

Kentucky Student Environmental Coalition

Strategic Plan

This document is the framework of our movement. It provides a narrative that unites us, defines our structure, and lays out a two-year strategy for achieving our goals.



The Elements

SHOULD I STAY OR SHOULD I GO?: Kentucky's future can look dim when we consider the hardships we face and the continued devastation of our environment, leading us to ask the question, "Is there a future for me here?"

ISSUES: Kentuckians are disenfranchised by a government which continues to prop up an economy that destroys our environment, threatening our health and democracy. Without urgent action, we will continue to endure the consequences of a destabilized global climate and lack of access to clean water and healthy food.

THEM: Top industry and government officials serve corporate interests above public interests. Because of this, Kentucky continues to pursue false solutions at the cost of public health and environmental well-being.

US: As Kentucky youth, we hold the greatest stake in the future of our state. We accept our responsibility to create an environmentally-sustainable, socially just, and economically vibrant Kentucky for the well-being of ourselves and future generations. We are leading our state away from a self-destructive path by helping to usher in a new government and a new economy that will respect and protect our workers, communities, and environment. We are strong and resilient. **If we work together, we will win.**

THE CHOICE: Will we stay and unite to transform Kentucky's future into one that is just and environmentally sustainable? Or will we leave our home and allow industry and our government to continue valuing profits over people, putting our environment, communities, and future generations at risk?

OUR VISION: KSEC envisions a just and environmentally sustainable Kentucky that listens to the voices of young people, fosters a just society and strong local economies, honors our natural and cultural heritage, and puts people over profit.

Long Form Meta-Narrative

The purpose of the meta-narrative is to serve as the wellspring for all the messaging materials that will be created by the movement - both for training and for mobilization. We can't know in advance all the iterations our story will take, so the meta-narrative is meant to serve as a consistent reference and foundation for all possible iterations.

Kentuckians have a unique connection to the land we inhabit. Even those who wouldn't consider themselves environmentalists value our state's forests, rivers, and mountains. As much as our cultural identity is shaped by our natural environment, it is also shaped by the impact of extractive industries, particularly the coal industry, and the power structures that reinforce the false narrative that we must destroy the environment for economic growth. We recognize how these industries have exploited our land and resources, harmed and killed our workers, and extracted wealth from our communities. This legacy of exploitation leads young Kentuckians to ask the question: is there a future for me here?

Our generation is facing one of humanity's most challenging moments. Our planet is beginning to experience the catastrophic impacts of global climate change as prominent politicians continue denying the human causes. Our nation is facing societal upheaval as our democracy is threatened by bigotry and corporate takeover. Our state is experiencing the economically devastating decline of the coal industry as our state government remains in the pocket of the fossil fuel industry. The situation is urgent and calls for us to build a strong, united youth movement to combat false solutions, oust corrupt politicians and their corporate handlers, elect new leaders who put people and environment over profit, and build a just and environmentally sustainable future starting with our own communities.

We are at a turning point in history and the actions we do or do not take now to mitigate and prepare for the crises we face will define our generation. Though the days seem bleak, this unsettled moment is a chance for us to demonstrate our commitment to our values and ensure a just and environmentally sustainable future for the generations which will follow ours.

It may seem that our actions on the local scale are not big enough to confront the challenge of climate change or societal upheaval. But the most lasting change starts in local communities and permeates through society. As we work to implement local solutions in Kentucky, we are working alongside others across the nation and across the world who are implementing their own local solutions.

We believe in centering our work in intersectionality because we know that social injustice is tied to environmental injustice. We believe that we can have robust local economies that promote environmental integrity rather than destroy it. We own our responsibility to protect the environment for the well-being of future generations. We know young people have the power to create a Kentucky centers itself in equity for all, treats environmental stewardship as a moral obligation, fosters strong and just local economies, honors our natural and cultural heritage, and puts people over profit.

The only choice before us is to build a youth movement in Kentucky to create a society that holds true to our values and does not recreate the power structures which have brought us to this moment. Our movement has a role for everyone and shares power across our membership. When we stand united in our efforts to build a just and environmentally sustainable Kentucky, we will be able to shift the balance of power and turn our vision into our reality. We are fighting for our future.

Guiding Principles

WHO WE ARE

We recognize the march toward collective liberation has been progressing for centuries and that our work is only a part of the story. We are grateful to those who have come before us and brought us to the point we are at today. We honor their memory and their sacrifices by carrying on their legacy of fighting the good fight.

We choose non-violent direct action. Our organization does not physically harm people or property as we pursue our vision for Kentucky. We use both words and actions to demonstrate our values.

