

● Covering Climate Now

# Changing the climate conversation, in newsrooms and beyond

Covering Climate Now is transforming how the media covers climate change. And not a moment too soon.

Better news coverage is an essential climate solution. It's a catalyst that makes progress on every part of the climate problem—from politics to business, activism to justice, lifestyle change to systems change—more likely. Better mainstream news coverage reaches beyond the choir. It can educate massive numbers of everyday people about what's going on, how to fix it, and inspire them to act.



If you doubt that news coverage shapes a nation's trajectory, think about how Fox has changed America since Fox was founded 25 years ago, not least by legitimating climate denial.

Covering Climate Now is helping hundreds of the world's leading news organizations to provide coverage that illuminates the heartbreaking dangers of the climate emergency but also the common-sense solutions.

Founded in 2019 by Columbia Journalism Review and The Nation, CCNow counts as partners more than 500 news outlets—including the Guardian, ABC News, CBS News, NBC News, PBS NewsHour, Bloomberg, Reuters, Agence-France Press, Deutsche Welle, Times of India, and a host of local TV, radio, newspaper, and digital outlets—that reach some 2 billion people.



**“In just three years, Covering Climate Now has gotten scores of legacy news outlets to tell the climate story so tens of millions of everyday citizens understand the threat and what they can do about it. Let’s help CCNow keep doing it.”**

— **Bill Moyers**, PRESIDENT EMERITUS,  
SCHUMANN MEDIA CENTER

## Fostering An Engaged Public

Our work facilitates what has long been lacking on the climate challenge: an engaged mass public. Decades of philanthropy have produced plenty of scientific knowledge about the climate threat and smart policy proposals to address it. What's missing has been the public pressure that can compel governments and companies to *implement* those policies, when powerful interests want to stick with the status quo.

CCNow focuses on helping TV and other mainstream outlets—which, after all, are where most people get their news—provide the plain-spoken climate coverage that can energize public opinion.

## What We Do

Covering Climate Now helps newsrooms give audiences coverage that does not paralyze them with fear but alerts them to the challenges and opportunities at hand. We encourage coverage that is centered on actual people; that highlights the local as much as the global; and the solutions as much as the problems.

### PROVIDE EDITORIAL CONSULTATION

Because we are organized by journalists, for journalists, CCNow can speak with newsroom decision

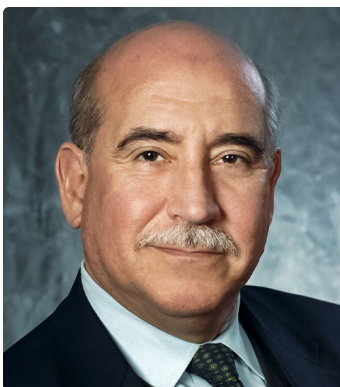
makers in ways that non-journalists simply cannot. The trust we've built with newsroom leaders animates both our public and behind-the-scenes relationships. We have organized numerous confidential training sessions with key journalists at CBS News, ABC News, CBC News, Al Jazeera, and other outlets to bring them up to speed on climate science, politics, and justice and recommend specific stories to pursue. We then work with these journalists to give their stories audience appeal and impact.

### CURATE HIGH-QUALITY CONTENT

Through our newsletters, social media, website, and relationships, we help amplify the reporting done by our partners and other newsrooms. We provide stories that our partners can republish or rebroadcast for free. We organize our partners to do Newsmaker Interviews with such luminaries as Greta Thunberg, UN Secretary-General António Guterres, COP26 president Alok Sharma, New Zealand prime minister Jacinda Ardern, Global South climate ambassador Mohammed Nasheed, and US representative Jamie Raskin, injecting into the public conversation much-needed perspectives on climate justice, solutions, and the urgency of taking action.

### BUILD COMMUNITY BY TALKING SHOP

We convene Talking Shop sessions where hundreds of journalists gather for confidential, candid discussions about how all of us can improve climate coverage. Topics have included climate justice, the 2020 US elections, and cutting edge climate science; a session co-sponsored with Scientific American led to coverage in the Washington Post. Our weekly newsletter reaches 6,000-plus subscribers, with insights about where the media is excelling and falling short and how to do better.



