

EARTH MONTH 2023:

Reflections, learnings, and
actions for businesses to center
climate justice.



Climate Justice for People & Planet



1

Introduction

Let's get started! Learn what you can expect from this toolkit.

2

Climate Justice Reflection Challenge

This challenge will help businesses on their climate justice journey by providing prompts, exercises, resources and calls to action, informed by B Lab U.S. & Canada's interviews with frontline community leaders.

3

Glossary

Get clear on commonly used terms related to climate justice.

4

Additional Resources

Articles, podcasts, webinars, event recordings, and more.

5

Calls to Action

After your business has processed the reflections and learnings put forward, find out how to take action during Earth Month, and throughout the year.

Introduction

An overview of the topic and toolkit, including how businesses can use this resource to engage in reflection, learning, and action around climate justice.



A Note from B Lab U.S. & Canada

As [urgency for climate action](#) increases, it is important to center work in climate justice to create solutions that are inclusive, equitable, and regenerative, and that place the needs and perspectives of people and communities most impacted by climate change at the forefront.

B Lab U.S. & Canada is committed to transforming the economy and raising the standard for business to benefit all people, communities, and the planet. Our impact pillars of change are:

Stakeholder Economy | Racial Equity | Climate Justice

We are on a mission to catalyze business action in these areas and beyond. Through our climate justice program, we aim to center the needs, leadership, and perspectives of the people and communities, mainly marginalized and systematically oppressed, in our climate action work. One of the ways that we have done this is by embarking on a [series of interviews with frontline community and climate justice leaders](#) to inform how B Corps can best advance climate action centered in justice moving forward. We've woven some of the insights from these conversations into this toolkit, and hope that you find them inspiring, challenging, thought-provoking and action-driving.

We invite you to join us on this journey. Start by reflecting and learning using the insights and information in this toolkit, then move to taking action on climate justice with your company.

To learn more about our Theory of Change and climate justice work, visit our [website](#).



What Is This Toolkit?

This toolkit is an introduction for businesses that want to learn more about climate justice — no matter where your company is on the journey. This guide is meant to be a tool to prepare businesses for further action on climate change that centers people, justice, racial equity and communities. It draws heavily on the information and case studies within [The Climate Justice Playbook for Business](#) (V1.0, January 2021), as well as learnings from the B Corp business community, frontline community leaders and partners in this work.

By the end of the four-week Climate Justice Reflection Challenge, you will have the foundations to better understand the nuanced and intersectional issues surrounding climate justice in order to consider how your business can play a positive role in advancing climate action centered in justice.

Week One	Week Two	Week Three	Week Four
What is climate justice?	How does climate change impact frontline communities?	What is the role of business?	How can businesses take action?

Who Should Use This Toolkit?

This toolkit is designed for any business, organization, or professional that wants to learn more about climate justice and how to embed it into their work.

As you dive into the Climate Justice Reflection Challenge in the next section, you will be asked to reflect and discuss questions. You can do this with your company leaders, internal teams devoted to environmental and climate strategy, other colleagues, industry partners, or even friends and family. You can use the exercises and questions as personal journaling prompts for your own individual reflection.

Climate Justice Reflection Challenge

The Climate Justice Reflection Challenge is designed to be completed over the course of four weeks. Each weekly section includes a central question or theme, an exercise, frontline leader insights, discussion questions, and more.



What Is Climate Justice?

Climate justice recognizes that those who are least responsible for climate change are more likely to suffer its most devastating effects, now and in the future. These people and frontline communities are already being impacted first and worst by climate change. Climate change is a human-made crisis that has been primarily caused by those with economic power and privilege. Its effects have a disproportionately negative impact on the [historically marginalized](#) and underserved – mainly People of Color and people who live in low-income communities.

Climate justice calls on us to place the needs, voices, and leadership of those who are most impacted by climate change at the forefront.

Exercise Part 1

Identify three different organizations focusing on climate justice work. Try to find at least one in your local community or region. You might start with members of the [Climate Justice Alliance](#) or [Grassroots Global Justice Alliance](#), or [The Equitable and Just National Climate Platform](#). Look at how these organizations describe themselves and their work, and consider and discuss the following questions:

1. How do these organizations define climate justice?
2. Who is leading these organizations? Do their leaders come from marginalized identities or communities with lived experience with climate change and/or other environmental harms?
3. How might the leadership and composition of the organization impact how they talk about, and approach, climate justice work?