We realize this work requires life-long learning and dedication. We are resilient because we don't expect to win everything all at once or without setbacks. We work to achieve ambitious yet realistic goals.

We believe the environment has intrinsic value. We believe the environment holds value outside of its relation to humanity.

We value truth. We believe truth and transparency and honesty between each other and from our community leaders is essential.

We are young Kentuckians. We define Kentuckians as those who were born here, currently live here, or attend school here. We work to ensure young Kentuckians have the skills and support to stay and thrive in Kentucky.

WHAT WE BELIEVE

We value diversity. We prioritize the inclusion of all identities and backgrounds. Only when we come together to identify what we share in common and build relationships with each other will we be able to make true progress in our march toward collective liberation. We work to create safer spaces for people to be their authentic selves in our movement.

We value consensus. We put a lot of effort into building consensus and creating a non-hierarchical organization. We also work to build consensus with ally organizations. The best decisions are made when everyone's voices are heard and when we work together to create solutions.

We value science as well as lived experience. We hold that truths can come from both empirical data and our own lived experiences.

We value young voices. While we respect the life-experience and knowledge of those who have lived longer, we also recognize and respect the insight and power of young people. We expect our leaders to listen to us. We need to be a part of solutions because we're the ones living the longest with the consequences.

We believe everyone should be empowered to be a leader. We strive to foster a decentralized movement in which everyone can take on leadership roles. Each of us has the power within to be a leader of change. We invest a lot into the development of our leaders so that people have the skills and confidence to be successful.

WHAT WE DO

We stand in solidarity with others who are working for justice and environmental sustainability. We realize that the issues we directly address are only a small portion of the overall struggle for justice. We must support in words and action those who are addressing capitalism, hetero-patriarchy, and white supremacy. We will only achieve our vision of a just and sustainable Kentucky when all our fellow Kentuckians are free from oppression and environmental dangers.

We believe in fostering strong local economies. We believe that a strong economy is diverse and offers meaningful opportunities for employment. We prioritize economic models that keep our wealth in our communities, provide adequate compensation to workers, do not damage our health, and prioritize environmental protection.

We own our responsibility to build a just and environmentally sustainable Kentucky. We see how an economic system that assumes natural resources are unlimited is destroying our life-sustaining environment and reinforces oppressive power structures. It is our responsibility to dismantle these power structures and create a just and environmentally sustainable Kentucky for the well-being of future generations.

Our Strategy



Our Goal

“We will uplift our voices to unite and resist all new threats to the integrity of Kentucky’s environment and our communities. We will no longer be ignored.” #ForOurFuture

We will know we’ve won when:

- Our campus organizations feel connected to the youth environmental movement and are regularly prioritizing coordinated action
- Our peers, allies, and communities recognize the leadership of young people and no longer ignore our needs or voices
- Our movement and the issues we’re addressing have become a statewide topic of discussion
- Our candidates and elected officials are talking about the issues that are important to us and standing with people, not corporations
- Our political landscape allows us to make gains around environmental justice and economic transition rather than forcing us to use our energy to fight off new threats

Our Power

There are more than 750,000 young Kentuckians (ages 14-30), over 60 institutions of higher education, and nearly 700 high schools in Kentucky. There are a lot of us and when we are united we can be an unstoppable force. By showing our peers that grassroots organizing is an effective way to make change, we will unite to elevate our voices. We will no longer be ignored.

Our Role

Our generation has a unique understanding of social and environmental justice. As youth with this understanding, we have a responsibility to advocate for the solutions that we need for our future. Our role is to hold justice and solidarity at the center of our movement and ensure that our solutions work towards creating a new system that works for all of us, not just the privileged few.

Our Tools

- Moral High Ground: We draw strength from knowing we are on the right side of history.
- We have a decentralized state-wide movement of members across Kentucky's different regions
- Social Media: Our generation is highly connected through social media and we use this platform to build our movement and show how we are using our power
- Rapid-Response Network: Using peer-to-peer texting as a tool to mobilize our base to take quick, coordinated action when new threats arise

