



# The Climate Initiative



# Annual Report 2025

# Reflections on 2025



“Our commitment remains clear: to amplify climate solutions and empower communities to drive meaningful environmental progress.”

Reflecting on 2025, I am increasingly grateful for this community and the work we accomplish together.

2025 was a year of steady resolve. Amid ongoing environmental challenges and change, The Climate Initiative remained committed to equipping educators and youth with the tools, knowledge, and confidence to lead meaningful local action.

Our Educator Hub continued to expand, becoming a connector and resource for climate educators nationwide — giving local practitioners access to high-quality climate education and to each other, turning national resources into local impact. Since 2020, nearly 6,000 educators have been part of the TCI community, and the stories they share of real, tangible change in their communities continue to inspire us.

We know that when you sit down at the kitchen table, climate change may not be the first thing on your mind. But we also know it exacerbates rising living costs, job security, and health concerns. That's why the work our educators and youth are doing on the ground matters — by addressing the real and immediate needs of their communities, they are making families and neighborhoods stronger right now.

The John Mathers Climate Action Leadership Program deepened its roots this year, reaching more young people and creating new pathways for youth-led environmental action. We are also piloting a pre-service educator workshop with local universities, embedding climate literacy into the teaching practices of an entire generation before they even enter the classroom.

Through all the changes we have seen this year, we remain committed to building an organization as resilient as the communities we serve — thoughtful in how we grow, disciplined in how we invest, and always accountable to this mission.

None of this happens without you. Thank you for standing with us through every season.

In this together,



**Leia Lowery**

Executive Director and Co-founder

# Mission Empower youth voices for climate action

We see the power of climate education in the communities our educators and youth call home. In 2025, we deepened our commitment to meeting people where they are — equipping a growing network of nearly 6,000 educators with the tools and training to turn national resources into local action, and opening new pathways for young people to step into leadership roles that strengthen the resilience of their communities from the ground up.

## 2025 Highlights

260

Youth trained in our Climate Action Leadership Program pilot

5,610

Lifetime Learning Lab Educators brought into our newly launched Hub

28,000

Youth involved in community-based climate action projects

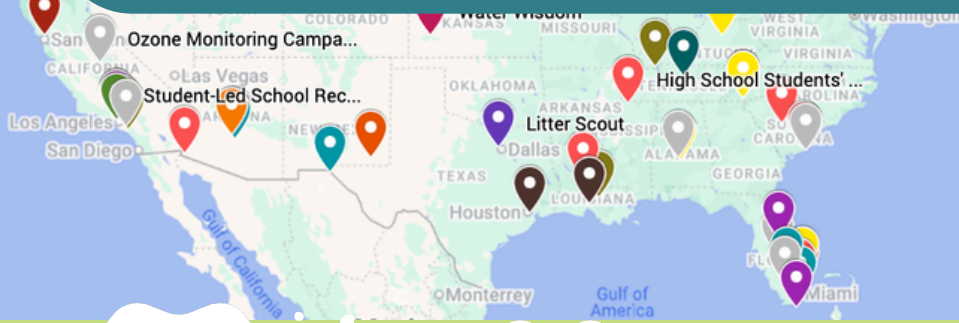
610,000

Students from 50 states and 50 countries, educated with TCI's Learning Lab modules

## 2025 TCI Changemaker Award Winner



**Christine Girtain, New Jersey's 2023 State Teacher of the Year, has spent 20 years building a K-through-industry STEM pipeline that connects climate science to real community action, from gleaning thousands of pounds of wasted seafood to pushing local businesses toward compostable alternatives. Her students don't just learn about climate change, they do something about it!**



## A closer look at TCI's Climate Action Map

TCI's Climate Action Map captures what happens when students go from learning about climate change and start doing something about it! Across all 50 states, educators and youth are leading real projects in their communities. Each pin is a story! Here's one we loved in 2025:

On the Seminole Tribe of Florida's Big Cypress Reservation, 49 students at Ahfachkee School used TCI's Civics Climate Action Learning Lab to plan and build a real nature trail through the cypress dome wetland behind their school. Eleven hands-on science stations. A traditional Seminole chickee built alongside tribal elders. Real meetings with six tribal departments, construction contractors, and community stakeholders.

What they uncovered along the way was the point all along: Seminole land stewardship has always been climate action. The trail will serve students, tribal communities, and neighboring schools for years to come.