“We cannot tackle the climate crisis without addressing the global inequality crisis. We cannot develop effective solutions without recognizing the differing impacts of climate change on different groups.”

- Sayo Ayodele, *Climate Action Champions Team for COP26*
(from *The Climate Justice Playbook for Business*)

Exercise Part 2

After exploring and discussing how different organizations and activists define climate justice and the work they do, consider and discuss the following:

1. How would you describe climate justice to a friend, client, or colleague with little to no understanding of the topic?
2. Can you point to examples of how climate justice issues show up in your local community, among your team, or within your supply chain?
3. Can you think of examples of how the impacts of climate change are disproportionately being felt by certain communities?

Climate Justice Leaders' Perspective

During B Lab U.S. & Canada's interviews with frontline community leaders in the second half of 2022, one of the resounding themes was that racial justice and climate justice are inextricably linked. Here's what folks said:



"You cannot talk about climate justice without talking about environmental racism."
- Cee Stanley, CEO of [Green Heffa Farms](#)



"We must apply a racial equity lens to our climate action work."
- Raj Aggarwal, President of [Provoc](#)

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[Assets](#)

Share Out

Share your reflections and learnings from the Climate Justice Reflection Challenge using #BusinessForClimateJustice.

What is climate justice?

#BusinessForClimateJustice

Climate justice recognizes that those who are **least responsible** for climate change are more likely to suffer its **most devastating effects**, now and in the future. These frontline communities will be impacted **first and worst**.

CLIMATE JUSTICE | WEEK 1

Climate change is a **human-made crisis** that has been primarily caused by those with **economic power and privilege**. Its effects have a **disproportionately negative impact** on people who have historically been marginalized.

CLIMATE JUSTICE | WEEK 1

Climate justice places the **needs, voices and leadership** of those who are **most impacted** by climate change at the forefront.

CLIMATE JUSTICE | WEEK 1

How Does Climate Change Impact Frontline Communities?

A frontline community is a group of people who are experiencing the consequences of climate change first and worst. They have lived experiences of concrete climate impacts on their daily lives. Frontline communities can exist anywhere — they might be urban, rural, or coastal and located in both the global north and global south. These communities are generally lower income, under resourced, and communities of color.

For example, coastal frontline communities are impacted by sea-level rise and worsening natural disasters like hurricanes, resulting in major damage to homes and lives. You may also have heard the phrase [loss and damage](#), which refers to harms caused specifically by climate change.

To root our actions in climate justice, we need to listen to these communities and honor their leadership. As Raj Aggarwal, President of Provoc, explains in the [Climate Justice Playbook for Business](#):

“...the only way to solve climate change is through an equity lens, to center frontline communities most affected, listen to the wisdom within those communities, and to work with them to create a sustainable future.”

Stories From the Frontlines of Climate Change:

- [Climate change isn't a distant threat - it's our reality](#), Selina Neirok Leem
- [Youth Climate Activist Mitzi Jonelle Tan Speaks on Climate Justice](#)
- [The Refuge](#), a short film about the Gwich'in people of Alaska and Northern Canada.
- [Protecting Our Elders From Hurricane Ian and Beyond](#), Yessenia Funes
- [Broken by Design: A Report on Jackson's Water System](#), Hadas Thier

Exercise

Take some time to learn more about a specific frontline community, preferably one that is proximate to where you work or live or where your company is headquartered.

1. How are they being affected by climate change today?
2. How will they be in the future?
3. What other intersectional issues is this community facing in addition to climate change?
4. Where are the frontline communities in your own region that will be hit first and worst by climate impacts?

Climate Justice Leaders' Perspective

During our frontline community interviews, many of the folks we spoke to talked about the importance of building trust and equitable partnerships with frontline communities. Many frontline communities hold a deep mistrust of business in particular, based on past harms that have been caused. Businesses need to listen, learn, and be accountable in order to begin to heal frontline communities' previous negative experiences. Too often and for too long, they have experienced businesses as extractive, and lacking follow through. By listening before acting, all businesses have an opportunity to more effectively address the issues around climate change, particularly as they affect their local communities.



