



CLEAN AIR COUNCIL

2024

ANNUAL REPORT



WELCOME TO CLEAN AIR COUNCIL'S 2024 ANNUAL REPORT!

We are delighted to share with you the workings and stories of the Council's environmental and public health progress for the Mid-Atlantic region in 2024. This report highlights key victories and organizational growth, while also providing a snapshot of the breadth of the Council's current work and membership. 2024 has been a year of internal leadership transitions at the Council and advocacy successes at the local, state, and federal levels. This will lead to cleaner air and a less chaotic climate in the years to come. This is not the whole story, though. For more information, be sure to check us out at cleanair.org, engage with us at [@CleanAirCouncil](https://twitter.com/CleanAirCouncil) on social platforms, or reach out at members@cleanair.org. Happy reading!

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A LETTER FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

ALEX BOMSTEIN

What a year it's been! The Council kicked off 2024 with the retirement of our long-time Executive Director Joseph Otis Minott, who had built this organization from a handful of staff focused on the Philadelphia area in 1986 to the regional environmental advocacy nonprofit with three dozen staff we are today. After a national search, I was promoted from Legal Director to Executive Director in March. And this fall, our Board of Directors voted Oscar Wang and Carolyn Hewson to co-chair the Board, as Russ Allen stepped back after presiding for 25 successful years.

With our new leadership, the Council has focused inward on structure, policies, culture, systems, and building a strong foundation for growth. The creation of this Annual Report is one of those many changes. I won't bore you with the details of our employee handbook and upgrades to our electronic systems, but I believe that today we are in the best shape we've ever been to fulfill our mission of protecting everyone's right to a healthy environment.

We are also ready to weather the storm of the coming years. Project 2025, under the new Trump administration, envisions a toothless

EPA, a departure from science-based policy, and accelerated climate chaos. A freeze on funding to groups, such as ours, doing community air monitoring and climate resiliency work is on the table. With these threats on the horizon, support from foundations and members like you is even more critical. And as federal environmental work pivots from offense to defense, our focus on making progress where we can at the local, state, and regional levels takes on new importance.

In these pages, you'll get the inside scoop on our progress—what we have accomplished, where we want to go, and where we stand right now. That's a lot about us. But pull back the curtain, and it's a story about you. Your support is what keeps the lights on, your voices and stories persuade the decision makers, and you are who we're here for.

From me and the rest of the Clean Air Council family, thank you.

Yours in solidarity,

Alex Bomstein, Executive Director

“ IN THESE PAGES, YOU'LL GET THE INSIDE SCOOP ON OUR PROGRESS—WHAT WE HAVE ACCOMPLISHED, WHERE WE WANT TO GO, AND WHERE WE STAND RIGHT NOW. ”

ABOUT CLEAN AIR COUNCIL

MISSION

The Clean Air Council is a member-supported environmental organization serving Pennsylvania and the surrounding regions. The Council is dedicated to protecting everyone's right to a healthy environment. The Council works through a broad array of sustainability and public health initiatives, including public education, community action, government oversight, and enforcement of environmental laws.



VISION

- ▶ Our vision is to secure a future where all people in Pennsylvania and surrounding regions have clean air, water, and land that support healthy communities.
- ▶ The Council fights for a future where all communities have the resources and ability to access clean, renewable energy, sustainable forms of transportation, protection from the impacts of climate change, and access to vibrant and safe greenspace.
- ▶ The Council works for a future where pollution and industries are no longer able to harm the health, welfare, and quality of life of people, communities, and other living things, as well as a future where people, individually and collectively, are empowered to take actions and make decisions that advance this vision.
- ▶ The Council works to ensure communities, particularly environmental justice communities, can meaningfully participate in the decisions that impact their health and welfare, so that they can build and maintain thriving, just, and environmentally resilient communities.
- ▶ The Council envisions a future where people live in balance with wildlife and nature and enjoy its bounty, ensuring there is always enough for everyone, and have peace in knowing that it will be preserved for future generations.

