

## **Our Mission Statement**

As people of faith, we believe we all have a moral responsibility to protect the Earth's natural systems, and to safeguard the well-being of those most vulnerable to climate change, but least responsible for it -- the poor of the world and future generations. Therefore,

- we work with local faith-based organizations to raise awareness about climate change and related spiritual teachings;
- we assist religious communities in promoting energy conservation, energy efficiency, renewable energy and other forms of sustainable living; and
- we advocate for public policies that will effectively minimize global warming.

## **Introduction**

Commencing in June 2016, RI IPL's Board of Directors directed an eight-month planning process designed to evaluate the organization's history and record of accomplishment, with the goal of considering opportunities and challenges for programmatic growth and alignment, as well as potential changes in organizational structure.

A consultant, funded by the Rhode Island Foundation (David Karoff), was engaged, who began his work with a series of 21 confidential interviews, including all Board members, current and former staff, Advisory Board members, and selected members and lapsed and prospective members. The Board reviewed the collated interviews, and then embarked on a series of meetings, resulting in an iterative set of drafts of a strategic plan and a detailed work plan.

The plan is designed to cover the calendar years 2017-2019.

## **Education**

Goal: Develop a robust educational program for RIPL's member congregations and the general public. While conveying fact-based climate-change information, it will emphasize our moral responsibility to consider the most vulnerable amongst us. The program's objectives are to lead to a deeper level of understanding of our moral responsibility to take climate action and to substantive individual and institutional changes in beliefs, values, attitudes and behavior.

Strategies:

- a. Develop and deliver a program for congregations that presents the scientific basis and the spiritual aspects, as well as practical applications. Goals for number of congregations served with presentations by year:

2017	2018	2019
4-8	4-8	4-8

- b. Write and/or collate information, including both long- and short-format pieces, that will be made available to congregations for dissemination via their newsletters and other outlets.

	Short pieces for church bulletins	Longer pieces for RI IPL newsletter
2017	53	12
2018	60	12
2019	60	12

- c. Create a short introductory video which can be attached to e-mailed communications and invitations for membership, and will be available on our website and on YouTube, etc.
- d. Research and assemble existing materials to be used for clergy-specific (and judicatory) education.
- e. Produce an annual conference, with the goals of:
- promoting the recognition that stewardship of the Earth is our moral responsibility toward God, humankind and all of Creation;
  - raising awareness of climate change by providing the opportunity to learn more about it;
  - encouraging practical climate mitigation actions; and
  - providing an opportunity for each participant to engage in some form of discussion, ideally in interfaith groups.
- f. Write and submit a minimum of four Op-Eds and other external communications per year.

- g. Record webinars and interviews and make them available on our website.
- h. Strive to teach by example. RI IPL will
  - continue to promote interfaith understanding and collaboration;
  - be as environmentally considerate as possible in the use of natural resources;
  - serve vegetarian food at RI IPL meetings and conferences and, whenever possible, support organic and/or locally-grown food; and
  - continue to ask People's Power and Light to make our annual meeting and conference carbon neutral.

### **Energy Conservation and Implementation**

Goal: Increase action by our member congregations to reduce their environmental footprint through energy conservation, renewable energy and other means of environmental responsibility.

Strategies:

- a. Advocate for a customized, streamlined process for member organizations to ease access to National Grid energy efficiency and other programs.
- b. Develop simple and appropriate metrics and a data-gathering system to measure progress toward this goal.
- c. Designate an 'Energy Liaison' in each member congregation to help expedite progress towards this goal.
- d. Assist member congregations in maintaining focus and tracking their progress.

### **Advocacy**

Goal: Become the statewide voice for Rhode Island's faith communities on climate change and environmental issues.

Strategy:

- a. Support meaningful climate policies, legislation, rules, and regulations. Advocacy support may include developing and promulgating statements on climate-related issues, producing Op-Eds and Letters to the Editor, endorsing letters and petitions, writing letters to government officials and bodies, and participating in actions such as vigils, peaceful marches and demonstrations and testifying before RI State Senate and House hearings.

- b. All such advocacy will take place only after careful consideration of (i) the issues at hand, (ii) the legal limits of a 501(c)(3) organization under election of the 501(h) lobbying option, and (iii) the capacity of a small organization.

**Membership**

Goal: Expand and retain the number of member congregations and judicatories as follows:

	2017	2018	2019
Judicatories	+2	+1	+1
Congregations	+20% net	+20% net	+20% net

Membership expansion strategies:

- a. Create a detailed menu of benefits of membership in RI IPL.
- b. Formalize a process for engaging and recruiting individual members of RI IPL

Membership retention strategies:

- a. Develop a consistent and ongoing system of support and communications for member organizations and individual members.
- b. Establish a menu of ‘members-only’ programs (e.g. films, speakers).
- c. Designate a liaison in each member congregation responsible for effective transfer of general (non-technical energy conservation and implementation) information between RI IPL and the member congregations.
- d. Produce an Annual Meeting for Member congregations, for which the purpose is to
  - encourage member congregations in their continued actions for climate change mitigation, both in the area of education and in practical action;
  - provide member congregations with information about RI IPL activities; and
  - provide the opportunity for member congregations and/or individual participants to report on their activities, share experiences, and to discuss ideas.

## **Organizational Capacity**

Goal 1: Increase RI IPL's internal operations capacity.

Strategies:

- a. Increase paid staff capacity to .75 FTE in 2018 and to 1.0 FTE in 2019.
- b. Research and develop the ability to expand internal capacity via non-staff-driven means (i.e. VISTA and partnership opportunities with other organizations).

Goal 2: Increase the income contributing to RI IPL's annual operating budget.

Strategies:

- a. Foster/steward relationships with current donors.
- b. Expand RI IPL's base of contributions by individuals.
- c. Maintain and expand RI IPL's grants funding for general and/or program support.
- d. Pursue avenues for diversifying RI IPL's funding structure.

Goal 3: Sustain and further develop RI IPL's external communications presence.

Strategies:

- a. Sustain and further develop RI IPL's social media presence.
- b. Develop new outreach vehicles via partnerships.

Goal 4: Further expand the capacity of RI IPL's Board of Directors.

Strategies:

- a. Develop a job description for each board position and a recruitment/orientation process by April 1, 2017.
- b. Increase the size of the Board to eight by 2017 and to nine by 2019, giving due consideration to diversity and skill set.
- c. Establish board committees for the four areas of Education, Advocacy, Conference, and Energy.

Goal 5: Adhere to our strategic plan and mission statement.

Strategy:

- a. Continuously monitor progress toward implementation of the strategic plan, and undertake a formal review process in early 2019.