



# **LCV RJE REPORT 2022 AND 2023**

## LEADERSHIP LETTER

To everyone in the LCV family,

In some ways, 2022 was a year of rebirth for the League of Conservation Voters (LCV). We went from being a fully remote organization in response to the Covid crisis to welcoming staff back to our offices and other in person activities slowly and intentionally. Our organization emerged from the global pandemic stronger and more effective than before, largely due to the resiliency of our staff and their abilities to find innovative ways to approach their work during a period of crisis. Much of that innovation was informed and undergirded by our commitments to upholding principles of equity, racial justice, and inclusion. Infusing those principles into how we influence policy, hold polluters accountable, win elections, and approach our internal operations was instrumental in our successful efforts to pass the most consequential climate legislation in U.S. history, the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA), which includes the Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund, a \$27 billion fund that invests in climate and clean energy projects that benefit low-income and “disadvantaged” communities.

This report offers both an analysis of how we approached our work in 2022 and 2023 through a framework of justice and inclusion, as well as an argument for why this was a winning approach to building the social, political and economic power necessary to protect our democracy and avert a climate catastrophe. It is divided into the following sections, corresponding to the four key strategies employed across the organization to translate our racial justice and equity commitments into action:

- Centering People
- Deepening Partnerships
- Leaning into Accountability
- Internal Supports

As the report illustrates, each of these strategies helped us make progress towards building a world in which all people have the right to clean air, clean water, public lands, and a safe climate, protected by a just and inclusive democracy. In 2022 and 2023, we exceeded expectations in the midterm elections, helped pass the IRA, continued to protect public lands, strengthened coalitions, and helped build grassroots power in communities disproportionately affected by climate change, environmentally irresponsible practices of the fossil fuel industry, and voter suppression efforts.

LCV is still maturing in its ability to fully embed equity, inclusion, and racial justice in our work. We will continue to learn from our successes as well as our challenges and remain committed to protecting the future of our planet and its people while attending to the disproportionate impacts of climate change on the health and safety of communities today.

Thank you all for your continued commitment to our movement and support for this organization.

Sincerely,



Gene Karpinski  
President



Carol M. Browner  
Board Chair

## INTRODUCTION

The League of Conservation Voters (LCV) envisions a world in which tackling the climate crisis, confronting environmental injustice, and strengthening our democracy lead to cleaner and healthier communities, good, well-paying jobs, and a just, equitable, and sustainable future for all. Climate change is not just a distant threat to our future. The daily news reminds us that natural disasters such as hurricanes, fires, floods, and droughts are now more powerful, deadlier, and costlier than ever in terms of loss of life as well as damages to homes, businesses, and basic infrastructure.

Climate change has also had negative impacts on the food we grow. Heat waves, droughts, floods, and powerful storms have reduced the yield of many crops around the world including dietary staples such as rice and other grains. Reduced food yields increase hunger and food insecurity and contribute to the higher price of groceries. In short, climate change is not just a threat to our future, it presents a real danger to our lives and livelihoods today.

LCV is committed to ensuring that our efforts to tackle the climate crisis intentionally address the lived experiences of those presently impacted by harmful environmental consequences made more severe by climate change. This approach brings us closer to a day when all people have access to safe water, clean air, and healthy food regardless of race, income, or geography.

LCV's comprehensive and multi-faceted approach combines advocacy for policy change; holding elected officials accountable; mobilizing and building grassroots power in communities; electing candidates who share our values; and investing in strong partnerships with our state affiliates and other allied organizations.

Taken together - and guided by a framework that centers principles of racial justice and equity- these strategies uniquely position LCV and our partners to succeed in forestalling the climate crisis. Essential to successfully implementing these strategies is a robust fundraising and donor engagement apparatus, internal structures and systems that support our people, and an organizational culture that continually honors and brings to life our core values.

