



Building Climate Action Teams (CATs) or Teams

Together Everyone Achieves More!

**A Guide to Local Climate Action Teams (CATs) and Community
Organizing.**



The Historical Mandate

Making History with a New Energy System



Shift to Democratized Energy

We are shifting away from centralized, extractive fossil fuel infrastructure to decentralized, clean, and democratized energy. To speed up, this transition requires active civic participation and historical agency at the local level. Only we as a people organized can drive a successful change.

Response to Urgent Challenges

Change does not occur in some abstract ideation of what is nice to have. It is created in response to a real, urgent, and specific challenge that shakes us out of apathy and habit. Transitioning to a sustainable energy system is historically urgent and demands that we step up to build the power necessary to make this change a reality.

The Organizational Challenge

Shifting from Mobilization to Organization



Marshall Ganz Model: Building durable public power requires shifting from short-term mobilization to long-term organization.

Durable Capacity

The climate crisis cannot be solved by temporary mobilization or single-event turnouts alone. It requires structured, permanent organizational capacity.

Relational Scale

Organizing is leadership that enables people to turn the resources they have into the power they need to make the change they want.

Climate Action Teams (CATs) serve as the local structure to sustain commitment, build deep relationships, and scale efforts. By focusing on long-term organization, we ensure that we are not just raising awareness, but actually building the power required to solve problems and keep them solved.

Crisis Leadership & Capability

Matt Andrews, Lant Pritchett, and Michael Woolcock note IM



Isomorphic Mimicry

Many reform initiatives fail because they are merely 'isomorphic mimicry'—that is, governments and organizations pretend to reform by changing what policies or organizations look like rather than what they actually do. Look at how agreements like the Paris Agreement have derailed many. A noble aspiration which omits fossil fuel mention and allows for NDCs, nationally determined contributions allow not for mitigation but adaptation!

Capability Traps

This dynamic facilitates 'capability traps' in which state or local capacity actually declines because officials are rewarded for adopting 'best practice' models that are completely inappropriate for the local context. Escaping capability traps requires a fundamental shift in how we approach crises: we must move away from top-down, imported solutions and instead focus on building mitigative and adaptive, localized capacity to solve specific, locally-nominated fossil fuel. We are now caught in a climate trap as oil and gas companies continue winding up, not winding down..

Escaping Capability Traps

Problem-Driven Iterative Adaptation (PDIA)



Local Solutions

Focus on solving specific, locally-nominated and defined problems rather than importing external prepackaged solutions. Encourages local actors to take initiative.

ARA

Act, reflect, adapt, and repeat. This step-by-step process builds functional capability through learning by doing, creating resilient local capacity.

Networked Diffusion

Rather than scaling via rigid replication, we diffuse learning dynamically through networks of active local practitioners, sharing lessons across CATs.

How Climate Action Teams Work

Integrating Democratic Justice with Structured Action



Structuring Justice

CATs combine the essential goals of justice and fairness with the practical work of bringing about a new energy system. They analyze local environmental impacts and mobilize community resources. NAZCCA has Green Burial, digital, Community Choice, STEP cats, and a Bike cat as a kitten.

Structured Solutions

By forming structured, permanent teams, communities can effectively drive long-term sustainable change, advocating for municipal and community-scale renewable energy projects.

CAT Issues

CATs issues can build around Food, Health, Education, Forests, Faith, Biking, Peace, Plastics. Often an issue which helps the community to move forward with an indirect emphasis on energy change to reduce climate instability..

People, Power, and Change

Marshall Ganz's Community Organizing Framework



Organizing Model: Community organizing turns the resources we have into the power we need to achieve the change we want.

Defining Power

Power is not a fixed asset; it is a dynamic relationship that can be built and scaled through organization, enabling collective action. What makes for that power is integrating brains (strategy), heart (motivation such as hope, solidarity), and hands (skills)..

Leadership Development

Organizers build power by developing leadership, forming communities around leadership, and mobilizing the unique resources of those communities to achieve specific, strategic outcomes. In many cases, we do not have money, but we have people resources.

Public Narrative



Translating Shared Values of stories into Motivation for Action. Recall what we discussed.

Story of Self

Why you were called to act. This story communicates the unique experiences and values that drive your personal commitment to climate action.

Story of Us

The shared values, experiences, and aspirations of the community that call us to act together. It transforms individuals into a collective 'us'.

Story of Now

The urgent, specific challenge we face today, the choices we must make, and the concrete action we must take immediately to avoid apathy.

The work requires building relationships committed to common interests; translating shared values into sources of motivation to act through narrative; creating structure that facilitates leadership development, collaboration, and coordination; strategizing transformation of resources into the power to achieve goals; and acting to mobilize and deploy social, economic, cultural, and political resources. Organizing is usually conducted as a campaign, a rhythm of change that Stephen Jay Gould calls “time as an arrow,” which requires urgency, focus, and energy. –MG

The fossil fuel Zeitgeist is crushing humanity. A new Zeitgeist around the public narrative endorsing renewable must rise.