"It is critical to define extractivism versus just/right relationships with frontline communities."

- Jacqui Patterson, Founder & Executive Director,
[Chisholm Legacy Project: A Resource Hub for Black Frontline Climate Justice Leadership](#)

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How does climate change impact frontline communities?

#BusinessForClimateJustice

A **frontline community** is a group of people who are experiencing the consequences of climate change **first and worst**.

They have **lived experiences** of specific climate impacts on their daily lives.

CLIMATE JUSTICE | WEEK 2

For example, sea level rise and worsening climate disasters like hurricanes impact **coastal frontline communities**, resulting in major damage to homes and lives.

22.3 million

worldwide people were displaced by climate disasters in 2022.

CLIMATE JUSTICE | WEEK 2

Frontline communities can **exist anywhere** — they might be urban, rural, or coastal.

Q: What are other examples of frontline communities, including in your own community or region?

CLIMATE JUSTICE | WEEK 2

Source: [Global Report on Internal Displacement, 2022](#)

What Is the Role of Business?

Business and industry are the [sources of the vast majority of our planet's greenhouse gas emissions](#). An economy built on extracting from people and the earth — coupled with a growth-at-any-cost mindset — has fueled the climate crisis. Given that businesses have a significant role to play in the causes of climate change, they have a responsibility to be part of the solutions. Business leaders must look to the leadership and wisdom of frontline communities to guide practices and solutions in order to reduce the risk climate change poses to their business and humanity.

Climate Justice Leaders' Perspective

During our frontline community interviews, we asked the leaders we spoke with how they would like to engage with businesses to advance climate justice in the future, and what businesses need to know in order to play an authentic, lasting role in addressing the climate crisis.

Here are some of the top takeaways we heard on the role of business:

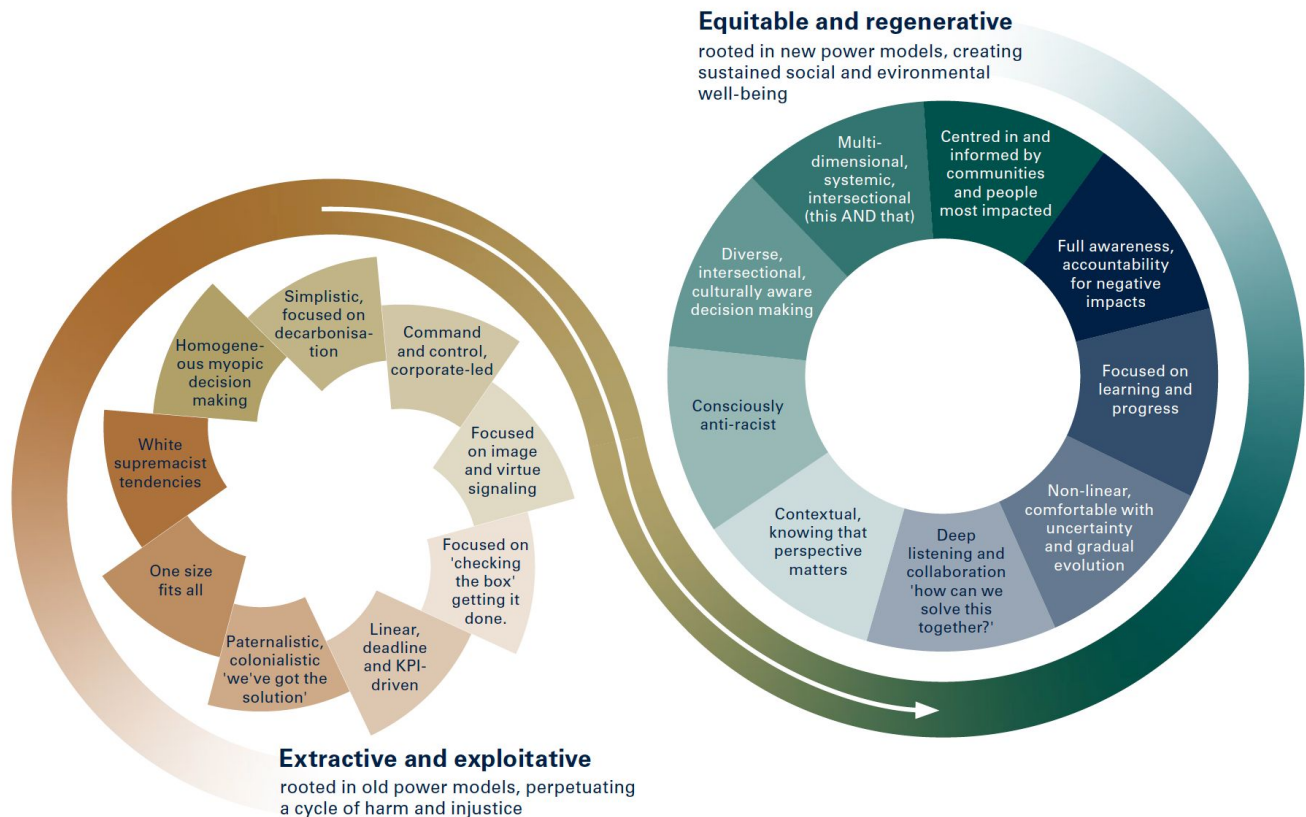
1. Financial resources are needed; businesses should start locally and adopt a trust-based approach in their philanthropy efforts.
2. Businesses need to listen, learn, and be accountable in order to begin to heal past harms and trauma with communities.
3. Businesses must be proactive, rather than reactive, with commitments.