This report highlights how LCV achieved our most significant accomplishments in 2022 and 2023 - specifically how continuing to center racial justice, equity, and inclusion in our programmatic work and internal operations helped lead to those wins. We believe centering these principles is the best way to build the social, political, and economic power necessary to protect our democracy and avert climate catastrophe. LCV hasn't perfected this approach and doesn't win every fight, but our increased competencies in centering racial justice and equity have made us stronger and more effective in achieving our goals. Whether in our policy work, elections, organizing, or internal operations, focusing on achieving more just and equitable outcomes informed how we approached and executed our core organizational strategies. This included:

- Centering people
- Deepening partnerships
- Leaning into accountability
- Internal Supports

The sections below illustrate how these themes were operationalized in our work in 2022 and 2023 and enabled LCV to become a more powerful, relevant, and effective organization.

## CENTERING PEOPLE

LCV's growth and increased impact over the years is due in large part to our greater understanding of the present-day impacts of climate change on people, and how these impacts don't affect communities equally or randomly. Their stories and experiences hold vital keys to what a people-centered approach to addressing the climate crisis should entail. This includes approaches that ensure that **all** communities and individuals across the U.S. have access to clean air and water today as a means to securing a healthier future for all. Learning how to better center people in how we do our work was a core strategy for meaningfully upholding our organizational values and growing a larger, stronger climate movement.

### **Centering People in Communications and Fundraising**

Centering people in our work requires intentional, thoughtful action, but words matter as well. How we describe our work externally is critical to informing the public about what we do and why, and offer crucial opportunities for growing our membership and donor bases, attracting partners and job applicants, and strengthening our movement.

Centering people in our external communications, which includes our fundraising efforts, involves thoughtfully crafting our messages and selecting our messengers. Over the past decade, LCV and our Communications Team have become better messengers on the negative effects of climate change and their disproportionate impacts on low-wealth communities and communities of color. This includes becoming better at telling the story of why that disproportionate impact exists and why centering those communities in how we approach forestalling the climate crisis is a winning strategy for achieving our climate goals.

We have also worked to expand who we're communicating to beyond our traditional audience, including working with social media influencers, with local visual artists to communicate with communities in ways that resonate with their local history and culture, and with our staff, state affiliates, and other partners to elevate the stories of individuals within our movement whose direct experiences with environmental injustice provide informed insights into the negative consequences of that injustice on their communities and beyond.

In our fundraising efforts including mailings, emails and in-person donor visits, we are intentional about connecting climate change, democracy, and land conservation with the fight for racial and environmental justice. While more progress can be made, we have moved from simply tacking on a sentence or two about justice or equity to more fully integrating our organizational values in all conversations and messaging. As one staff member stated, "Our messaging is no longer the generic, Gotta win on climate! Now it's, Gotta win on climate equitably!"

## **Centering People in Policy**

"Gotta win on climate equitably" was a rallying cry across our programmatic work in 2022 and 2023. In every communication with lawmakers, coalition partners, community organizations and donors we were outspoken and transparent about our racial justice and equity commitments.

The passage of the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) was undeniably one of LCV's most historic accomplishments during this time period, achieving the largest federal investment to reduce carbon pollution in U.S. history. The tireless work of our staff and coalition partners was critical to getting the IRA across the finish line and ensuring that environmental justice provisions remained in the Bill. When some organizations and elected officials tried to eliminate critical environmental justice components, our staff and coalition partners fought back. LCV consistently worked to demand that commitments to environmental justice were not sacrificed in pursuit of victory.

The final bill was not perfect, and includes some provisions that fell short of our equity goals such as allowing harmful fossil fuel expansion in already vulnerable low-wealth and communities of color in the Gulf Region and Alaska. After the IRA's passage, LCV worked with coalition partners to reduce the impacts of those provisions by advocating a halt to new offshore drilling leases and mobilized thousands of people to submit public comments to the Department of Interior as it was finalizing its five-year offshore drilling plan.

Passing a law is just the first step. The work continues in ensuring that laws are implemented effectively. LCV worked closely with our state affiliates and environmental justice organizations to ensure that the implementation of the IRA at the local level centers the needs of communities and is done justly, equitably, and effectively. That includes helping to remove barriers to applying for federal IRA funds, and supporting the flow of these funds to communities that are most in need of them.