CAT Structure & Coordinator Roles

Fostering Distributed Leadership and Sustainable Climate Organizing



CATs distribute leadership and responsibility, avoiding centralized bottlenecks to enable massive scaling.



Effective Team Leadership

Leverages community resources to develop coordination, prioritizing strategic delegation over control.

Volunteer-Led

As a fundamental rule, all coordinators are volunteers, driving the group's authenticity and ultimate power.

Core Functional Coordinator Roles

Digital & Tech

Manages online mobilization platforms, list communication, and digital

Events Lead

Coordinates logistics for local rallies, public discussions, and community meetings

Volunteer Sync

Welcomes, tracks, and integrates new members into active CATs.

Team Leader

Fosters overall alignment, coaching coordinators and bridging local links.

Organizational Levels & the Snowflake Model



How digital, team, and community organizing connect in NAZCCA and other groups Both a digital connection and geographic-structural connection

1. Digital Organizing

Helps to build and support team organizing by establishing digital outreach, communication pipelines, and mobilization platforms.

2. Team growth and improved internal Organizing

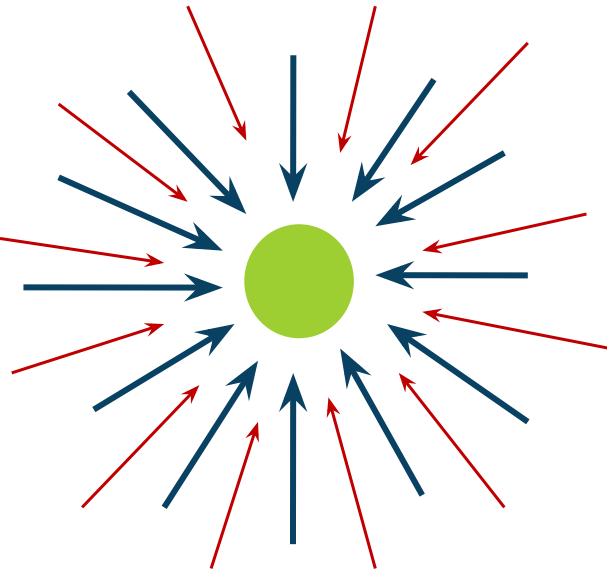
Involves internal teams organizing around separate, focused issues. They use smart goals.

3. Snowflake Model

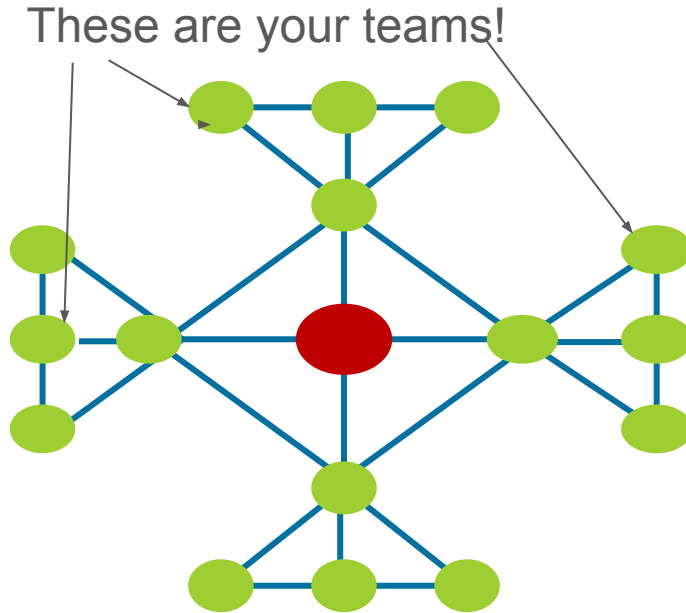
The ultimate scaling of local efforts, where structured team relationships unite to build powerful, broad grassroots community networks. The snowflake model works within a larger community and it works between communities.

The Snowflake Model: Teams work together dynamically, helping each other distribute leadership and responsibilities to avoid centralized bottlenecks.

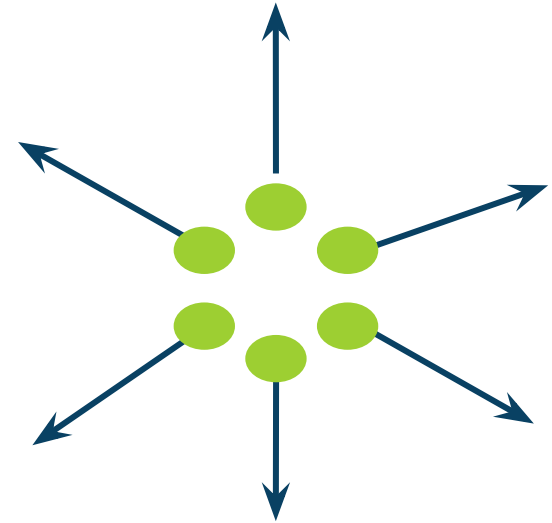
Which of these team models would function the best and why?



