



**Equity Based  
Strategic Plan**

**Environmental Council of  
Rhode Island**



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# Mission

To serve as an effective voice for developing and advocating policies and laws that protect and enhance Rhode Island's environment.

ECRI is hereby established to coordinate, initiate, promote and unify efforts of Rhode Island organizations concerned about the problems of our natural environment consistent with the right of the people to a clean, healthy and productive environment in which to live, work and play, and to lobby and advocate for that right.

# Vision

A coalition that effectively serves the residents of Rhode Island providing support and expertise to all that want to improve the quality of the natural environment of Rhode Island and the quality of life of its residents.

# Values

## Representation

At ECRI we strive to be representative of the people that call Rhode Island home. Through our policies, communications, initiative and outreach we seek to include all people and all environmental problems in a comprehensive way.

## Participation/Opportunity/Access

At ECRI, we want to provide a safe and inviting opportunity for the residents of Rhode Island to express their needs and wants related to natural resources and the environment and to become involved in every aspect of the work, from Executive committee to on-the-ground advocacy. We believe that a clear and participatory decision-making process will encourage more voices and perspectives to be considered.

## Support

We strive to create a space for support and growth, where technical expertise as well as life experience are shared to the betterment of the whole.

## Sustainability

We understand that to offer broad support and expertise through ECRI's coalition, we must secure and dedicate funds to recruit and retain dedicated individuals who can assure our organization's flexibility and strength to meet its vision.

# Objectives

1. Increase the representation amongst our membership to reflect the demographic characteristics of the community we serve

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2. Create a space for the membership and community to learn and do

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3. Communicate the purpose and importance of a concerted effort (a coalition) to address environmental issues

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4. Understand and highlight environmental injustice and support those most affected

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5. Become a reference point for new initiatives and policy regarding Rhode Island's water, land and air

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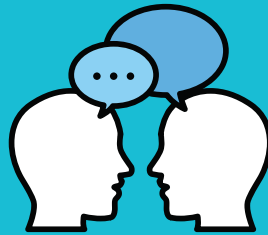
6. Create and sustain a backbone structure that ensures the viability of the coalition for the future

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# Strategy: Objective 1

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Increase the representation amongst our membership to reflect the demographic characteristics of the community we serve.



## Improve our communication and outreach efforts

**Create a portal/website to communicate ECRI's purpose, goals and ways to participate**

**Identify critical partners in the community and reach out to better understand their needs and how they relate to ECRI's purpose and goals**

**Locate and advertise meetings at different venues around the state**

**Have open listening sessions to include current and former members to understand what they need and what ECRI can provide**

# Strategy: Objective 2

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Create a space for the membership and community to learn and do



## Identify and prototype a couple of community hub locations to increase on-the-ground engagement

Select two locations in the community to hold listening sessions

Offer a space for learning at the identified locations, having guest or local speakers that can share knowledge and experiences in response to the community's needs

Have a dedicated time and space for community building, networking and connection

## Improve the format of membership meetings

Create a participatory methodology to set meeting agendas (improve communication and opportunities through the website and community hubs)

Focus on membership community building, providing support and access to those that represent a broad spectrum of Rhode Island's residents

Invite engaging speakers that can speak to the community's needs (policy makers, community activists, etc)

Find a venue that is conducive to connection and community building



# Strategy: Objective 3

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Communicate the purpose and importance of a concerted effort (a coalition) to address environmental issues



**Optimize ECRI's communication platform (website) to easily and succinctly communicate purpose, activities, opportunities and needs**

Create a sub committee to evaluate the website as a whole and incorporate the results from listening sessions and other community outreach efforts into the messaging and format of a website

Secure funding for and hire someone knowledgeable about user experience (i.e. website designer) to improve the website design and functionality (ideally if done from within the community)

**Connect with the community in their own terms**

Identify key community messaging amplification possibilities and actively participate in events and opportunities offered by those who we want to reach

# Strategy: Objective 4

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Understand and highlight environmental injustice and support those most affected



## Partner with local advocates and activists

Create opportunities for open communication to better understand and highlight local issues and the people most affected

Define ECRI's position and willingness to engage

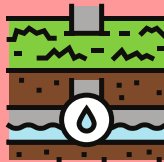
Explore opportunities for synergistic action and allyship

Offer ECRI's network and expertise for support

# Strategy: Objective 5

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Become a reference point for new initiatives and policy regarding Rhode Island's water, land and air



## Have a clear process for community engagement and request for support

Create a clear and adaptive pathway for individuals and organizations to uplift issues of local importance and immediate need

Become an anti-racist organization (see anti-racism initiatives below)

Offer teaching, civic engagement and learning opportunities through the 501-C4

## Connect with policy makers

Become advocates for the environmental issues brought to ECRI's attention by their historically marginalized members

Serve as the bridge between policy makers and community by providing a space for learning, understanding and connecting

Represent the community in an just and equitable way through appropriate representation of people and issues

# Strategy: Objective 6

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Create and sustain a backbone structure that ensures the viability of the coalition into the future



## Identify and secure funding to support part or full time staff

Evaluate the feasibility of membership dues (sliding scales to encourage participation)

Search and apply for grants that could provide support for part or full time staff

Seek individual donors that align with ECRI's purpose and can commit funding to support a part or full time position for a trial period of two years

# Evaluation

## Stakeholder engagement

- Survey membership after every meeting/engagement opportunity
- Evaluate website usage and metrics (engagement with personal experiences, educational opportunities, member highlight, particular issues, technical expertise, etc)
- Community outreach efforts and response
- Policy maker engagement and willingness to participate of events geared towards community building

## Outreach and communication

- Response and participation at listening session
- Interest and participation at community hubs

## Community building

- How many ally-ships were formed/ performed?