Another way in which LCV centered people in 2022 and 2023 in our policy work is the building out of our Healthy Communities Program. Healthy Communities lies at the intersection of human health, the environment, and justice and centers people in our work to eliminate pollution in the air, water, soil, and food that jeopardizes the health of all families and communities. During this time period and moving forward, the program's focus includes:

- Encouraging federal policymakers to ban and clean up dangerous PFAS, known as "forever chemicals" because they do not break down in the environment or human body, which can lead to health problems like certain cancers, weakened immune response, developmental impacts, hormonal issues, and decreased fertility;
- Working with our allies in the labor and environmental justice movements to secure protections for workers and frontline communities that face the brunt of pollution from fossil fuel and chemical production; and
- As a member of the Equitable & Just National Climate Forum, working with our partners in the environmental justice movement to address the legacy of industrial pollution that contaminates our air and water, and to ensure that every community exists in a healthy,

safe environment and federal investments in infrastructure and environmental health prioritize and reach the communities most impacted.

### **Centering People in Protecting Public Lands**

Safeguarding our nation's public lands and oceans is essential to fostering a healthy, sustainable environment for all, and to addressing the climate and biodiversity crises through nature-based solutions. Conserving public lands and ending fossil fuel development on the public estate helps us meet our greenhouse gas reduction targets and provides equitable access to nature. As such, we work to protect our public lands and waters through uplifting local movements and driving federal action to increase opportunities for all people to experience and feel welcome on our public lands. One example of this people-centered approach in 2022 and 2023 is LCV's and Chispa Arizona's support for and deep engagement with the Tribally-led efforts that resulted in the August 2023 designation of Baaj Nwaavjo I'tah Kukveni—Ancestral Footprints of the Grand Canyon National Monument. By partnering with – and learning from –the Indigenous communities leading this effort, we were able to advocate for Native peoples to have shared management of this monument that is so closely tied to their land and culture. This designation protected nearly one million acres in the Grand Canyon region including sacred sites of the Havasupai, Hualapai, Hopi, and Navajo people.

### **Centering People in Grassroots Organizing and Power Building**

LCV's community-based organizing programs help build a locally rooted and racially inclusive grassroots base of power to advocate for climate action and a stronger democracy. Through our Chispa, Climate Action, and Candidate Academy programs, we connect people to political solutions based on the needs of their communities. While our organizing work has always been predicated on the principle of centering people, we continuously strive to support the development of greater grassroots power within those communities. Central to this work is our commitment to building deeper, more authentic partnerships with community leaders, organizations, and individuals to ensure that their needs and voices are centered when climate and environmental policies are being created, discussed, and implemented. (See section on Deepening Partnerships below.)

Our efforts to better center people in our organizing programs - specifically those in communities most impacted by the effects of climate change - were an integral part of LCV's campaign to get the IRA passed into law. Through our Chispa and Climate Action programs, while we use quantitative metrics such as numbers of doors knocked to provide a measure of our reach within the communities we serve, we understand that true organizing also entails long-term relationship building with community members and leaders in order to achieve meaningful long-term environmental justice wins that align with other key issues that confront them. This means centering their needs in all of our campaigns and programs.

One urgent need across our country, including in the communities we serve, is more leaders who share our vision of a world in which we have a healthy environment and healthy communities protected by a just and equitable democracy. LCV's **Candidate Recruitment and Training Academy** provides robust leadership development opportunities to local advocates who become leaders in grassroots organizations, utility boards and local governments. This creates a pipeline of talented individuals with deep connections to their communities and interest in running for future state-wide

and federal elected positions. In 2022, the Academy trained 15 prospective candidates, including Priya Sundareshan, who went on to win her race for Arizona state Senate (LD-18).

