

CLIMATE FAST FORWARD 2024

CONFERENCE SUMMARY



Wisconsin Academy of
Sciences, Arts & Letters





AN INVITATION



This fall, the Academy invited Wisconsinites to come together for the third statewide Climate Fast Forward conference, on November 14th and 15th, 2024. Invitations, by their nature, are opportunities: they encourage us to step forward, engage with others, and imagine new possibilities. Held for the first time outside Dane County, participants representing 108 organizations gathered at the center of the state to connect, reflect, and act.

What made this gathering powerful were the moments of connection—emotional conversations, shared gratitude, and a collective sense of purpose. Beyond listening, attendees actively contributed: providing feedback to Wisconsin’s Comprehensive Climate Action Plan, gaining practical skills in workshops, and forming new partnerships to advance climate action.

This report highlights the themes and outcomes of CFF 2024. It is a reminder of what we achieved together and an open invitation to stay connected. Whether building partnerships, sharing ideas, or taking action locally, we all have a role in shaping Wisconsin’s climate future.

Thank you for being part of Climate Fast Forward 2024.

Sincerely,
Lizzie Condon

Director of Climate and Science Programs for the Wisconsin Academy of Sciences, Arts & Letters

CLIMATE FAST FORWARD 2019 TO NOW

Through Climate Fast Forward (CFF) conferences, the Academy aims to bring together people from all over Wisconsin to connect, build community, and act on climate change. The first CFF conference took place in 2019, followed by a second gathering in 2022. These meetings prioritize collaboration and bring people together from around the state and across many sectors to identify practical steps to advance Wisconsin’s climate goals.

Building on the second Climate Fast Forward conference, which included the 2022 Climate Action Plan, Climate Fast Forward 2024 (CFF24) marked several milestones. It was the first conference held outside of Dane County, making it more accessible to attendees from northern Wisconsin.





