



earth day **2010**

**STUDENT OUTREACH GUIDE**

[www.earthday.org](http://www.earthday.org)

## Earth Day University - Microcosms of the Movement

Dynamic and aggressive action has the power to capture the attention of peers and leaders, and is most powerful when its purpose is clear. Earth Day 2010's campaign message is simple: the American people demand that the United States Congress pass a bold and comprehensive climate bill in 2010. It is time to stop protecting polluters and enact climate legislation that will create American jobs, cap carbon emissions and ensure national security and a healthy environment for future generations.

**April 17-18 - Global Days of Service**

**April 22 - Earth Day**

**April 25 - Rally on the National Mall in Washington DC**

**Earth Day.  
You Matter. It Works.**

## Introduction - Rallying for a Sustainable Future

This coming Earth Day, college campuses have an opportunity to stand together and demand sustainable policy changes at their schools. Earth Day Network is asking student leaders to organize rallies that will **unite** their campuses around a common theme, and expand how the student population looks at the environmental movement. Modeled after the Earth Day 2010 global campaign which targets interest groups ranging from environmental NGOs to religious communities, justice groups, labor unions, artists, athletes, international leaders and many more, Earth Day University wants equivalent campus student groups to work together and create a new face for the environmental movement...one that shows environmentalism is about far more than saving the trees. This is a movement to ensure our future.

At the core of the program is the Earth Day Rally. During these scalable events, students from each organization will take to the stage and demand that their peers and leaders (administrations and town officials) recognize the impacts of climate change and the power of sustainability and the green economy. With each group bringing a unique perspective, the rallies will address social injustice, renewable energy resources, and climate protection. The ultimate goal is to show how a green future is important to everyone. School administrators and professors will join students at the podium to discuss areas for improvement, and propose an action plan to achieve positive environmental change on campus. Their involvement will help draw massive numbers of students into the movement, and publicly call on other school officials to make changes on campus.

## Why Organize?

Earth Day is an opportunity for the school to address its commitment to a greener future. Each school has its own character and each rally will be vary depending the on the size of a campus, the level of the administration's cooperation, and which student groups choose to participate. At schools that are already taking impressive steps towards environmental sustainability, their efforts deserve to be applauded, and then built upon . At schools where the issue is a low priority, these rallies will pressure the administration to address its lack of action by showing an united student front, and ideally force a commitment for action by the school's President.

Every school that works towards sustainability proves that we are fighting a winnable war and that people are taking this issue seriously. If college communities can demonstrate that carbon neutrality is achievable, then cities, states and countries can use this model to achieve carbon independence.

## Student Group Research

The first step in planning the event is to focus on research. Organizers need to decide what student groups to target to be a part of the rally.

To get started, organizers should make a chart of the various student organizations they want to approach, and add the main goals of each group. There are many different kinds of organizations, and some will have a clearer connection to the environment than others, however, there is a way to reach *anyone* - the connection between the environment and the group just needs to be made. Here are examples of possible groups to target, and how to approach them.

**Cause groups** will have their clear foundation, but its connection to the environmental movement may not be as evident.

*For example, the key goals of some anti-genocide groups are raising awareness and funds on behalf of Darfur. The environmental connection would be the water contamination and desertification in the region, which is intensifying the violence as people fight for the resources to live. This is an organization that should be approached on the message of water conservation and sustainable farming practices. Someone from their group might want to join the rally to discuss how fragile eco-systems contribute to violence and the ways to address and prevent further resource destruction.*

**Justice and Culture groups** might be celebrating an identity, or possibly bringing attention to discrimination against this identity.