### **Centering People in Elections**

LCV believes that centering people in our electoral work means the candidates we endorse and elect to local, state and federal office should reflect the communities they represent. We do not endorse candidates based on demographics alone but on their deep ties to the communities they seek to represent, their track record and commitments to serving those communities in an equitable and just way, and their support for solutions to the climate crisis that will help secure clean water, clean air, and improved health outcomes for those communities. Some of the highlights of this people-centered approach included:

- Investing \$550,000 to support four pro-environment, non-incumbent, women of color running for U.S. House seats in competitive primaries in 2022: Jessica Cisneros, candidate for TX-28; Donna Edwards, candidate for MD-04; Summer Lee, candidate for PA-12; and Andrea Salinas, candidate for OR-06. Lee and Salinas eventually won their elections, contributing to the racial and gender diversity of Congress and adding two more Climate Champions to our ranks.
- Also in 2022, LCV Action Fund endorsed 181 federal candidates. Of the candidates we endorsed, 48% were women, 38% were candidates of color, and 6% identified as LGBTQ+. Some of our endorsed candidates who made history in 2022 include:

**Becca Balint (VT-AL):** first woman and first openly LGBTQ+ person to represent Vermont in Congress.

**Dr. Yadira Caraveo (CO-08):** first Latina member of Congress to represent Colorado.

**Maxwell Frost (FL-10):** first-ever Gen-Z member and also the first Afro-Cuban to serve in Congress.

**Robert Garcia (CA-42):** first LGBTQ+ immigrant elected to Congress.

**Marie Gluesenkamp Pérez (WA-03):** first Latina Democrat to represent the state of Washington in Congress.

**Summer Lee (PA-12):** first Black woman to represent Pennsylvania in Congress.

**Delia Ramirez (IL-03):** first Latina elected to represent Illinois in Congress.

**Andrea Salinas (OR-06):** first Latina to represent Oregon in Congress.

**Eric Sorensen (IL-17):** first openly LGBTQ+ person elected to Congress from the state of Illinois.

**Shri Thanedar (MI-13):** first Indian American to represent Michigan in Congress.

Many of these candidates were not well known in the political arena, particularly to Congress or state legislatures. Their endorsements helped increase diversity of lived experience and thought in the candidate pool, increased the number of candidates representing the interests of the communities they hoped to serve, and increased the number of candidates committed to environmental justice and tackling the climate crisis, their wins were a significant reason the predicted "red wave" in the midterm elections was averted.

### **Centering People in Our Internal Operations**

None of our external programming would be possible without our staff. The work they do to ensure we center people in our programs is possible in part because of the work we do internally to support staff in this endeavor.

One of the most significant ways we leaned into centering people internally at LCV in this time period was through collective bargaining. LCV has been a unionized organization since 2019 and signed our first CBA in August of 2020. The bargaining between staff and management for our second contract was largely concluded at the end of 2023 and culminated in a new collective bargaining agreement (CBA) that secured new gains for staff, including more vacation time and personal days, more generous health insurance coverage provisions, and an ongoing commitment to ensuring our workplace remains an inclusive one for staff of all backgrounds.

Our Finance and Legal teams leaned into creating more transparent and equitable systems that centered on the needs of staff. In 2022 and 2023, our Finance Team worked tirelessly to transform our internal financial systems to support non-finance staff to manage their budgets. The long-term goal of the Finance department is to help contribute to a sustainable workplace by creating and maintaining systems and procedures that maximize the quality of the organization's financial data while minimizing the amount of staff time needed to produce it. LCV's Legal and Compliance team revamped our contract review process to make it easier for staff to submit contracts for review, reduce the timeline for approving and executing contracts, and streamline the process for staff and our external grantees in finalizing grant agreements.

Our Human Resources Team also focused on centering staff in their role of creating, maintaining, and implementing policies and procedures across the organization guided by values of inclusion and equity. One prime example during 2022 and 2023 was the rollout of our Reasonable Accommodations Policy, which was paired with a series of trainings and workshops on Disability Justice designed to: instruct staff on how to request accommodations when needed; ensure teams were equipped to effectively support the implementation of those accommodations for their colleagues; and further promote an inclusive organizational culture.