**“CCNow has helped CBS train journalists in the language and science of climate so they have the confidence and ability to see the interconnectedness with stories they’re reporting.”**

— **Al Ortiz**, EXECUTIVE PRODUCER, CBS EVENING NEWS



## ORGANIZE JOINT WEEKS OF COVERAGE

We organize Joint Coverage Weeks around key news events to raise climate's visibility in the public eye. Four months after our founding, we cracked the media's long-standing "climate silence" by organizing hundreds of news outlets to do a week of high-profile coverage in the lead-up to United Nations "Climate Week" in September 2019. With leadership from the Guardian, CBS News, Bloomberg, El País, and Agence-France Presse (which supplies hundreds of additional news outlets with articles, videos, and photos), this Joint Coverage Week generated an estimated 3,400 pieces of climate news that appeared in 47 countries and reached hundreds of millions of people.

## OFFER STORY IDEAS & RESOURCES

Our website offers concise, authoritative resources on all aspects of the climate story and how to cover it. We meet our colleagues where they are, nurturing a Slack community of nearly 800 journalists where we brainstorm story ideas, identify sources, and facilitate collaboration. We further engage journalists by hosting events on Twitter—where we have grown our audience to more than 13,000 followers—and Instagram Live.

## ESTABLISH STANDARDS OF EXCELLENCE

Our annual Covering Climate Now Journalism Awards establish standards of excellence that journalists and newsrooms everywhere can emulate. Last year's awards were announced in a full-page New York Times ad and a TV special co-hosted by NBC News's Al Roker and Savannah Sellers that streamed on NBC News Now. This year's awards attracted 900 submissions from 65 countries and will animate a second TV special, again co-hosted by Roker and Sellers, to be streamed and broadcast on 191 public television stations nationwide.

## A HUB OF COLLABORATION

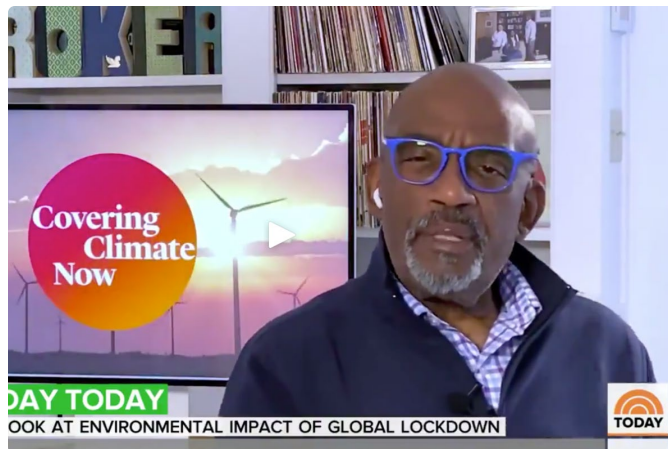
CCNow enjoys constructive working relationships with other non-profits working on climate communications. We collaborate in particular with Climate Nexus, Climate Central, the Society of Environmental Journalists, and the Solutions Journalism Network. CCNow brings to these collaborations our close relationships with mainstream newsrooms, which in turn connects our colleagues' work to much broader audiences.

## What's next for CCNow?

We are bringing big changes to mainstream news coverage, and thereby making progress more likely for everyone working to stop climate change. We've achieved all this with just a \$1.2 million a year budget. We seek funding first and foremost to put our current operations on a sound financial basis.

We also hope to raise additional funds to take advantage of opportunities to make even more of a difference. Local TV remains, even in this digital age, a leading news source for middle America. Most local TV climate coverage, however, is poor or non-existent. If we could increase our budget by \$250,000 to \$500,000 annually, we could significantly expand our impact.

After decades of climate silence, the media needle has finally begun to move. CCNow is helping to drive that change. But this welcome improvement remains frustratingly inadequate in the face of the onrushing emergency, which makes CCNow's work more important than ever. Please join us in making the most of this pivotal moment.



**“Now more than ever it is important to cover one of the most pressing issues in our lifetimes.”**

— **Al Roker**, NBC NEWS

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