*Certain communities, more so than the general population, have been disproportionately affected by industrial poisoning and these groups may want to discuss how it affects their population. Latino, African-American and Native American communities are the focus of the Environmental Justice movement, which seek fairness for minority groups whose concerns are ignored in favor of big-business. These groups may want to speak about local areas where their community is being recklessly contaminated and what needs to be done to stop this degradation.*

**Activity Groups** may not have a shared collective identity, but may still want to be part of the movement.

*Groups like Science based clubs and College Radio may not be able to speak to any cause affecting their daily lives, however, individuals in these groups often have a personal interest in the environment, and a willingness to recruit their club to be a part of the rally or service events. College Radio could be of service by promoting the event on the air, while the involvement of Science Clubs can help scientific interest and backup research that supports the environmental movement.*

## Student Group Outreach

The outreach team needs to work closely with the information found during research to form an overall message and targeted supporting messages that will motivate partnership development. Organizers need to align the target groups' priorities into the demand they are asking on campus. All participating student groups need to feel as though they own an element of the rally if it is going to be a success.

Earth Day Network has partnerships with many national and international organizations and mentioning this connection can provide leverage and legitimacy in approaching local chapters of these groups. Organizers can see what groups Earth Day Network has standing relationships with by visiting [earthday.org/community](http://earthday.org/community). By researching the groups we're partnered with and what those partnerships entail, students will be able to form their own strategies on how to approach other student groups on campus.

## Campus Policy Research

To incorporate the messages of the various groups approached on campus into a call-to-action for the school, organizers need to determine their school's commitment to sustainability. Some schools may already be making their buildings more efficient, purchasing green energy, serving local and organic food in the cafeteria, and offering environmental education programs. Keep in mind that unless a school is already carbon neutral, administrations can be pressured to continue developing green policies.

If the school has a sustainability director, then they are the first person with whom to speak. Otherwise, school deans and environmental science professors may be able to help point you in the direction of campus environmental policies. When approaching these figures on campus, students should find out the school's stance on the following topics: Energy Usage, Building Efficiency, Reducing Consumption, Food on Campus, and classes incorporating sustainability issues.

Two great resources for ideas and case studies on environmental projects are AASHE's Campus Profiles page and Campus Ecology's sustainability yearbook.

**AASHE:** <http://www.aashe.org/resources/profiles/profiles.php>

**Campus Ecology:** <http://www.nwf.org/campusecology/resources/yearbook/index.cfm>

## Working with the Administration

While speaking with the school regarding their commitment to the environment, students can gauge how much cooperation or resistance they are going to get from the school in terms of organizing the rally. Some school officials will be eager to address their commitment to the environment, and be a part of a movement that unites so many different groups on campus, however, schools that are avoiding a commitment to sustainability may be less eager. In order to have a chance for real impact, it's important that the school is a part of the action.

If any commitment is going to be made by the school, then the administration needs a role at the rally. Someone from the school administration needs to be able to respond to student demands. Ideally, the college President will take the matter seriously enough to speak on behalf of the campus, however, that might not always be possible. Organizers should try to collaborate with the highest level representative possible - someone who can be held accountable for any promises.

## Working with Professors

Professors can be a useful ally against a resisting administration. Professors in the environmental sciences community will attest to the reality of climate change. Professors in other departments can speak about topics such as the economic impacts of a green economy, public health implications, industrial pollution, etc. Working with professors will also help outreach to other student groups by further legitimizing the rally and showing that this is a cause that extends by connecting organizers with active students interested in topics that can be incorporated into a message for sustainability.

## Organize Online

Earth Day has launched a powerful new Web site at [earthday.org/action](http://earthday.org/action) designed to enable organizers to create dynamic pages capable of hosting media ranging from videos and photos to blog entries. The site also incorporates a social media platform that allows organizers to invite students to join events, send them updates, and search for events in their area to coordinate efforts and recruit communities to campus events. The first step for any organizer should be to register their event on the website ([action.earthday.org/campaigns/drive-campus-action](http://action.earthday.org/campaigns/drive-campus-action)) within the Campus Leaders Campaign - this enables organizers to receive updates from the Earth Day University staff, and make sure their event is counted in our tracking system. The movement will only be taken seriously if we are able to quantify our actions. The Web site is the most important tool for accomplishing this.