## Sustainability into the future

- Budget and quarterly review of attaining funding goals

## Growth and adaptability

- Willingness and engagement around creating equitable and just pathways to engage (i.e. bringing up needs and policy issues from the community to the coalition)

# Equity and Justice Strategic Initiatives

This section of the Strategic Plan is organized into two main areas: internal practices and external practices. Each practice addresses four dimensions of racism: internalized, interpersonal, institutional, and structural. For shared understanding around these terms, formal definitions of terms used in this plan and its related work are specifically outlined as an objective of the plan itself.

Evaluation and benchmarks are also part of the plan's accompanying Strategic Action Plan, an internal working document. Monthly progress reports are included on the website. Stories about the impact of this work are shared on ECRI's website and other promotional materials.

# Internal Internalized Racism Goal

ECRI will create opportunities to discuss how we have all internalized racism using affinity spaces and collective and intersectional spaces.

## Objectives

- Participants will develop a better understanding of how the internalization of racism has affected themselves and each other.
- Participants will learn how their experiences have differed from that of their colleagues and other stakeholders.
- Participants will identify common types of internalized racism by being able to name and acknowledge them.

# Internal Interpersonal Anti-Racism Goal

ECRI will be a welcoming and affirming space for all new and existing staff members, both online and in-person, through consistent and intentional relationship building between staff that is free of racism.

## Objectives

- Staff will be able to articulate ECRI's shared definition of racism. This also includes the meanings of internalized, interpersonal, institutional, and structural racism.
- New staff member on-boarding will address issues of internalized and interpersonal racism and encourage new staff members to show up unapologetically in the fullness of their identities.
- Staff will be able to articulate the historical context of racism and become aware of their own implicit biases and how those inform interpersonal interactions.
- ECRI will take steps to develop affinity groups.



# Internal Institutional Anti-Racism Goal

ECRI will employ policies, protocols, processes, and procedures that promote and advance anti-racist practices such as power, space, and resource sharing toward equitable, non-hierarchical program implementation.

## Objectives

- ECRI will create an anti-racism team (ART).
- ECRI's ART Team will re-evaluate the impact of every aspect of ECRI's work (such as membership requirements, general objectives, bylaws, etc.) to determine alternatives that accommodate more diversity, equity, and inclusion.
- ECRI will implement and embody a racial equity policy framework that includes inquiry toward anti-racist practice accountability (e.g. pay for lived experience, analysis of vacation and sick time policies, racism misconduct reporting, and other HR-related topics)
- ECRI's racial equity policy framework will also be applied to its vendor relationships.
- ECRI will actively seek and establish more representation from BIPOC staff and membership.
- ECRI will experience increased program innovation and increased inclusion of Black, Indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC) leadership in programming initiatives.

# External Internalized Anti-Racism Goal

To mitigate the impact of external racism on ECRI's environment and on the greater RI community.

## Objectives

- Create and implement a membership code of conduct that names ECRI's commitment to anti-racist practices.
- Introduce a communications plan that keeps stakeholders informed of all ECRI's anti-racist initiatives and strategies.
- Activate programming that builds community awareness and capacity in anti-racism within environmental justice work.
- Include community participation in anti-racist advisory team membership.

# External Interpersonal Anti-Racism Goal

To have a working, shared definition of racism that includes common and shared language and understanding of anti-racist practices that we can leverage to have conversations and collaborations regarding anti-racism.

## Objectives

- To be intentionally equitable in the allocation of meeting spaces.
- Create formal and informal opportunities for members to get curious about racism and anti-racist practices.

# External Institutional Anti-Racism Goal

Attract and retain more Black, Indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC) staff and members.

## Objectives

- Recruit and offer more opportunities to BIPOC volunteers

# External

## Structural Anti-Racism Goal

Lead the charge in the galvanizing of multiple organizations in Rhode Island and governing bodies toward the expansion of anti-racist practices in all that we are and all that we do.

### Objectives

- Partner with local government agencies and other stakeholders to discuss, plan and implement anti-racist policies, ordinances, and laws.
- Work to share a broader scope and understanding of anti-racist practices.
- Collaborate with other organizations to share anti-racist strategies/practices (broaden your own community of practice).
- Establish more representation from ECRI in the larger environmental association context.
- Partner with other area organizations, even if not environmentally focused that have alignment in anti-racism strategies.
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