### **DEEPENING PARTNERSHIPS**

Protecting our environment requires massive popular support to overcome powerful opposing interests that place profit over people and the planet. No one organization can build the social, political, and economic power necessary to protect our democracy and avert climate catastrophe. LCV is investing in developing long-term, deep partnerships needed to grow and strengthen a movement large and diverse enough to save our planet.



## **Deepening Partnerships: Grassroots Organizing and Power Building**

LCV is committed to building a locally rooted and racially inclusive grassroots movement for climate action and a stronger democracy. Central to this work is our commitment to building deeper, more authentic partnerships with community leaders, organizations, and individuals to ensure their needs and voices are centered when environmental and democracy policies are being created, discussed, and implemented.

We understand that effective organizing requires long-term relationship building with community members and leaders. By listening to and engaging deeply with our partners, we are better able to achieve long-term environmental justice wins.

- Chispa (Spanish for 'spark') is an LCV program that seeks to create healthier environments in Latinx communities and other communities of color that are disproportionately impacted by destructive environmental policies. In 2022 and 2023, our Chispa National and state programs continued to grow their community partnerships, particularly with other Hispanic/Latinx environmental groups. In 2023, Chispa National granted \$1.3 million to state programs in Arizona, Colorado, Florida, Maryland, Nevada, and Texas for organizing Hispanic/Latinx communities around climate justice. They also demonstrated responsive partnership by providing additional resources, sponsorships, and capacity building support on an as-needed basis.
- Chispa National also awarded more than \$500,000 to Chispa state programs focused on localized campaigns to access and effectively utilize federal implementation funds from the IRA, as well as Justice40<sup>1</sup> and the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act<sup>2</sup> to help Hispanic/Latinx communities gain access to federal funds available through the Inflation Reduction Act and the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act. These grants are designed to encourage and deepen collaboration between organizations committed to accessing federal implementation funding in partnership with the communities they serve.
- Our Climate Action Teams in Nevada, New Hampshire, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, and Virginia continued to strengthen collaborations with partner organizations, including 50 organizations led by and serving people of color. These partnerships have deepened trust and allyship across multiple and varied racial and economic justice campaigns.

This approach to deepening partnerships also applies directly to the communities our Climate Action teams serve. Building grassroots power involves organizing with passion and compassion and taking time to build authentic relationships. This requires a pivot away from designing organizing campaigns in short-term increments that focus on metrics as a goal unto themselves, and a shift towards the development of deep partnerships as the end goal, which requires long-term presence and commitment within and to those communities. As one member of staff stated, "You don't let metrics

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<sup>1</sup> Justice40 is a government initiative to deliver at least 40 percent of the overall benefits from certain federal investments to "disadvantaged communities".

<sup>2</sup> The Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act is a once-in-a-generation investment in our nation's infrastructure focused on rebuilding America's roads, bridges, and rails; expanding high-speed internet to communities across the country who lack access to this service; and tackling the climate crisis, advancing environmental justice, and investing in communities that have too often been left out of significant investments.

drive you. You can still produce great numbers, and you will if you're developing real relationships. Organizing with compassion, organizing in a way of just really taking the time and listening and responding to the needs of the community will produce good numbers. Developing long-term partners instead of looking at people and campaigns in 3-month increments will have lasting positive impacts beyond just the length of a campaign. That makes it much more likely that you'll have good metrics moving forward. The metrics aren't the goal, developing deep partnerships is the goal. If you work on those partnerships, the metrics will follow." With donor support, and the commitment of our talented organizers, we are able to sustain our presence in communities and build trusted partnerships that are integral to driving long-term policy wins.

### **Deepening Partnerships: Coalition Building**

The passage of the IRA was the most significant win on climate legislation for our organization, our movement, and the American people in history. The centrality of coalition building in achieving that win cannot be stressed enough. For over a decade, guided by our racial justice and equity commitments, LCV worked to build new coalitions and deepen existing ones, especially with environmental justice groups and other progressive organizations.