## Service and Billion Acts of Green

In addition to these rallies, students can also participate in service activities as part of Earth Day Network's Billion Acts of Green™ initiative ([www.billionactsofgreen.org](http://www.billionactsofgreen.org)), an effort that will mobilize one billion people around climate action. The massive collection of service commitments will send a powerful message and drive efforts for solving climate change that everyone can understand. In conjunction with community organizations, national, regional and local governments worldwide, actions will be counted toward a Billion Acts of Green. Global service activities have already begun, but a major series of service projects will be held the weekend before Earth Day: 17-18 April 2010.

## Rally on the National Mall - April 25

In addition to events on campus, Earth Day Network is asking students along the East Coast and in the Midwest to mobilize for a rally on the National Mall in Washington, D.C. on April 25. While many students will have made a decision to come to Washington, D.C. before Earth Day, on-campus events provide an opportunity to recruit last-minute supporters into joining the mobilization. A separate mobilization guide will be available on the Drive Campus Action campaign page ([action.earthday.org/campaigns/drive-campus-action](http://action.earthday.org/campaigns/drive-campus-action)) that will help leaders coordinate these efforts. This rally on the National Mall is the focal point of Earth Day Network's 2010 campaign and will unite not just campus groups, but also groups from every organization that Earth Day Network reaches. Campus events will be a powerful opportunity to demand action at colleges and universities; however the rally on the National Mall will be the moment that ensures Earth Day 2010 will be remembered for changing the course of the environmental movement, and forcing Congress to pass the necessary climate legislation the American people deserve.

## Wrapping up the Event

After the event is finished, it is important for campus leaders to follow up with the groups that participated to collect feedback about the event. There is no reason that this broad level of participation can't be replicated every year, however, to ensure strong relationships, it is necessary that each group feel as though their involvement is appreciated, and their input is included. Ideally, organizers should also continue to act as a liaison between the different groups fostering continued cooperation between them throughout the year. If each group joins together every year, the bond that unites them will only grow stronger, enabling the Earth Day moment to have significant influence on how school administrations respond to student sustainability demands.

## Steps to Organizing an Event

**A. Form a Team:** Work within an existing Earth Day effort or start your own. Begin by learning what's already being planned in your community:

- Check Earth Day Network's Web site at [www.earthday.org](http://www.earthday.org) and Earth Day on Campus page to view the latest listing of planned events and to look for contacts and organizers on campus or in your community.
- **Find core members** who consist of two or three dedicated students and ideally a supportive professor or staff member.
- **Talk to groups** on campus and ask what they are planning.
- **Organize a kick-off meeting** to identify possible partners. Invite existing campus groups who may already be planning an Earth Day event, or who might be interested in helping with one. Pull together a steering committee (for more on recruiting volunteers see Building Support).
- **List your event on Earth Day Network's Web site so that information will be available to people in your community.**
- Form committees: If you choose to team up with other organizers and establish your own Earth Day group, consider forming committees to oversee basic functions. Committees may include project/event planning, materials, publicity and outreach.

**B. Set a Goal:**

- **Do research.** Find out where your political leaders stand on various environmental issues, who/what/where your school gets its power from, etc. Make sure you have all the relevant information to help make your campus Earth Day event successful.
- **Set campaign goals.** Be ambitious but realistic. Decide how many people you want to sign the Climate Legislation NOW petition, join your rally, call your Congressperson, or get educated on the impact of coal or other environmental issue relevant to your campus. Whatever you do, set clear goals so you can assess your progress along the way.

**C. Choose a Strategy:**

- **Identify your goals and objectives** for outcomes. How will you achieve them? Will you rely solely on existing group members or will recruit more members? Will your campaign make extensive use of campus media, or will you try to expand interest into your community? Will your strategy involve building a coalition or retaining a separate organizational identity and focus, or both? There are many ways to craft your strategy. Pull together your steering committee and choose an action plan that is best for you.
- **Educate yourself and others about your campaign.** Lots of good information already exists - don't try to reinvent the wheel. Knowledge of the material is the basis of a good campaign. Make sure you know your stuff before you move forward.

## 4. Organizing Tools: What You Need To Succeed

### A. Developing a Message & Outreach:

- **Message Formation:** What is the one thing you want people to know about your organization's Earth Day event?