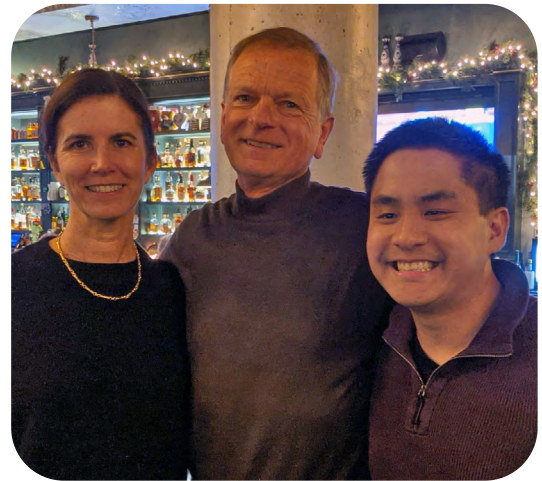
ABOUT CLEAN AIR COUNCIL *CONTINUED*



In 2024, Clean Air Council grew to 37 staff, including lawyers, engineers, community advocates, and other personnel dedicated to protecting everyone's right to a healthy environment.

NEW LEADERSHIP

In 2024, Clean Air Council ushered in a new era of leadership. Clean Air Council's longtime Executive Director, Joseph Minott, retired after more than four decades of service and Alex Bomstein, the Council's Legal Director, took over as the new Executive Director. The Council's Board President, Russ Allen, also stepped back from Board leadership after 25 years of service. Oscar Wang and Carolyn Hewson took over leadership of the Board as Co-Presidents.



(Left to Right) Carolyn Hewson, Russ Allen, and Oscar Wang celebrate the retirement of Allen from his service as Clean Air Council Board President.

A MESSAGE FROM THE NEW BOARD CO-PRESIDENTS


Protecting communities. Safeguarding our planet. Promoting conservation, transit, and equity. We are inspired daily by the Council's exceptional staff's unwavering commitment to fighting for everyone's right to a healthy environment. Clean Air Council is one of our region's most effective environmental organizations. This year, we've strengthened our role as frontline defenders of community health, taking on polluters while ensuring local voices lead our efforts. Looking ahead, we're positioned to expand our impact by working relentlessly toward ambitious goals and strengthening our partnerships throughout the region. With a new strategic plan, a strong leadership team, and a united front, the Council is ready to advocate, fight, and win.

- Clean Air Council Board Co-Presidents Carolyn Hewson and Oscar Wang

LOOKING FORWARD

In 2024 the Council drafted a new strategic plan to guide the organization into the future.

The plan's new areas of focus include:



Impact

Reduce PA's GHG emissions to nearly zero and significantly cut health-harming pollution



Engagement

Cultivate strategic relationships needed to advance the mission of the Council



Organizational Development


Nurture a culture and structures that will support staff growth and enhance the Council's ability to execute its mission

The Council's plan has the overarching goal of reducing Pennsylvania's GHG emissions to nearly zero and slashing toxic pollution by 2050. The plan lays out strategies to reduce pollution by 2030 at the pace needed to reach the 2050 goal.


The Council's program of work includes:



Phase out fracking and related operations



Stop dangerous petrochemical projects



Achieve 50% renewable energy in Pennsylvania by 2030 and 100% by 2045



Make biking, walking, transit and electric vehicles the primary way most people get around



Stop pollution in all communities, with environmental justice communities as a priority

CLEAN AIR COUNCIL
STRATEGIC PLAN 2024-2030



SEE OUR PLAN AT:
bit.ly/cacplan24
or [click here](#)

BY THE NUMBERS

Figures illustrating the Council's accomplishments in 2024.



11.4M TONS

of greenhouse gas emissions avoided annually, going forward, equal to taking **2.6M** gasoline cars off the road permanently



250+ TREES

planted in the Cobbs Creek community



81.2K MILES

biked by participants in the Love to Ride Challenge, enough to bike around the world more than three times



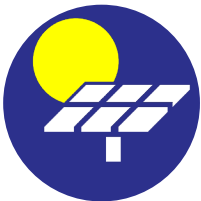
#1 LARGEST

proposed plastics pyrolysis plant in the nation stopped



13 LAWSUITS

filed against polluters



1K MEGAWATTS

of new solar projects allowed by new ordinances, enough to power **121k** homes



\$5M PENALTY

in lawsuit settled against U.S. Steel and required **\$37M** in upgrades to maintenance and pollution control equipment



21 PROJECTS

funded in Philadelphia to encourage walking around the city



\$153M

in funds successfully advocated to be transferred to transit

KEY VICTORIES

2024 has been a great year for the Council in protecting public health and the environment throughout the region. Together with our coalition members and community partners, we achieved major victories.