“The most important thing is to come from the heart, make sure you’re being ethical, honest about where you are, and check your progress ongoing. Businesses need to build on their progress, versus just check boxes.”

- Kara Boyd, President, [Association of American Indian Farmers](#)

The Climate Justice Mindset Shift



Exercise

As you think about how your business can pursue climate action rooted in justice, it's important to reflect on your business' current mindsets and behaviors that may be a source of harm. The diagram above is from the [Climate Justice Playbook for Business](#). On the left are traits of an extractive mindset and business approach. On the right, are traits of an equitable one.

Discussion Questions

1. How could your business shift to a more equitable and regenerative approach, through its operations, culture, governance, model, etc.?
2. How has your industry contributed to climate change? Reflect on your own company's role and relationship to the climate crisis. How might you share these reflections internally with your team, or publicly with clients or peers? To start, check out [Seventh Generation](#) and [Ben & Jerry's](#) have framed their climate justice journey and commitment.

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Share Out

Share your reflections and learnings from the Climate Justice Reflection Challenge using #BusinessForClimateJustice.

Business and industry are the leading contributors to climate change.

Business has a role in addressing climate justice.

#BusinessForClimateJustice

We are ready to do our part.

#BusinessForClimateJustice

How Can Business Take Action?

As we come to the final phase of our reflection challenge, it's time to start thinking about how your business can take action. Action on climate justice might look different for every business, depending on factors such as size, industry, and location. There's not a one-size-fits-all approach, and no simple checklist. Real engagement in climate justice requires a long-term commitment starting with learning and listening, and transitioning to acting, committing, and building equitable partnerships with frontline communities.

Find insights to inform where you might start in the [Climate Justice Playbook on page 20 & 21](#). While business strategies will vary, a common ingredient of effective work on climate justice is collaboration. No business can do this work alone! Watch for the tendency to jump to action without reflection and understanding first. Start by listening and remember your role is to learn from those most impacted.

Climate Justice Leaders' Perspective

During our frontline community interviews, we asked how businesses can and should take action on climate justice. Some of the common themes we heard were the importance of trust-based relationships, especially when it comes to corporate philanthropy and partnering with frontline communities, and starting by listening to the perspectives of those who are most impacted.



"It's all about relationships, especially working with Indigenous people, it's about relationships, and being humble."

- Pennie Opal Plant, Co-Founder,
[Movement Rights](#)

Photo Credit: Jack Owick

Exercise

As you think about where your work might begin, consider these seven spheres of influence. **Which communities could your business work with to take action on climate justice?** Consider where your business holds influence and what existing relationships you can build on.