Our Plan

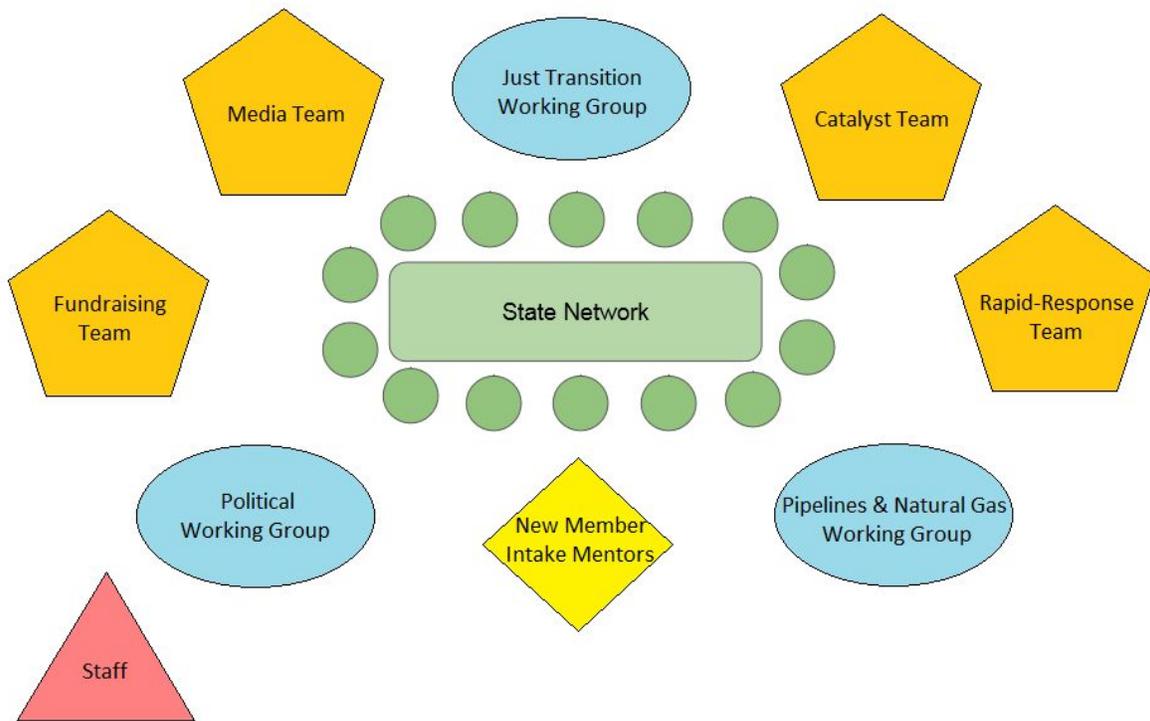
1. **Unite young Kentuckians under a movement** that empowers and emboldens us to take collective action
2. Uplift our voices and show up to **combat the narrative of youth apathy** and Kentucky conservatism **by resisting threats being waged against our future**
3. Utilize the power of our coordinated movement to **get our issues heard by decision makers**
4. Once we have achieved a more favorable political climate, we will **launch solution based campaigns** informed and energized by justice and solidarity

Our 2 Year Strategy

	FALL 2017	SPRING 2018	FALL 2018	SPRING 2019
GOAL	Unite our campus groups under a shared objective + build the KSEC community	Start to feel/see the power of our growing movement	Utilize movement to influence candidates and elections	Launch solutionary campaigns in a more favorable political climate
STRATEGIES				
 Educate	Build urgency by educating about key issues + political education	Skill trainings around taking action and building political courage	Campaign Planning + Get Out The Vote training	Anti-Oppression* Campus Tour + Solidarity training
 Connect	Campus Tour to launch the new plan, connect at fall Summit build community + social media takeover	Connect at Spring Summit to take action social media takeover + wrap up movement map project	Connect regionally to build stronger local base + witness local issues	Connect at Spring Summit to celebrate our victories + keep the momentum growing
 Show our Power	Plug into Working Group Actions to fight apathy narrative + uplift youth voices	Mobilize to resist threats through rapid-response	Engage Candidates + Voters	Mobilize through rapid-response + Big Action at State Capitol
Movement Capacity Goals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 15 campuses on campus tour • 100 people on rapid response network • 75 people trained 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 50 people at Spring Summit • 200 people on rapid response network • 150 people trained 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 30 new leaders • 300 people on rapid response network • 75 people trained 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 20 campuses on campus tour • 100 people at Big Action • 150 people trained

*Anti-Oppression trainings are an ongoing part of everything we do in KSEC. Anti-Oppression trainings help our members understand how power dynamics impact groups of people and show how we can work together to dismantle oppressive systems. AO trainings are offered at all of our summits and provided for all people in leadership positions. This campus tour is an attempt to reach people in our bases outside of our membership.

Our Structure



*We use a horizontal leadership model, where there is no hierarchy and use a modified consensus model for decision making

State Network

Our State Network is KSEC's governing body and represents each of our affiliated campus organizations.