# Direct to Youth

## Youth Action Council (YAC)

In 2025, TCI's Youth Advisory Council became the Youth Action Council, and the name change means something. Rather than advising TCI on how to engage young people, YAC members are now doing the work directly: leading climate action in their communities, building climate communication skills, and participating in and co-hosting our CALP Program.

This year's cohort focused climate communication, creating and publishing original content for the @tciambassadors Instagram account. And with the close of 2025, TCI celebrated the completion of its second two-year YAC cohort, a milestone that reflects real organizational staying power in youth engagement.

**Ariel, TCI's Youth Engagement Manager, was featured on CBS News during the January 2025 Los Angeles wildfires, bringing TCI's voice on climate resilience and disaster preparedness to a national audience.**

### In the News



## Community Partnerships: CORE x Listos California

In 2025, TCI partnered with CORE, Community Organized Relief Effort, to bring climate education into emergency preparedness outreach across Los Angeles. Through bilingual workshops, tabling events, and webinars, TCI reached hundreds of community members, with a focus on immigrant and refugee households and youth, connecting climate resilience to real, practical action at the local level.

## Climate Action

### Leadership Program (CALP)

TCI's flagship youth program hit a major milestone in 2025: CALP is now fully developed and piloted. The program's premise is simple: participants learn about climate problems, solutions, and carry out a climate action project of their choosing!

In 2025, we trained 260 youth utilizing the CALP method and results are showing up in communities across the country.



CALP program graduates monitored local waterways, classified wildlife photos for active researchers, and hosted peer education workshops on sustainability. Train-the-trainer materials are now in development, setting the stage for community partners to bring CALP directly into their own communities in 2026 and beyond.



## Fellowship Program

TCI was proud to host six fellows and interns in 2025, each bringing something distinct to our work.

**Marie Collins (UNH Sustainability Institute)** expanded our Learning Lab modules for international audiences, ensured Indigenous perspectives were reflected throughout, and built a resource dashboard of regional case studies and datasets for educators worldwide.

**Joy Reeves (Morgridge Family Acceleration Program)** completely rebuilt TCI's Climate Action Map data collection form, strengthening one of our most-used impact tracking tools.

**Justin Gibbons (University of Maine)** focused on financial support and got a full organizational experience across TCI's operations.

**Mara Muse (Bowdoin)** came full circle in 2025 — after five years as a TCI Youth Ambassador, she returned as a Climate Action Fellow, contributing to event planning, Learning Lab development, and global climate education outreach.

**Michael Jump and Lateefat Sanni**, both Baucus x TCI Fellows, brought perspectives from Montana and Nigeria respectively, grounded in a shared belief that climate education works best when it meets communities where they are.

# Direct to Educators

## Learning Lab

Learning Lab is now being implemented in ALL

**50 STATES & 40 COUNTRIES**

Via our modules, we educated over

**202,716**

middle and high school students in 2025!

In 2025, we reached

**1,898**

new educators who have used at least one Learning Lab in their classrooms.

**10** modules are now **LIVE**



covering climate change issues from *coast to coast and beyond*

## Did you know?

Eight of our ten Learning Lab modules are available in Spanish, French and Portuguese, with Vietnamese and Arabic coming soon!

## Launch of TCI's 10<sup>th</sup> Learning Lab!

In partnership with the University of Southern Maine and the Maine Economic Improvement Fund, TCI launched its 10th Learning Lab on Climate Migration. This module explores the impacts of a changing climate on our environments and communities, and how it will lead to increased rates of migration.



Climate Migration



## Additional Highlights

- In late 2025, TCI's online Educator Forum went live, which is a discussion platform housed in our Educator Hub. This forum provides a space for educators to build community and connect with TCI staff!
- TCI hosted its first cohort of five Climate Action Educator Fellows, current educators who helped foster educator regional engagement.

## Educator Retreat

During our annual keystone event, 32 educators from across the country came together for a week of hands-on professional development, connecting with experts and creating real community, leaving with climate education and action plans they could bring straight back to their classrooms.



Hear about the transformative impact of the Climate Educators Retreat from previous educators themselves. Click [here to play](#).