- Employees & their families
- Policy makers
- Climate justice activists
- Suppliers & supply chain stakeholders
- Aligned businesses
- Local communities
- Customers & clients
- Colleges & universities

Form Your Plan

Think of three actions your business could start by taking, for example:

1. Identify local climate justice activists and/or organizations you can learn from. Use the resources and power you have to support them. Donate to them, volunteer with them, and amplify their work.
2. Contact suppliers to see how climate change may be affecting them and how they could use support to implement solutions.
3. Reach out to a peer company to see how you could work together on an initiative to advance climate justice and/or amplify the issue.

[Download
Assets](#)

Share Out

Share your reflections and learnings from the Climate Justice Reflection Challenge using #BusinessForClimateJustice.

Use the caption of your social media post to share more about how your business is taking action on climate justice.

And remember, continuous learning and listening is the most important part of taking action on climate justice.

**Here's how
we are taking
action on
climate
justice:**

#BusinessForClimateJustice

Glossary

Definitions of the key terms used in this toolkit and the climate justice space.



Frontline community

A group of people who are already or will experience the consequences of climate change first and worst in ways that will cause significant damage, upheaval, and loss to life. They experience disproportionate impacts of the climate crisis due to compounding inequities and are often also experiencing and struggling with harmful corporate and industry activity jeopardizing the health and wellbeing of themselves, and their local environment. (Source: [Climate Reality Project](#))

Intersectionality

[Coined by Kimberlé Crenshaw](#), intersectionality acknowledges the complex and cumulative way that multiple social and personal identities and issues can combine, overlap, and intersect to create layers of power and privilege, and adversely layers of oppression.

Intersectional environmentalism

A more expansive and inclusive take on environmentalism calling for justice for all people and the planet. It looks at how environmental injustice and racism affect frontline communities and especially peoples with overlapping or multiple marginalized identities, working to bring them to the forefront of environmental activism. (Source: [Intersectional Environmentalist](#))

Loss and damage

Refers to the destruction and harm being caused by the climate crisis on lives, livelihoods, and infrastructure. Ongoing global discussions about loss and damage show vulnerable and impacted countries asking wealthier and responsible countries for economic support in addressing the effects of climate change. (Source: [The Guardian](#))

Marginalized people

People who experience unequal access to resources and power, who are often Black, Indigenous, and/or People of Color (BIPOC), and living in lower-income communities and neighborhoods that lack basic infrastructure. (Source: [Pachamama Alliance](#))

Racism

The concept of racism is widely thought of as simply personal prejudice, but in fact, it is a complex system of racial hierarchies and inequities. At the micro or individual level, are internalized and interpersonal racism. At the macro level of racism, we look beyond the individuals to the broader dynamics, including institutional and structural racism.

Additional Resources

Articles, podcasts, webinars, event recordings, and more to learn more and dive deeper.



Additional Resources

READ:

- [Climate Justice Playbook for Business](#), B Lab U.S. & Canada
- [All We Can Save: Truth, Courage and Solutions for the Climate Crisis](#)
edited by Dr. Ayana Elizabeth Johnson & Dr. Katharine Wilkinson
- [The Intersectional Environmentalist](#), Leah Thomas
- [Who We're Learning from About Climate Justice: 5 Things Businesses Need to Know About Climate Justice from Frontline Leaders](#), B Lab U.S. & Canada
- [A Call to Action for B Corps: Climate Justice Is Racial Justice](#), B Lab U.S. & Canada
- [Radical Collaboration to Accelerate Climate Action](#), Radical Climate Collaboration
- [As Long as Grass Grows: The Indigenous Fight for Environmental Justice, from Colonization to Standing Rock](#), Dina Gilio-Whitaker
- [Business and Climate Justice: Putting People at the Heart of Climate Action](#), Business Fights Poverty

LISTEN:

- [How To Save a Planet](#) hosted by Dr. Ayana Elizabeth Johnson & Alex Blumberg
- [The YIKES Podcast](#) hosted by Mikaela Loach & Jo Becker
- [Why Climate Justice Can't Happen Without Racial Justice](#), Tara Cooper
- [5 Climate Justice Podcasts You Need to Follow](#) by Climate Justice Center
- [9 Youth Climate Activists From Around the World Share Their Podcast Picks](#) by TED