Stopped Encina's toxic petrochemical plant proposed along the banks of the Susquehanna River in Point Township, Northumberland County. The Council and partners supported residents in opposing the proposal for years. The facility would have turned post-consumer plastic waste into toxic chemicals and shipped them by rail.

- Played a key role in the Pennsylvania part of a national campaign to cut the potent greenhouse gas methane from the oil and gas industry, which culminated in the **Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) adopting a rule that will reduce methane pollution from the industry by 80%**.
- Achieved a record-breaking lawsuit settlement against **U.S. Steel** concerning months of severe air permit violations after its neglect led to a fire that destroyed pollution control equipment. We forced U.S. Steel to pay a **\$5 million penalty** to benefit impacted communities, invest about **\$37 million in equipment upgrades and emission controls**, permanently shut down 10% of Clairton Coke Works' most polluting equipment, and concede to strong penalties for future violations.
- Successfully petitioned the EPA to object to an inadequate air permit for the **Edgar Thomson steel mill**, which had insufficient emission testing and monitoring requirements to detect any emission violations by the facility. This resulted in a stronger permit that better protects the health of neighboring communities.
- Helped convince the EPA to set strong air monitoring requirements to protect frontline residents near facilities that make coke, a fuel used in the steelmaking process, and for steel mills. The Council commented on proposed rules; engaged our members; and arranged for the Executive Office of the President to meet with impacted residents, advocates, and experts.
- Through our public comments, we convinced the Army Corps of Engineers to **consider the Pepper School site in Eastwick as a future flood control measure**.
- Supported residents in **convincing the City of Philadelphia to take enforcement action on an illegal auto-repair operation** in Southwest Philadelphia.



Organized **two native plant and pollinator garden installations** and helped **plant over 150 trees**.

KEY VICTORIES *CONTINUED*

- Worked with residents from Delaware County environmental justice communities and Johns Hopkins University researchers to **complete a health study that captured the cumulative burdens** on residents living close to polluting industrial infrastructure.



- Defeated the Northern Access Pipeline**, a fracked gas pipeline proposed to run 97 miles across Pennsylvania from McKean County through Cattaraugus and Allegany counties to Erie County in New York.
- Mobilized residents to convince local elected officials in three counties to adopt solar laws** to unlock new solar projects that will generate over 1,000 megawatts.
- Guided the Philadelphia Technicians Training Institute in **successfully making their entire campus smoke-free**.



- Mobilized our members to convince the City of Philadelphia to request **increased public involvement in the cleanup of the site polluting a Bartram's Garden trail** with hexavalent chromium. DEP performed inspections and **issued violations**.
- Hosted four seasonal events in Philadelphia that **brought nearly 1,000 people onto trails and into greenspace** for recreation, education, and conservation programming.

- Supported residents in Cecil Township, Washington County in successfully advocating for a law **requiring new oil and gas well pads to be 2,500 feet away from homes and businesses and 5,000 feet from hospitals and schools**.
- Worked with a coalition to successfully convince Governor Shapiro to **reallocate highway funding to help temporarily cover SEPTA's budget gap**, avoiding big cuts to transit service and big fare increases.
- Funded 21 organizations with over **\$38,000 in mini-grants to make their neighborhoods safer, easier, and more pleasant to walk in**.



DOING THE WORK

The Council's work has grown over the decades to cover much more than air quality. The updates below are a selection from among our programs spanning several broad areas of environmental and public health protection.

CLIMATE RESILIENCY

Preparing our communities to adapt to a chaotic climate

In 2022, the Council launched its Climate Resilient Communities program, partnering with community organizations in Delaware County and Southwest Philadelphia, to embark on a two-year planning process. Through advisory boards and public community meetings, Council staff worked directly with community members to better understand climate change, potential impacts to our local communities, and select sites within four communities to establish green infrastructure projects aimed at lessening climate impacts. The project will culminate in Spring 2025 with the installation of four park projects and a final report on Climate Resilience by Olin Studios landscape architects.