ONE LEADER



SNOWFLAKE MODEL



NO LEADER

Distributed Leadership is helped along by Action Network!



Scaling Climate Action Teams Through the Snowflake Model



1

Broaden Engagement

CATs must focus on reaching out locally to expand their community presence and establish a robust, broad grassroots base of support. Data flowing into Action Network including petition signups help, as do event and email invites. Eventually even the board should be electable by vote.

2

Regional Links

Over time, build your team and connect individual teams together regionally to build wider strategic networks and amplify coordinated movement pressure.

3

Snowflake Structure

Adopt a model of interconnected organizational units that distribute leadership and responsibility, avoiding centralized mobilization bottlenecks. That distribution is made possible by the Action Network! In AN we tag folks linked to a CAT if possible and both agree. The admin of the CAT makes sure to bring in the volunteer, often selecting a mentor to help the new volunteer.

Action Network Tagging Setup



A Guide for Local CAT Leaders and Coordinators to Manage Member Data Effectively. Tag when relevant

01

Energy System Tag

Understand how "Energy" is utilized as a highly specific system tag to categorize local interest and align targeted mobilization [efforts](#). In tagging, do not create your own tag but use those given or consult with digital coordinator.

02

Profile Tagging

In Action Network, go directly to the person's file – if you are an administrator. For example, go to People, Activists, insert email address, View Record, Edit Activist, and under Tag add or delete Energy.

03

Automated Ladders

If you have administrative permission, install a ladder operation on the events page or volunteer page, edit section, with a tag such as Energy, if the person selects to volunteer with Energy. .

04

Visit the form sheet and update but avoid tagging.

For NAZCCA,
<https://actionnetwork.org/forms/join-the-nazcca-efforts/>.

For FFF,
<https://admin.actionnetwork.org/forms/volunteer-form-fff-local-v2>

How tags appear in a report under the can2_user_tags

an_report_latest-signups-5-2-5_

first_name	last_name	email	can2_phone	can2_user_cit y	information	volunteer	can2_user_tags	Initial Contact Date	Latest Contact Date
Beverly	Hedden	beverlyhedden@gmail.com	12485619809	Cottonwood	Yes	Yes	AZCAT: Hydrogen Hub, CAT: Green Burial, CAT: Movie Club, SommerList, Verde: Electrify, talks		
Kathleen	Harley-Mays	kharmays@gmail.com	19282735386	Prescott	Yes	Yes	PrescottCAT: Fleet		
Doug	Bland	doug.bland@azipl.org		Cottonwood	Yes	Yes	SommerList, talks		

Apache County
AZ CAT - Vegan
Vegan
AZCAT CCA
Energy
AZCAT: Digital
Digital
AZCAT: Educator
Apache
Educator
AZCAT: Fossil Free
Energy
AZCAT: Hydrogen Hub
Energy
AZCAT: Spotlight
Spotlight
boardco
drop

FlagCAT: Faith
Faith
FlagCAT: Farmer
Health
FlagCAT: FEN
Energy
FlagCAT: Ped-Pedal
Bike
FlagCAT: Protest
Ope
+
FlagCAT: Youth
Youth
Flagstaff: Clean Health
CAT
Health
Fundraiser

peace
Podcast Report
PRCAT
PR
Prescott:
Community
Engagement CAT
PrescottCAT: Bike
PrescottCAT: Faith
PrescottCAT:
Farmer
PrescottCAT: Fleet
PrescottCAT:
Youth
Quiz_no
Quiz_yes
SedonaCAT: Bike

Relational Commitment



Deepening Community Ties and Leadership Capacity should be assessed. Ask!

Community Relationship Building

Are CAT activities and events enabling the group to build deep, values-based relationships with community stakeholders, faith groups, and other allies?

Increased Leadership Capacity

Is our group's commitment to CATs resulting in increased, measurable capacity and leadership growth among our members? Real organizing is relational, not transactional.

Continuous Progress Evaluation



Core Criteria for Local Climate Action Teams (CATs) need to be reviewed, not just ask about but also evaluate.

“*Local CATs should continuously evaluate their progress using core criteria to maintain momentum, alignment, and community trust.*”



Mission Alignment

Do goals and activities contribute to the larger mission?



Community Building

Are events fostering relationships with allies like faith groups?



Capacity

Is the commitment increasing leadership and capacity?



Strategy

Do campaigns have measurable goals and successive action steps?



Reception

How are campaign messages received by stakeholders and targets?



Support

Are teams receiving sufficient training and reflection opportunities?

Developing Strategic Plans through smart goals



Structuring Campaigns for Successive Action and Real Impact

Measurable Outcomes

Every tactic must serve a strategic plan with clear, quantifiable metrics of success, verifying that actions yield real-world results.

Successive Action Steps

Tactics should build momentum, leading to peak moments of action and successive strategic steps rather than disconnected, isolated events.

Reception & Tone

Our campaign messages and style must align with our organizational values to build public trust, engage allies, and win targets.

In brief, community organizing to a new energy system needs digital organizing.