Additional Resources

WATCH:

- [TED Talk: Climate Justice Can't Happen Without Racial Justice](#), David Lammy
- [TED Talk: The Urgency of Intersectionality](#), Kimberlé Crenshaw
- [Future of Net Zero: B Corp Climate Collective & Partners Info Session](#)
- [Moving to Action on Climate Justice](#), Tracey Osborne
- [Corporate Climate Action Centered in Justice](#), B Corp 2022 Champions Retreat
- [Co-Creating Climate Justice](#), B Corp 2022 Champions Retreat
- [Introduction to B Lab U.S. & Canada's Climate Justice Program](#), B Lab U.S. & Canada
- [10 of the Best Climate Change Documentaries To See in 2023](#), Yale Climate Connections
- [Business Fights Poverty Climate Justice Summit 2022](#), Business Fights Poverty
- [Frontline Youth: Fighting for Climate Justice](#), Climate Justice Alliance
- [Climate Action Needs New Frontline Leadership](#), Ozawa Bineshi Albert

FOLLOW:

- [B Corp Climate Collective](#)
- [1% For the Planet Environmental Partners](#)
- [Climate Justice Alliance](#)
- [Grassroots Global Justice Alliance](#)
- [Patagonia Action Works](#)
- B Lab U.S. & Canada's 2022 frontline community and climate justice expert interviewees:
 - [Association of Indian Farmers](#), [Equitable and Just National Climate Platform](#), [Green Heffa Farms](#), [Indigenous Climate Action](#), [Movement Rights](#), [Navajo Power](#), [Power Shift Network](#), [The Chisholm Legacy Project](#), [The Solutions Project](#), [UC Center for Climate Justice](#).

Take Action

Is your business ready to take action?

Reflection and learning is essential to the climate justice journey. After you have made progress in those areas, consider how your company can take the next step.



Show Up – Join These Upcoming Events:

- April 13, 2023: [Ensuring Employee Incentives Align With Your Climate Values](#), Climate Collaborative
- May 4, 2023: [B Corps and the Race to Zero](#), B Lab (For Certified B Corps only)
- May 4, 2023: Planet and Partnership: Funding climate solutions while ensuring equitable community partnerships, B Lab U.S. & Canada
- Search for other climate justice events online or in your community!

Commit – Join These Campaigns:

- [B Lab Earth Day Thunderclap](#)
- [One Step Closer Zero Waste](#)
- [Climate Collaborative](#)
- [Race to Zero](#)

Advocate For Climate Policy:

- Learn more about the [2023 Farm Bill](#) and its implications for climate justice from our partners at Climate Collaborative.
- Sign up to join for B Lab U.S. & Canada's bi-monthly [policy collaboration calls](#).
- Sign up to receive B Lab U.S. & Canada's [policy newsletter](#).
- Join [Ceres' BICEP Network](#).
- Support the [Equitable and Just National Climate Platform](#).

For B Corps:

- Join the [B Corp Climate Collective](#).
- Explore the [B Climate Tools Base](#).
- Learn about B Lab's [new draft climate action standard](#).
- Learn more about [B Lab U.S. & Canada's Climate Justice Program](#).

B of Service

Organize your team, B Local Network, family, or friends to take action on climate justice while getting involved in your local community

