You could host a screening in your school auditorium or reach out to a local theater to see if they would sponsor the event**. What materials will you need for your presentation? Visuals, data representations, even music will make your presentation engaging and memorable.
* Advertise for your event ahead of time and reach out to school clubs, local nonprofits, and decision-makers you want to expose to your topic.
* Make time for a discussion about possible future plans to support or implement the solution you’re focusing on.
* **At the screening, make sure to provide resources for people to get involved**, learn more about your topic, or recommend a specific action people can take.

## Create a social-media campaign

Social media allows you to share your message with a large group of people beyond your immediate geographical area. This type of action likely allows you to engage more people than those who would show up to an in-person event. You can use social-media platforms to convey your message, share information, and build your audience. Create a unique hashtag to track and make it easy to build power for your action.

* **Build your base:** The more people involved, the farther your message spreads. How can you enlist as many people as possible to share content/ reshare posts? Reach out to school clubs and local nonprofits with similar interests.
* Create content that is appropriate for the medium you’re using, but make sure to have a place people can go for more information.
* What is your “**ask**” of participants? Share resources with more in-depth information, how to get involved further, or ask people to take a specific step connected to your topic.

## Host a community-action day

Gathering people to participate in a day of action is a great way to generate enthusiasm for your cause and motivate people in your community to further action. It is an opportunity to share information, increase awareness, and build connection among community members. Your event can be designed for a specific group of individuals (for example, your group for this project, a sports team, a class) or it can be open to the public. This is a way to make an immediate, tangible impact in your community.

* Pick a date and time with as much lead time as possible. Consider how much time you have available and how much time you will need to plan and prepare.
* Consider cohosting: Partnering with other organizations with shared values is a great way to increase your support base and access to resources.
* Think about what materials you will need and how you will obtain them. For example, if you are planning a tree-planting day at a local school, consider everything you’ll need: Will you purchase or ask a nursery to donate the trees? Will you buy shovels and gloves or ask participants to bring them?
* Be sure to document the event and share photos or videos with participants and any partner organizations.
* Example community action days include:
  + -Host a “Zero Waste” day at your school
  + -Host a community “Bike/Walk-to-Work” Day
  + -Plant trees in a community park or school
  + -Volunteer on a sustainable farm

## Write a letter to an elected official

Personal letters are an extremely effective way of communicating with your elected officials. Writing a letter to a decision-maker is powerful because it lets them know where voters and constituents stand on a given issue. Using this strategy, you have the opportunity to explain, in your own voice, the importance of a given issue to the person who has the power to make change.

* Include in your letter a recommendation for a solution and explain why this solution is important.
* Identify yourself and how you are connected to the official—remember officials are most concerned with the opinions of their constituents.
* Identify the problem your recommendation is addressing and explain why this problem is significant. What is the historical context for your issue and how does it connect to other issues important to your community?
* Explain how this problem impacts you personally. Consider including examples from your personal experience.
* Include secondary sources to support your argument. You can use materials from the course or seek outside sources—make sure to cite the sources of your information.
* Be polite and professional—address the official with their appropriate title.
* Be clear and concise. Stick to your specific demands!
* Sign and date your letter and include your contact information for a response.

## Meet with an elected official

Speaking with a decision-maker in person can be a powerful way to advocate for your cause. Meeting face-to-face can be more personal than a phone call or letter and can help you connect with your decision-maker on a deeper level. You will have the decision-maker’s undivided attention as you share your message and recommendations.

* Call the official’s office to set up an appointment to discuss the issue.
* If you are working with a group, assign roles to each member in your group so individuals can prepare what they will share.
* Make sure you know where the decision-maker stands on your topic by looking at their voting history, newspaper articles, speeches, and debates.
* Prepare a reference or “fact sheet” to provide the decision-maker so they’re able to follow along with the information you’re providing.
* In your meeting, identify the problem your policy recommendation is addressing and explain why this problem is significant. What is the historical context for your issue and how does it connect to other issues important to your community?
* Explain how this problem impacts you personally. Consider including examples from your personal experience.
* Think about what the opposition is telling the decision-maker and address those points and provide your rebuttal.
* If you don’t know the answer to a question during the meeting, let the official know you will do some research to find the answer. Make sure to follow up in a timely manner.
* Take notes during the meeting to have a record of what’s agreed to and a reference for future lobbying.
* Follow up after the meeting with a letter thanking the official for meeting with you, reminding them of any action steps, and providing any additional resources.