*"I have been given the 'simple' advice of 'just teach solutions' many times, but always felt like I was not only out of my depth but also lacking any and every resource to make that happen. This retreat changed that profoundly, and in every way."*

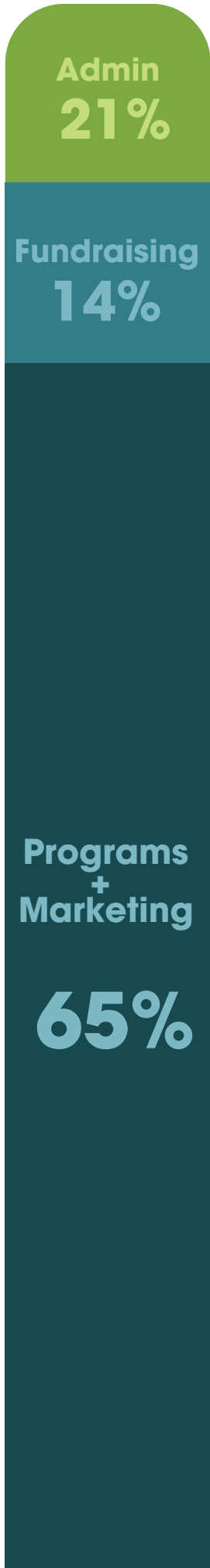
## Educator Retreat Testimonials



## Donor Spotlight: Onion Foundation

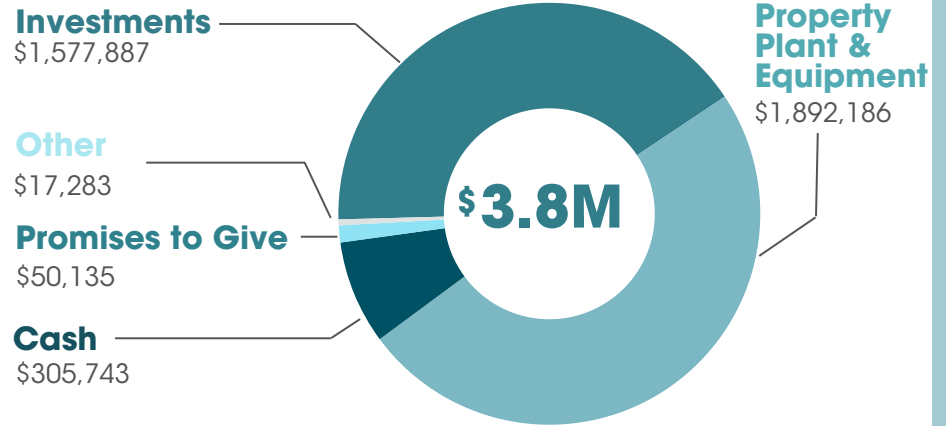
In 2025, TCI was awarded a grant from Onion Foundation to expand climate education access across Maine. The grant supports funding a pilot project with pre-service educators in Maine, including bringing soon-to-be teachers into TCI's annual Educator Retreat and providing ongoing cohort support as they complete their training and enter classrooms.

# EXPENSES

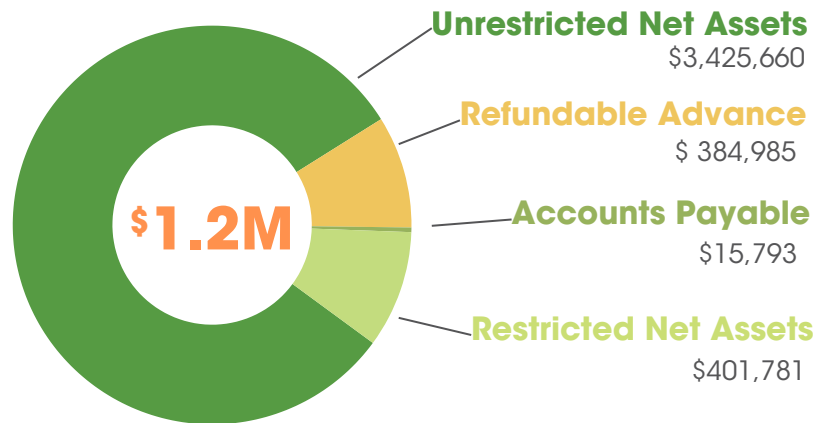


# 2025 Financial Breakdown

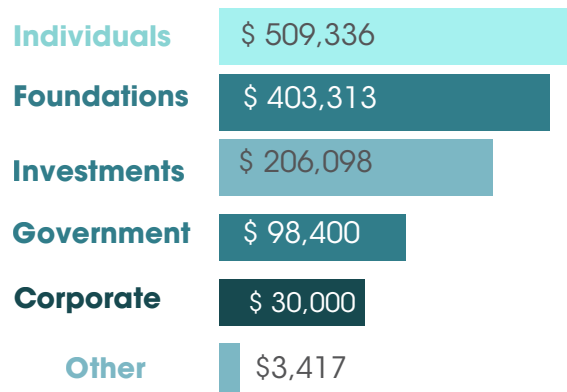
## Assets



## Liabilities & Net Assets



## 2025 Revenues by Source - \$1,250,684 Total



*\*\*Un-Audited\*\**

# Leadership



## Tom Bradbury, Chair

Chair, Executive Director for the Kennebunkport Conservation Trust

## Dabreon Darby, Treasurer

JP Morgan Chase Senior Associate Data & Analytics | MBA Graduate Kogod School of Business (AU)