Campus Affiliate Organizations elect a single delegate to represent them within State Network decision making, ensuring that campus organization members stay in the loop about statewide opportunities and provided with individual support and troubleshooting for campus goals.

Delegates represent their campuses in decision making, strategic planning and state-level event planning including our Spring and Fall Summits. This body exists to empower strong, KSEC-mission-driven leaders on all of our affiliated campuses, liaise between campus organizations and state-level working groups, and take on vital organizational roles.

The full online version can be found here <http://bit.ly/2vLqZbb>

Foundational Teams

Foundational Teams are small groups that work to ensure that basic elements of the organization are taken care of. These groups will stay connected to other working groups, but most importantly the state network through delegates and the Discord communication application. These groups will be made up of anyone in KSEC that wishes to be involved. Current Foundational Teams and how to join can be found [here](#).

Working Groups

Working groups are a major part of KSEC. Working groups are task forces of members that are working on a specific issues. These groups coordinate statewide campaigns and initiatives and build grassroots power through engaging with our State Network and Campus Affiliate Organizations. Current working groups and how to join can be found [here](#).

Staff

Staff bottomline general organizational operations and provide training and support to members. Staff serve as connectors between KSEC members to foster unity across our movement and as point-people for allies and other organizations to get connected to our work. We currently have one full-time state organizer, one part-time Just Transition organizer and one full-time communications and development Americorp VISTA.

Communication

All internal KSEC communication happens using the Discord App. Each subsection of KSEC has it's own Discord Channel. This helps ensure that communication is transparent and that everyone involved has access to all internal communication. Join KSEC's Discord Server using [this link](#).

Easy Ways to Plug In

Action	Time Commitment
Sign a petition, fill out a survey, share social media	Quick <10 min
Write a letter to the editor, attend a webinar	<1 hour
Attend an event	1-4 hours
Attend a Fall or Spring Summit	2 days
Attend Catalyst Summer Training	1 week
Join the Rapid Response Network	<1 hour as needed

Roles

Mentor Roles

Delegate Mentors: Past delegates who serve as mentors and safe people* for current delegates

Recruitment Intake Mentors: Past KSEC leaders who serve as the initial contact for new member one-on-ones/intake

Staff: Staff bottomline general organizational operations and provide training and support to members.

Leadership Roles

Campus Delegates: Serves as the point person for campus affiliate organizations and serves year-long terms in the State Network to support general functioning and decision making for KSEC. Read more about the delegate role [here](#).

Working Group Co-Chairs: Each Working Group has its own leadership structure to handle communication and ensure accountability amongst the working group members. Find out more about current working groups and how to join [here](#).

Regional Co-Coordiators: The main role of regional coordinators is recruitment and connecting nearby campus organizations. To become a regional co-coordinator contact [Cara Cooper](#)

Working Groups + Foundational Teams Members

Find out more about current working groups and foundational teams and how to join;

[Working Groups](#)

[Foundational Teams](#)

General KSEC Members

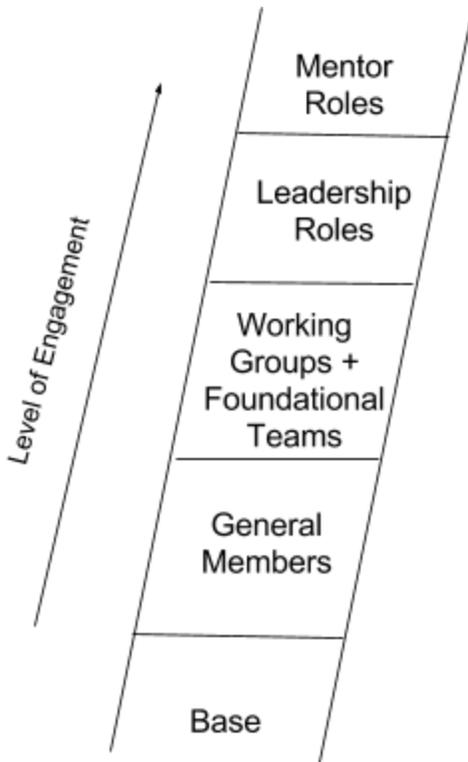
Campus Organization Members: Anyone who is a member of a campus affiliate organization is also a member of KSEC.

Rapid-Responders: Rapid-Responders commit to signing up for text message action alerts and taking collective action to resist new threats

Catalyst and Summit Attendees: Anyone who attends KSEC summits and Catalyst is a member of KSEC

Base

Students and Youth in Kentucky (ages 15-30)



*Safe People serve as confidants for people to talk to about sensitive or emotional issues and to help people create solutions to interpersonal issues.