

OOS THEORY OF CHANGE



THE ISSUE

The climate crisis threatens the City of Philadelphia and the lives of current and future generations of our families, friends, and neighbors. Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) and poor and working class Philadelphians are more likely to experience both immediate and long-term consequences of the climate crisis, which is exacerbating existing disparities related to exposure to extreme heat, flooding, poor air quality, and more. Despite these disparate impacts, there is insufficient action to lessen the climate burden that is perpetuated by systemic racism, white supremacist culture, broken relationships between communities and government, and a failure to center the voices of these most impacted Philadelphians.



THE VISION

OOS visions a city in which all Philadelphians have access to a life-sustaining environment free from harmful pollution and where residents have the power and resources to thrive, to determine the outcomes of their community development, and to respond to climate stressors when they occur.

ASSUMPTIONS/STANCES

- Climate change is real and urgent.
- We cannot have environmental justice without racial justice.
- OOS exists in the service of the people of Philadelphia and it takes work to build genuine relationships with and build power among the Philadelphians we serve.
- BIPOC communities in Philadelphia experience historic and ongoing economic, political, and environmental oppression. OOS should prioritize the needs of residents who have been, and continue to be, most impacted by climate change and pollution.
- OOS must work internally to examine and shift our culture while also working in the broader government to dismantle the systemic racism and white supremacist culture that exist.
- Change can be incremental or transformational, and it matters how and when we push for each.
- Climate change and quality of life are interrelated. We can make a difference in people's lives now while also protecting their futures.
- Partnerships and collaboration are critical to our work. Extensive knowledge, experience and power exist in Philadelphia and the majority of it is outside of OOS. Incorporating a diversity of voices in our work helps us achieve more.

ROOT CAUSES

- Genocide and erasure of indigenous people who have a history and relationship with this land and wisdom of how to care for it.
- A capitalistic, extractive, and fossil-fuel-based economy that prioritizes unlimited growth over the wellbeing of people and the land.
- Legacies of systemic racism and white supremacist culture - manifested through such things as disinvestment and racist zoning practices - that have marginalized BIPOC and poor and working class Philadelphians.
- Investment in the leadership of white middle and upper class "environmentalists" while not investing in the leadership of BIPOC residents at the frontlines of pollution and climate change who have and pioneered and continue lead on environmental justice issues today.

OUR CORE CONSTITUENCY

- The residents of Philadelphia, in particular those living in frontline communities and experiencing the brunt of climate injustices.
- Civic leaders.
- Experts in sustainability who provide us with information on best practices on how to do this work.
- National, regional and local organizations, institutions, businesses, networks.
- Climate justice organizations.
- Other City departments and agencies.
- Other governments (city, state, federal, international).
- Anyone who works in pursuit of a more sustainable Philadelphia.

ANTICIPATED CHANGES

- Utilize positionality within city government to push for climate justice.
- Put a climate justice lens onto all city offices' decision making and budgeting processes, while also working externally to both move power and minds to climate justice work and to amplify grassroots folks who are doing this work.
- Support and empower grassroots climate justice efforts.
- Build power in and push power to frontline communities most affected by climate change and pollution, and support their actions for community self-determination through our government connections, direct financial assistance, and capacity building.
- Pilot and model sustainable examples, and demonstrate, in a clear way, how the work benefits Philadelphians.
- Update and improve OOS's internal policies and practices to ensure equity in hiring, retention, salaries, promotions and workload distribution.
- Build a staff that is diverse in age, gender, education, and background, and place value on the lived experience of residents from frontline communities in hiring practices.
- Ensure that information about our performance, actions and progress are clearly accessible and transparently communicated in a timely manner.

CORE COMMITMENTS



COLLABORATION



ACCOUNTABILITY



EQUITY



TRANSFORMATION



COMMUNITY-DRIVEN, SCIENCE- AND DATA-INFORMED PROCESSES



PRIORITIZE THOSE MOST AFFECTED