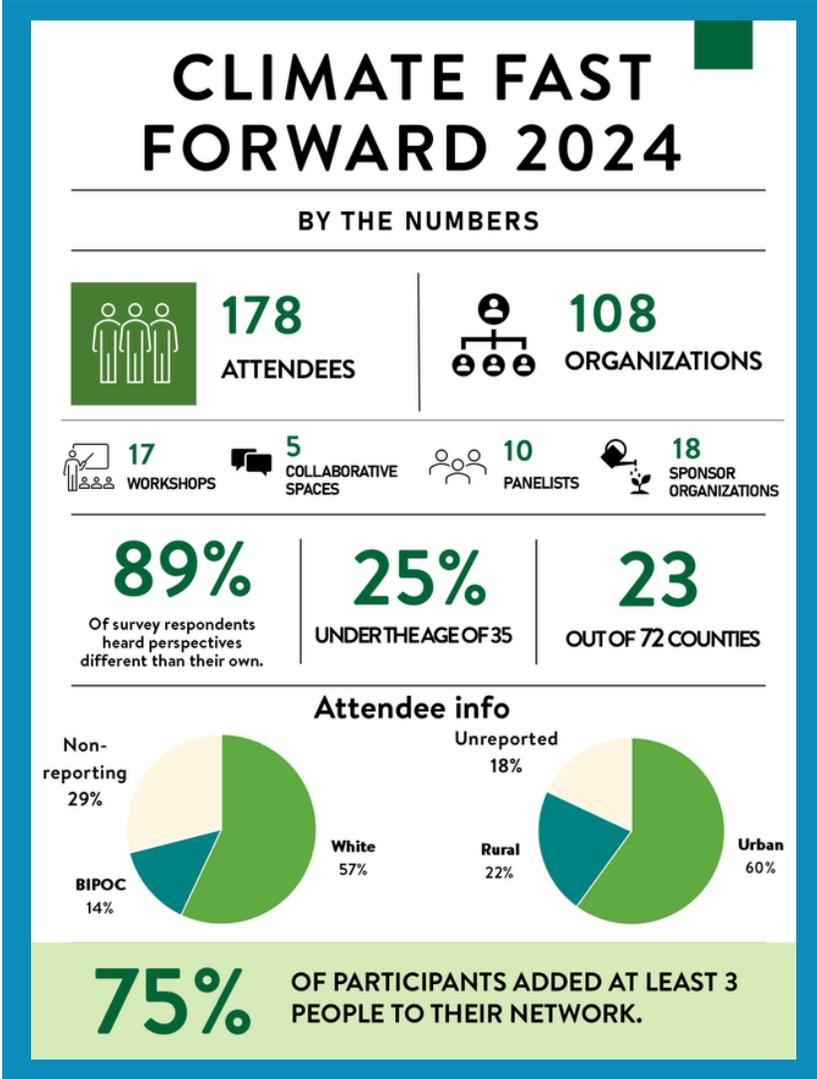
YOU ARE INVITED

TO CONNECT AND BUILD COMMUNITY

One of the most powerful reflections from CFF24 was the deep emotional experience of community that emerged throughout the event. Many participants spoke about the comfort and strength they drew from being surrounded by people who shared their concerns about climate change. It wasn't just the workshops or panels that left a lasting impact—it was the human connection that occurred between sessions, in hallway conversations, and during shared moments of vulnerability.

This theme of community, grounded in shared purpose and mutual support, was also echoed in the keynote speech by Kyle Whyte, who emphasized the importance of long-term thinking and solidarity in addressing climate injustice.

Through the conversations, tears, and laughter, participants shared their gratitude for the community of people who care deeply about climate action. A key theme that emerged from many speakers and throughout the event was the importance of community—especially in times of crisis.



CFF24 also offered opportunities for attendees to engage in statewide efforts to guide future climate policy, by adding comments to the Comprehensive Climate Action Plan, which is currently being drafted by the the State of Wisconsin's Office of Sustainability and Clean Energy's Comprehensive Climate Action Plan.



TO HEAR A DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVE

“As a high school student attending this, it was comforting to know how many people support my vision for my future.”

– CFF 2024 attendee

Climate Fast Forward acted as an invitation to people from all backgrounds, communities, and regions to come together for a shared vision: climate action.

Climate Fast Forward 2024 was the first held outside of Madison. While these meetings had a large turnout, representation was largely geographically limited to southern Wisconsin. Based on feedback from 2022 and our own observations, the Academy decided to move Climate Fast Forward 2024 to Rothschild, WI, located in the center of the state.

By moving the meeting north of Madison, the Academy hoped to allow easier access to those from rural communities in northern Wisconsin, who are often left out of the climate conversation but face many of the impacts. Other Wisconsin cities in more northern parts of the state, including La Crosse, Green Bay, Appleton, Wausau, and Ashland, also had stronger representation at Climate Fast Forward 2024 than at past conferences held in Dane County.

Representation, especially from historically underserved communities, remains an important goal for the Academy’s Climate & Energy Initiative programs. As we continue to work towards climate action, all voices are essential for this effort.

“Despite not being an expert or representing a big organization, I felt welcomed, included and valued! Thank you so much for opening the door to such a diverse group of voices and perspectives.”

-CFF 2024 attendee



The pre-conference reception at the Leigh Yawkey Woodson Art Museum set the tone for the gathering, where participants mingled, shared stories, and explored the exhibits in a relaxed yet meaningful setting.



TO LEARN SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE FOR CLIMATE ACTION

CFF24 was also an invitation to learn. With 17 hands-on workshops, participants had the chance to dive deep into practical skills and knowledge that they could take back to their communities and incorporate into their climate work. These workshops covered a wide range of topics, from climate resilience to sustainable energy solutions to ethical engagement with Tribal Nations, empowering attendees to take actionable steps in their own communities. This was the first time the Academy offered this type of learning space, where people could both share their expertise and learn from others.



Learning took many different forms outside of the workshops. There were 3 panels throughout the event to share current work, data, and visions for the future.

“It was a privilege to meet so many people from so many walks of life who came together to develop ideas to address this pressing issue.”
–CFF 2024 attendee

Workshop Topics

- Capacity Building for Communities: Leveraging FEMA and State Grants to Increase Resilience
- Climate Action Mapping Project (CAMP), Climate Action Now
- Climate Action Planning 101
- Grassroots Climate Action & Advocacy 101: Inclusive Movement Building for Change
- Climate, watersheds, and coasts: optimizing healthy Wisconsin waters
- Connecting Climate and Local Transportation
- Construction is HOW Big of a Climate Action Opportunity?! How your community can tackle the “other” building decarbonization–embodied (upfront) carbon
- Crafting Impactful Climate Change Communications
- Empowering Clean Energy Futures: Collaborative Workshop on Financing Solutions with the Green Innovation Fund
- Empowering Communities: Democratizing Investment in Renewable Energy through Cooperatives
- Grant Writing Strategies and Tips
- How to Build Sustainability at a Grassroots Level and Beyond
- How to Navigate -and Be Effective at- the PSC
- Natural Climate Solutions
- Relationships 101: Ethical Engagement with Tribal Nations in Wisconsin
- Systems Thinking Made Simple
- Exploring Community Adaptation, Resilience, and Storytelling with the Wisconsin Initiative on Climate Change Impacts