### **The Equitable and Just National Climate Forum**

For the past several years, LCV has been part of efforts to center racial and environmental justice across the broader climate movement. In partnership with a number of environmental and environmental justice partners, we helped establish the Equitable & Just National Climate Platform. During 2022 and 2023, the coalition continued to build a broader, more diverse climate justice movement that includes youth- and people of color-led organizations that have been doing the hard work of organizing and activating within and with communities on the front lines of polluting industries and targeted by those industries for decades.

Intentionally building and broadening our coalition over time helped LCV build more power, co-create and support smarter, more equitable, and just policy goals and ideas, and expand our reach. As part of this coalition, we have gotten more astute at connecting the dots between climate, the environment, and other interconnected, intersectional issues. LCV and our coalition partners will continue working together to ensure our movement gains relevance and impact by increasing the number of people across the U.S. who recognize climate change and environmental issues as kitchen table issues

### **Alliance for Electric School Buses**

LCV's National Chispa Program was one of four founding members of the Alliance for Electric School Buses in 2017. The coalition organizes local community members to advocate for a transition from dirty diesel to zero-emission electric school buses. The coalition has helped significantly increase access to funding to electrify school buses across the country, an emissions reduction solution that slows climate change *and* improves the health of children, bus drivers, crossing guards, and educators. The Alliance provides guidance to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) on their clean school bus program, including suggestions on how to electrify school bus fleets more equitably across the country, especially in communities of color.

## **Deepening Partnerships: The Conservation Voters Movement**

LCV's more than 30 state affiliates, along with LCV, comprise the Conservation Voters Movement (**CVM**). Our state affiliates are at the epicenter of our environmental justice, climate, and democracy work across the country. Their deep local expertise allows them to convene and empower broad coalitions that include environmental justice groups, communities of color, and low-wealth communities. These coalitions are driving clean energy legislation that stays true to environmental justice principles across multiple states.

In 2022, LCV and our state affiliates finalized our most recent CVM Agreement, laying out the values that guide how we work together as a movement and includes a long-term vision of the CVM on climate and clean energy, democracy for all, public lands, and our collective commitment to anti-racism.

In 2023, we finalized the **Racial Justice and Equity Principles for CVM Development**. Influenced by LCV's Anti-Racist Fundraising Principles, this document provides guidance for how we as a movement will fundraise together, creating additional avenues to effectively raise money collectively and deepen trust and collaboration between CVM partners in ways that honor our shared values.

LCV's deep partnership with state affiliates includes providing grants that help fuel their work. For example:

- Our Clean Energy for All (**CEFA**) program granted millions of dollars in 2022 and 2023 to state affiliates to support their climate and energy advocacy work. The funds support affiliates in equitably advancing 100% clean energy policies and implementing our collectively defined CEFA racial and economic justice principles.
- Our **State Partnerships Program** supports state affiliates to expand and deepen authentic, long-term partnerships with communities of color, low-wealth communities, working families, rural towns, and other communities. Grounded in shared power and resources, mutual respect, and collaborative decision making, these partnerships build authentic local movements to address impacts of climate change, environmental harm, and threats to democracy.
- Finally, our **Level Up Operations and HR Systems, Policies, and Practices Grant Program** provided funding to over 20 state affiliates in 2022 and 2023. Designed to help organizations strengthen their capacity for action, the grants are invested in critical "back office" infrastructure, internal systems, and Human Resources policies and practices (e.g. recruitment, hiring, onboarding, culture, evaluation, compliance, compensation, benefits, payroll). The grants enable our affiliates to create operational systems that are just, equitable, and right sized to support staff.

## LEANING INTO ACCOUNTABILITY

### Leaning into Accountability: Elected Officials

One of our core organizational strategies is working with and holding elected officials accountable for promises made to the American people on our core issues. When our leaders keep their promises, we elevate and celebrate their leadership in the media and with their constituents. In 2022, after the IRA was signed into law, LCV in collaboration with Climate Power launched a \$2.2 million campaign thanking the dozens of Senators and House members who voted to pass the IRA, including those core congressional allies who fought for the environmental justice provisions in the law. Through positive accountability measures like this, we ensure that elected officials know their work is seen and appreciated, and is a win for their communities and our movement.