It could be the theme of your event. Perhaps it is one fact that beautifully illustrates the impact of climate change. Whatever it is, that one thing you want people to know and remember about you is your "message" and should be included in every piece of material you produce - just like your logo.

The message should be positive and a 'call-to-action' that inspires people to get involved and support the campaign.

- **Publicize creatively.** Use all your social networking talents and connections. There are also dozens of more traditional ways to get your message out. Consider handing out fliers, sitting at an information booth, phoning, hanging up posters, making announcements during other events, attending meetings of other groups, getting listed in campus calendars, starting an online group or message board, or any other form of publicity suited to your particular campus.
- **Media Outreach: Write a press release**—a compelling one-page summary about your event or project and your organization. Be sure to cover who, what, when, where, why, and how - and include contact information for your group.

Send the release to campus and community newspapers. Consider including supplemental background materials for outlets that may do an in-depth story.

**Give the media plenty of notice.** Send out your information a week or two in advance of your event. Send all media advisories to both the general office and those reporters who are most likely to cover the story. Be sure to follow up a few days before your event takes place.

**Follow through.** Try to establish relationships with certain reporters. If reporters ask for additional information in order to write a story, keep detailed records of requests and follow through in a timely way.

**Treat the press well.** Reporters like to feel that they are important to your group. Be available for interviews. If you are holding an event, assign someone to greet reporters and show them around. The more personal contact reporters receive, the more likely they are to write a substantial and positive story.

You can find sample press releases and media advisories in the Resources section of this guide.

## 4. Organizing Tools: What You Need To Succeed

- **Make a visual impact:** Events that have bright signs, big props, and vivid colors are more likely to get front-page stories written about them as well as bring attention to your campaign and event.

### B. Building Support:

- **Do what you do best:** Facebook, MySpace, Twitter, and blog your heart out! There are so many tools we can use these days to get the word out about our events. Create an event on Facebook, or Twitter your friends' updates on your Earth Day organizing efforts.
- **Finding Volunteers:** Earth Day is an ideal opportunity for interested students who have never volunteered before. They can get great experience and add some resume-builders. You just need to invite them!

The first step is a recruitment meeting or activity. Invite a large cross-section of your campus. Make sure notices get posted in all areas of your campus. Send a notice to your school newspapers and listservs stating that you are going to hold an Earth Day organizing meeting at a certain time and place, and that everyone is invited to attend. The key to success of volunteer recruitment is sending out invitations that cause people to respond. Free food or giveaways always helps attract attendees!

Start the meeting by introducing yourselves and the plan for the meeting. Give participants some background information on your organization and depending on the stage in the planning process, either brainstorm ideas for an Earth Day event or discuss the plans so far and ask for feedback.

At your meetings, always pass around a sign-up sheet for people to give their name, phone number, email address and dorm/address. Following the meeting, ask the volunteers to fill out an information form and sign up for specific tasks they are willing to take on. You can find a sample Volunteer Information Form in the Resources section of this guide.

- **Create organizational systems that will help your campaign or event.** As things heat up, you will want to be confident that you can handle the increased workload.

One important aspect of creating good systems and building capacity is having excellent communication tools within your campaign and for the audience that you hope to communicate with.

Make sure you have a good email list or telephone tree to reach key members of your team in a pinch. Create a database from which you can pull your contact list and break down the list in useful ways. Use email, which is fast and affordable, to get out the word about meetings, events and important news.

## 4. Organizing Tools: What You Need To Succeed

- **Reach out to decision-makers.** Assess whose approval or involvement you need to make your project successful. This may include other organizations on campus, campus administrators and staff. Go to these people immediately after you have worked up a solid plan. Keep them informed throughout the process and value their input.

### C. Location, Location, Location:

Decide very early in the planning process where you need to host meetings, post information about your campaign, have rallies or other physical locations that may need prior permission before access to use is granted. Campuses are typically extremely supportive of student activities and will be very helpful.

If you plan to have an Earth Day event, be sure to reserve the location well in advance. Be sure also to have a back-up plan for rain or in case more people than expected show up. Be sure to account for logistics such as accessibility, restrooms, trash cans, bike racks, food/drink, etc.