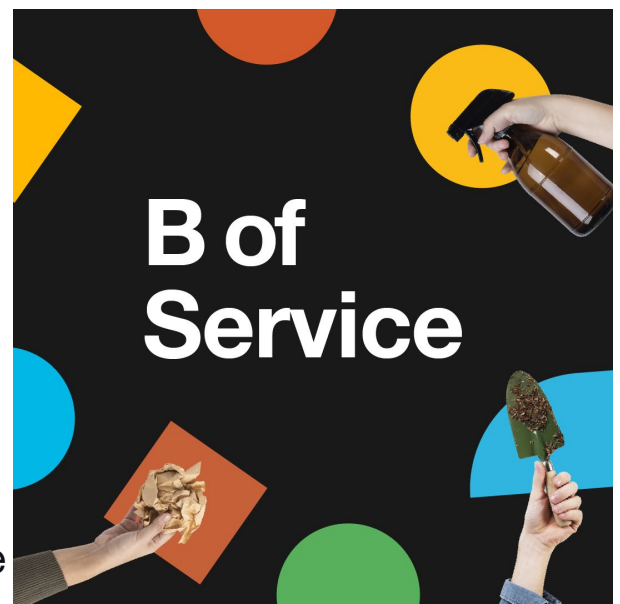
After your reflection journey is well underway, use your momentum to organize a B of Service, or volunteer day, with climate-justice-focused organizations and partners in your area. This is an opportunity to apply the principles learned throughout the Climate Justice Reflection Challenge. Feel free to use the [B of Service assets](#).

Tips:

- *Use this opportunity to involve your entire organization in climate justice work.*
- *Do research into local organizations that focus on climate and environmental justice near that need volunteer help.*
- *Share your B of Service initiative on social media and tag @bcorpuscan*

We recognize that not every individual, team, or B Local Network will have the time or capacity to organize a B of Service day during Earth Month. Here are some alternatives:

- *Consider how you can support the organizations you've identified outside of volunteering by amplifying, or if you're in a position to do so, funding their work.*
- *Follow and amplify voices and leadership of people on the frontlines of climate change via social media.*



Earth Day Thunderclap

Let's use our collective power to raise awareness about climate justice during Earth Month! Choose from our suite of assets to post on your company's social media accounts for **Earth Day, April 22, 2023**.

Suggested Copy

[Company Name] stands for climate justice. Climate justice calls us to center the needs and voices of frontline communities in our climate action and advocacy. We're answering that call by: [Insert information about your company's engagement with the Climate Justice Reflection Challenge or other initiatives]

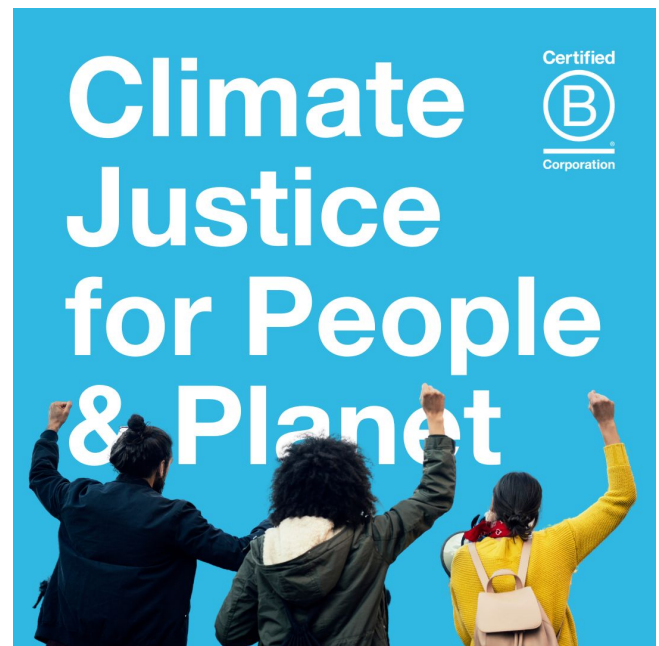
Climate justice is necessary to create a better future for all people and the planet.
#BusinessForClimateJustice
#EarthMonth

Access the Thunderclap Assets in Canva

Please note – Only Certified B Corporations may use the assets that include the B Corp logo.

[1080 x 1080 Files](#)

[1024 x 512 Files](#)



Amplify

Take action by amplifying the work of others!

What non-profit partners and local community organizations are you working with to advance and support climate justice? We want to know!

Give them a share and shoutout on social media and tag us at @bcorpuscan. Or email us at marcomm@bcorporation.net to share more details about the initiatives you and your partners are working on. We are seeking to compile and share case studies of B Corps doing climate justice work.



Credit: Jack Owick



Thank You

For questions regarding this document, please contact marcomm@bcorporation.net. For more information about B Lab U.S. & Canada and climate justice, visit usca.bcorporation.net/climate-justice.