We also hold elected leaders accountable through our *National Environmental Scorecard*. Released annually, our *Scorecard* provides an objective, factual scoring of the voting records of all members of Congress on legislation in the areas of:

- climate change
- democracy
- spending for environmental programs
- environmental and racial justice
- energy
- public health
- worker protections
- public lands
- wildlife conservation

Each year, experts from environmental, environmental justice, and conservation organizations collectively select the critical votes on which members of Congress are scored. In 2022 and 2023, as part of our evolution in better recognizing the interconnectedness of our climate, racial justice, and democracy goals, our Scorecard included more votes related to racial justice and democracy in both chambers. These scores help distinguish which legislators are working to help secure our environment and our democracy.

Other examples of how LCV worked to hold elected officials accountable publicly include:

- In 2022 we worked with partners to defeat Senator Joe Manchin's (WV) proposed Energy Independence and Security Act of 2022. The bill would have rolled back permitting requirements and supported the fracked methane gas Mountain Valley Pipeline that would have posed unacceptable risks to communities that live along its proposed path, that would have contributed to significant health risks to local communities and threats to their water quality. Our 2022 Congressional Scorecard included how members voted on this regressive piece of legislation.

- In 2023, we launched a \$200,000 digital campaign to celebrate members of the U.S. House working to protect strong standards for cleaner cars and trucks. The campaign also called out those House members who voted to block progress for cleaner vehicles.

### **Leaning into Accountability: Internal Operations**

Accountability doesn't begin and end with our external facing work. In 2022 and 2023, our Human Resources department worked to shore up some of our internal mechanisms for ensuring staff across the organization take ownership of their racial justice and equity responsibilities. Human Resources works with hiring managers to ensure that racial justice and equity competencies are included in job descriptions for all potential hires and that these competencies are evaluated as part of the hiring process. Our annual review process asks staff to reflect on how they have approached centering racial justice and equity in their roles and responsibilities and to demonstrate ways in which they are doing so competently. Supervisors are tasked with evaluating that work, providing feedback and suggestions for staff growth in these areas, and including staff competency in these areas as part of the promotion process.

## **INTERNAL SUPPORTS**

Throughout 2022 and 2023, LCV As LCV grows further develops our ability as an organization to center principles of racial and economic justice, equity, and inclusion in our work, we also support staff to increase and enhance their competencies in this area as well. In 2022 and 2023

### **Internal Supports: Organizational Culture**

Through 2022 and 2023, LCV focused heavily on creating a culture that was inclusive, equitable, and dedicated to supporting the professional development and success of staff across the organization. Central to our internal culture efforts was our Values Initiative. Launched in 2023, the initiative was designed to socialize our organizational values, create alignment on what our values mean, and support departments and individuals in thinking through how these values inform how we lean into our roles and responsibilities, how we work together, and how we work with our external partners. This initiative included organization-wide workshops, department-specific trainings, and one-on-one consultations with staff- all geared towards providing LCV employees, including senior executives, with the tools to operationalize our values in their work and connect the dots between living our values and the ability to better center racial justice and equity in our work. Our values help guide us to be better colleagues, better colleagues, and better at our jobs.

As one member of staff reflected, "Our values were created in 2021 but it wasn't really until 2023 that there was a big push to socialize them across the organization. Having values and the opportunity to talk about them and think through how to incorporate them in our work and to recognize staff who model those values is an internal highlight from those two years."

### **Internal Supports: Developing and Sharing Tools for External Communications**

LCV's Fundraising team created resources in 2022 and 2023 that have helped staff improve their racial justice and equity competencies around how we communicate with external audiences. Part of

this work involves making sure we are attracting and retaining donors who share our values and support our commitment to centering racial justice and equity in our mission.