### D. Staying the Course - Timelines & Deadlines:

- **From the start be sure to create clear, achievable completion dates** - set up your volunteers to succeed by allowing a fair amount of time to produce your desired results. Be sure to check in with your volunteers along the way to be certain everything is moving according to plan.

Know how much time you need, and for how long. Get commitments from your volunteers a few weeks or a month ahead of time, if possible. This allows you time to react and get replacements if something unexpected comes up.

- **Work Backwards** to determine all the steps needed to accomplish your goal. For each step ask, "How long before Earth Day must this be done?" Then for each time period, add a week. Keep track of all deadlines on a calendar and stick to them.

## 5. Resources

### Sample Volunteer Information Form

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Address:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Email Address:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Telephone Number: (H)**\_\_\_\_\_ **(W)**\_\_\_\_\_

**Committee you're most interested in (check one):**

Planning       Fundraising       Media and publicity

Coalition building       Materials       Events

**Time(s) available (specify):**

Mornings       Afternoons       Evenings

**Day(s) available:**

Monday       Tuesday       Wednesday       Thursday

Friday       Saturday       Sunday

**What brought you to this meeting?** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**What is your greatest hope for Earth Day?** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

## 5. Resources

### Sample Media Advisory

[organization letterhead]

**Media Advisory**  
Date

**Contact:** Name, Affiliation  
Phone

#### **THOUSANDS EXPECTED FOR EARTH DAY FESTIVAL IN THE PARK**

**11th annual EarthFair will feature clean energy technologies;  
interactive fun for the whole family**

**City, State**—Want to sample air quality or test water to check for lead? Listen to a great concert featuring sizzling local acts? Help a child examine a water sample under a microscope and check it for pollution? Participate in an art workshop featuring recycled materials?

Get ready for Earth Day—this year we're bigger than ever! Join us at Evergreen State Park for the 11th Annual EarthFair. In addition to offering hands-on fun for the whole family, the EarthFair will also recycle its trash, create an Earth Day garden and demonstrate other ways to have a sustainable event as well as a sustainable world.

**WHAT:** 11th Annual EarthFair, featuring food and entertainment, a children's area, planting techniques and much more!

**WHEN:** Sunday, 22 April, 10 am until 6 pm

**WHERE:** Evergreen State Park

**SPONSORS:** Earth Day Any Town  
Mayor Jane Doe  
Local clean energy businesses  
25 local PTAs  
Parks Department

Earth Day Any Town is a local coalition of concerned families, teachers, elected leaders and sustainable businesses that works to increase public awareness of environmental issues through annual Earth Day events and activities. Earth Day Any Town is affiliated with Earth Day Network, the international organization coordinating Earth Day events worldwide. For more information, check out [Earth Day Any Town web address] or [www.earthday.net](http://www.earthday.net).

## 5. Resources

### Sample Radio PSAs

Call your local radio stations to introduce yourself and find out whether they might run some PSAs announcing your event. If they are willing to work with you, you will need to arrange production logistics, including who will do the voice-over. Prepare sample PSA scripts that deliver your message in measured bites. Some examples:

#### :10 EARTH DAY VOLUNTEER PSA

Do something good for the Earth and fun for yourself—volunteer for Earth Day 2007! Call ###-####. Who says you can't change the world? ###-####

#### :20 WALK 'N' ROLL WALK-A-THON PSA

Get your Earth Day off to the right start by walking or biking to EarthFair 2007 in the Earth Day Walk n' Roll walk-a-thon! Pledges you raise support Earth Day Any Town. Who says you can't change the world? Call [###-####] to register, win prizes and help the Earth! Call [###-####].

#### :30 PARADE PSA

Solar cars, zero-emission bikers, milk-crate cars, skaters and marching bands will be some of the Earth-friendly sights you'll see in the Earth Day Parade through (Location) on (Date.) Head to \_\_\_\_\_ (Meeting Place Location) by 10am to join fellow earthlings gearing up for this year's parade theme: "Clean, Green Energy Machines." Get involved and have fun on Earth Day. To receive a parade entry form, or for more information, call [###-####].