TO COLLABORATE AND CONTRIBUTE: SHAPING WISCONSIN'S CLIMATE PRIORITIES

CCFF24 provided an opportunity for direct involvement in shaping Wisconsin's climate future. Attendees were invited to share their feedback and ideas from the collaborative space sectors, which were then submitted to the Wisconsin Department of Administration's Office of Sustainability and Clean Energy (OSCE) to inform the State's upcoming Comprehensive Climate Action Plan as part of the Climate Pollution Reduction Grant program. This plan will represent a commitment from the State of Wisconsin towards reducing greenhouse gas emissions in quantifiable and meaningful ways. Drawing from the work of OSCE's WI Climate Action Navigators, the collaborative spaces focused on intentionally opening a space for deeper conversations that matter. These dialogs, alongside the insights gathered during the conference, will play a crucial role in guiding future climate policies and actions across the state.

The spaces acted as an invitation to start rebuilding the community. In their discussions on the Comprehensive Climate Action Plan, many participants noted the need for more opportunities to connect, improve communication, and grow knowledge.

***"Storytelling is more important than ever. We need to tell more stories to create advocates for climate action."
-CFF 2024 Attendee***

Collaborative Space Sectors

Natural Climate Solutions

Leaders: Fred Clark, Nancy Turyk, Cassandra Flagg, and Kata Young

Transportation

Leaders: Kaleb Vander Wiele and Susan Gaeddert

Workforce Development

Leaders: Carly Ebben Eaton, PhD, Katelynn Samuelson, Christina Carvajal, and Lindsay Blumer

Clean Energy

Leaders: Francisco Sayu and Abigail Corso

Buildings

Leaders: Robin Lisowski, Montre Moore, and Kahya Fox



The Academy invited attendees to participate in collaborative spaces to gather, discuss, and share their experiences and ideas with others in the room.



AN INVITATION TO CONTINUE MOVING FORWARD

While CFF24 was an important milestone, it was also a call to action for continuing our efforts beyond the conference. Whether through the CCAP, teachings from the Menominee Nation, or poetry on climate action, the event was a reminder of the importance of sustained commitment to climate action.

The key question after CFF24 is: how can we continue to build on this momentum? The connections and partnerships made during the conference provide a strong foundation for ongoing climate action across Wisconsin.

This is not a conclusion, but an open invitation to keep reflecting, keep learning, and keep acting. We all have a role to play in Wisconsin's climate future, and the work continues.

The Wisconsin Academy of Sciences, Arts, and Letters will continue to play a role in connecting people and ideas to drive collective action. We want to hear about your climate actions moving forward, whether it be through a new partnership, event, or idea. If you would like to share any thoughts, events, or partner with us, please set up a meeting or [send us an email!](#)



Climate Fast Forward 2024 took place on the ancestral homelands of the indigenous people of the area around Rothschild, the Ho-Chunk, Menominee, Ojibwe, Potawatomi, and the many other nations and groups that predate colonial borders. Members from the Menominee Tribe set a strong starting point to the conference with a traditional drum and flag ceremonies. Myron Pywasit, a Tribal Elder with the Menominee Nation, welcomed attendees and encouraged us to continue our work of protecting the earth for all our relations. He emphasized the importance of thinking about seven generations in the future. This ceremony and speech were deeply affecting, with many attendees moved to tears.

Schedule a meeting with us

What climate action are you planning to take next?

Share any upcoming events



Thank you to our sponsors for your generous support in making Climate Fast Forward 2024 a success. We appreciate your partnership and look forward to future collaborations.



The State of Wisconsin's Office of Sustainability and Clean Energy

Clean Economy Coalition of Wisconsin | Wisconsin Office of Energy Innovation
CO2 Foundation

Invenergy | Wisconsin Economic Development | Wisconsin Farmers Union

Focus on Energy | Sea Grant University of Wisconsin | The Nature Conservancy
Natural Resources Foundation of Wisconsin | Couillard Solar Foundation | Brico Fund

North Wind Renewable Energy | WI Land + Water
Ruder Ware | Wisconsin Environmental Initiative

Thank you to our grant partners.



Thank you to our Leadership and Planning Committee for your dedication and hard work in making this conference a success.

Lizzie Condon	John Imes	Montre Moore
Beth Churchill	Samantha Kaplan	Morgan Moore
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