## Participate in a committee hearing or public forum

Speaking out in favor of or against a proposed bill or issue is a powerful way to play a direct role in the legislative process. At both the state and local levels, there is usually an opportunity for public comment before new legislation takes effect. Elected officials want to know if their constituents do or do not support an issue, and a committee hearing or public forum is a great place to make your voice heard.

* Familiarize yourself with the committee process. In most locations, agendas are posted online in advance of a hearing or meeting. Go to your state or local government’s website to find out when the issue you’re interested in will be discussed.
* Consider attending another meeting before the hearing or forum at which you plan to testify to become comfortable with the process.
* Research the membership of the committee or group to know which members are allies and which are opponents. Research how members have voted on similar issues, what’s being discussed in newspaper articles, and what they’ve said in speeches and debates.
* Know how much time you’re permitted to speak. Make the most of your time by making your comments clear and to the point.
* Make sure to include in your message the personal side of the story—how does this issue affect you personally?
* If you are speaking as part of a group, make sure your speeches are not exact replicas of each other’s. Take different approaches and share different stories and facts so your messages are distinct.
* Know what your opponents are arguing and craft a rebuttal to the other side’s main points.
* After you share, make sure to deliver a copy of your testimony and any supporting materials to decision-makers—give this to them personally or send to their office.

## Propose a school-board resolution

Taking your lobbying efforts to your school board can be a powerful way to make an impact in your community. School boards decide what is taught in classrooms, how finances are distributed, and how schools operate. Resolutions can be brought before the board by community members and can include topics like curricula, spending priorities, and building management.

* Find out what policies currently exist in your school district around energy conservation, building retrofitting, and so on. Is climate-change education part of your state or district’s science standards? Talk to your teachers to see what aspects of climate change are part of their curricula. Determining what is already in place will help you identify areas of need.
* Check your school board’s website for information on participation, how community members can engage, and a calendar for when issues will be discussed.
* Gather support for your resolution—consider collecting signatures or having other clubs or organizations sign on to show there’s a lot of support for what you want to accomplish. Is there a board member you can work with who might become an advocate for your resolution?
* Create information sheets for community and board members to learn more about the details of your plan. Consider setting up meetings with individual members to share your plan.
* Get as many supporters as possible to show up to the school-board meeting when your resolution is up for voting. Spread the word on social media encouraging people to show their support.

The chart below provides some resources where you can find information on bills, resolutions, regulations, and other issues in front of different bodies. This is not an exhaustive list—there may be other bodies at the local, state, or national level connected to your areas of interest that you might also choose to explore.

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| **National Level Offices** | **For More Information** | **Notes** |
| * US Senate * US House of Representatives | https://[www.congress.gov/](http://www.congress.gov/)  https://[www.govtrack.us/](http://www.govtrack.us/)  <https://www.senate.gov/senators/senators-contact.htm> <https://www.govinfo.gov/app/collection/CDIR> <https://www.house.gov/representatives/find-your-representative> | * You can usually search for a bill by topic, or you can look at recent activity reports. Be sure to note where in the legislative process a bill or resolution is. * All US senators’ contact information can be found on the senate website and searched by name, state, party, or reelection year. * Elected officials often have their own .gov website. * On most state congressional websites there is a tool to “Find My Legislator.” * On city council websites there is a tool to “Find My Council District.” |
| **State Level Offices** | **For More Information** |
| * Governor * State Senate * State House of Representatives | Search for the governor’s or congressional website for your state <https://www.ncsl.org/> |
| **Local Level Offices** | **For More Information** |
| * Mayor * City Council * School Board | Search for the mayoral, city council, or school board website for your city |