In early 2021, we created cross-departmental, racial justice and equity writing review meetings. Held bi-monthly, the meetings created a forum to review our fundraising content to ensure that LCV's stated racial justice and equity commitments were reflected. Participants discussed where we were succeeding, where we had fallen short, and how we could do better going forward.

In the creation of a **Writing Guide** that provides clear instructions on how to center racial justice and equity in our messaging from the beginning of the creation process. While this Guide is used primarily by our Fundraising staff, it is a useful tool for staff across the organization tasked with creating external communications.

The team also developed a **Design Guide** that serves as a companion to the Writing Guide. The Design Guide provides clean and detailed guidelines on visuals used in LCV communications. Taken together, these documents direct our writers, editors, designers and outside consultants on how to weave racial justice and equity throughout LCV's communications materials.

### **Internal Supports: Staffing Up Operations**

Across all sectors, and particularly within the social impact sector, it is common for organizations to grow and expand their programmatic agenda without shoring up capacity on the operations side. If left unchecked, this misalignment leads to unsustainable workloads for our Operations staff, bottlenecks program execution, and undermines trust in the organization from staff and partners. Having a right-sized Operations Team is critical to an organization's ability to effectively engage in any organizational change process. To this end, we added staff capacity to our Finance, Human Resources, and Legal teams in 2022 and 2023 and will continue to assess the resources needed to ensure that our teams are well supported in achieving LCV's mission through a just, equitable, and inclusive frame.

## **LETTER FROM OUR CHIEF OFFICER FOR RACIAL JUSTICE AND EQUITY**

This report would not have been possible without the time and thoughtfulness staff across the organization generously provided. All of this report's content was generated from:

- Quarterly updates from departments on how racial justice and equity has informed their work, the challenges faced in doing so effectively, and how successes translate into greater effectiveness at meeting their departmental goals and our organization's mission; and
- One-on-one interviews with 52 members of staff from every department and at all levels of the organization, guided by the following questions:
  - How would you describe where we were in 2022/2023 in terms of our commitment to centering RJE in our work, our ability to do so effectively as an organization, and your understanding of what that meant in your specific role and work?

- Can you describe 2-3 concrete examples from 2022 and 2023 in how you in your role and our organization as a whole approached our work through a framework of equity, racial justice, and inclusion?
- How is this approach different from your first year at LCV? In what ways do these examples highlight progress in centering RJE in our work? Has this change in approach been a winning strategy for us and our mission? How?

Over the 3 months interviewing staff, many asked how I would answer the very questions I posed. I hope my response to the first question - my top-level evaluation of our progress on transforming into an organization that is adept and effective at centering principles of inclusion, equity, fairness, and justice - is a fitting way to close out this report.

I began working at LCV in January of 2020. At that time, it was clear to me that the organization was committed to figuring out how to best incorporate principles of racial justice and equity in our programmatic work and internal operations. I used the first 4 months at the organization to meet with as many staff members as possible, both in person and virtually. I was pretty successful! Through these conversations and in team meeting spaces, my analysis at the time was the even with a firm commitment, the majority of staff were struggling with connecting these concepts to their specific roles and responsibilities beyond committing to including a racial justice and equity goal in their annual workplans - a goal that often was not connected to their core work. And the organization as a whole was in the same place.

By 2023, this dynamic had changed. As the contents of this report hopefully convey, staff across the organization have become better skilled at incorporating these principles into their roles, in how they set goals, in how they operationalize those goals, and in how they create and implement their work plans. In terms of how staff interact and work with each other, LCV is also a more collaborative, inclusive, and values-driven organization. There is more trust - although we can always work to build more. There is less conflict - although conflicts will arise.

There is still progress to be made. Whether and how we make progress towards becoming the organization we aspire to be will be tested in the years to come. I'm looking forward to sharing those stories with you in our upcoming 2024 Racial Justice and Equity Report.

Thank you to everyone in the LCV family of organizations and beyond who has supported and is invested in this important work.

Leslie R. Hinkson  
*Chief Officer for Racial Justice and Equity*