## Dr. Jono Anzalone

Faculty Lecturer - Economics, University of Southern Maine, Former VP of International Services at the American Red Cross, 1st Executive Director of TCI

## Monica Hanover

Realtor at Intero Real Estate Services

## Mary Clare Maxwell

Climate, Environmental & Credit Risk Lead at Northern Trust (NT)

## Fiona McRaith

Director, The Climate Pledge, Global Optimism

## Billy Shore

Founder and Executive Chair of Share Our Strength, parent organization for No Kid Hungry

## Dr. Pam Morgan, Vice-Chair

Professor, Department of Environmental Sciences at the University of New England

## Amy Tchao, Secretary

Drummond Woodsum's Practice Group Leader for Municipal Law

## Harold Brooks

Chief Resilience Officer at the Global Community Resilience Institute

## General Russel Honoré

Retired 4-star General and Founder of GreenARMY

## Gavin McKay

Focus Area Team Coordinator, Economic Inclusion and Climate Resilience at The Clinton Foundation

## Amelie Panaccione

Student, Brown University

We would like to recognize and thank the Board members who rolled off in 2025 — Alejandra, Angela, Louisa, Fiona, and Monica — for their countless contributions to the TCI mission.

## Advisory Council

### Kellie Bentz

Affiliate faculty member, Harvard's National Preparedness Leadership Initiative

### Dr. Katherine Hayhoe

Climate Scientist, Distinguished Professor, Texas Tech  
Chief Scientist, The Nature Conservancy | Author, SAVING US

### Houston Kraft

Co-founder of CharacterStrong, author and speaker.

### Dr. Veerabhadran Ramanathan

Edward A. Frieman Endowed Presidential Chair in Climate Sustainability, UCSD

### Dr. John D. Sterman

Jay W. Forrester Professor of Management; Professor, System Dynamics and Engineering Systems; Director, MIT System Dynamics Group

### Dr. Ann Giblin

Sr. Scientist & Interim Director of Ecosystems Center at the Marine Biological Laboratory at Woods Hole

### Dr. Somya Joshi

Associate Professor in Governance and Sustainability at Stockholm University

### Joan Lombardi

Senior scholar and Adjunct Professor at the Center for Child and Human Development

### Francis Rooney

Former U.S. Representative for Florida's 19th Congressional District

### Kathryn Wendell

Executive Director, Center for Ethics & Social Responsibility at University of Colorado Boulder - Leeds School of Business

# Staff



## Leadership Team

### Leia Lowery

*Executive Director and Co-Founder*

### Meagan Cooper

*Director of Communications*

### Kate Keefer

*Director of Operations & Impact*

### Julie Hudson

*Director of Development  
(7/2025 onwards)*

### Amanda Robinson

*Director of Development  
(through 7/2025)*

## Our Team

### Julia Anders

*Development Associate*

### Majid Attar

*Outreach Fellow*

### Luis Borrero

*Marketing Communications Manager*

### Ariel Maldonado

*Youth Engagement Manager*

### Shilton Mavule

*Monitoring and Evaluation Fellow*

### Alexa Sabatini

*Programs Coordinator*

We are all deeply grateful to Amanda, Julia, and Majid, whose dedication, creativity, and passion helped shape who we are as an organization, and whose contributions to the TCI mission will continue to show up in the work long after their time on the team.

## 2025 Climate Fellows

Marie Collins, Justin Gibbons, Michael Jump, Mara Muse, Joy Reeves, Lateefat Sanni, Lenny Zaleski (Comms and PR Consultant)

## Join the Movement!

[TheClimateInitiative.org](https://TheClimateInitiative.org)  
[@the\\_climateinitiative](https://www.instagram.com/the_climateinitiative)



## Interested in supporting The Climate Initiative?

Contact [kate@theclimateinitiative.org](mailto:kate@theclimateinitiative.org)