COBBS CREEK TRAIL

Connecting our urban communities with the nature in their backyard

Clean Air Council's trail work has focused on increasing safety and access to green space for West and Southwest Philadelphia Collaborating with residents, stakeholders, and non-profit partners. Ten organizations in Cobbs Creek Watershed received mini-grant funding to host bike workshops, a science palooza, summer education workshops, yoga in the park, wayfinding signage and more. The Council organized cleanups, held weekly trail walks and organized tree plantings. Expanding park and trail events, the Council held our third annual Celebrate Trails Day event in the spring, hosted a Summer Festival and Harvest Festival as well as a trail maintenance workshop.



DOING THE WORK *CONTINUED*

SOLAR ADVOCACY

Organizing to support solar projects on the ground

Over the last year, Clean Air Council has worked with partners on a multi-county initiative to engage residents in supporting local solar laws that allow large-scale solar projects to be built. Council staff educated residents where solar projects were being discussed to ensure they had the information and tools needed to advocate in support of solar. Mobilized by the Council, residents wrote to their local officials, signed petitions, and came to local meetings to voice support for local solar laws and projects. So far, this has resulted in local elected officials in three counties adopting solar laws that will unlock new solar projects generating over 1,000 megawatts, the same amount of energy as a large fossil fuel power plant.



ADVOCATING FOR TRANSIT FUNDING

Funding sustainable transportation for the long haul

During budget negotiations, the Council and its Pennsylvania partners advocated, and again this fall as temporary funds were running out. SEPTA faced a funding shortfall that would lead to its 800,000 daily riders seeing spiking fares and devastating service cuts. The Council helped to organize yet another urgent campaign, this time directed to Governor Shapiro, which led to “flexing” federal funding for highways to keep transit operational until the next budget negotiations in 2025, when we will renew our call for a long-term dedicated funding solution for transit across the state.



DOING THE WORK *CONTINUED*



SOUTHWEST PENNSYLVANIA MAJOR POLLUTION SOURCES

Fighting big polluters and protecting health

In 2024, years of legal work to protect the health of communities in the Pittsburgh region's Monongahela Valley from the steel industry's toxic air pollution came to fruition. The Council helped gain more effective national emission standards for hazardous air pollutants from steel facilities by connecting residents and experts with federal decision-makers. As a result of the Council's technical analyses and successful petitions urging EPA to object to weak local air pollution permits, these emission violations from steel facilities will now be more reliably detected and stopped. The Council and its partners won a record-breaking lawsuit settlement which forced U.S. Steel to spend \$42 million in fines and vital pollution control upgrades, cease operating large pollution sources, and concede to stricter standards and penalties for future violations.

PROTECTIVE BUFFERS

Protecting our communities from the hazards of fracking

Clean Air Council has built and is now a co-leader of a coalition advocating for protective buffers from fracking. Protective buffers are mandatory setbacks between fracking wells and homes, schools, hospitals, drinking water wells, and surface water. Pennsylvania currently has only a waivable 500-foot setback from buildings and a 1,000-foot setback from water supply extraction points—woefully insufficient to protect the public from the dangers of fracking. On October 22, 2024, the Council submitted a rulemaking petition to the Environmental Quality Board (EQB), Pennsylvania's environmental rulemaking body, requesting that it increase the setbacks to 3,281 feet from any building and from any drinking water well; 5,280 feet from any building serving vulnerable populations (e.g., schools, hospitals); and 750 feet from any surface water. These buffers are commonsense and critical for better protecting the health of the 1.5 million Pennsylvanians who live within 1.5 miles of fracking. On November 21, the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection completed an initial review of the petition, and found the petition was complete and can advance to the EQB for consideration.



CLEAN AIR COUNCIL IN THE NEWS



Sep. 30, 2024

Pennsylvania gas driller CNX says operations pose no health risk. Activists are skeptical

"CNX's radically dishonest and irresponsible fracking report fails the fundamental tests of scientific integrity. The Shapiro administration should immediately disavow the report and distance itself from this propaganda."

-Alex Bomstein, Executive Director

The Philadelphia Inquirer

Nov. 29, 2024

Pa legislators should treat SEPTA funding like an emergency

"We need our legislators to move past their partisan squabbles and give our region the durable, plentiful investment in our transit we all deserve."

-Alex Bomstein, Executive Director



Jan. 30, 2024

Environmental groups, residents hail 'historic' settlement in case against Clairton Coke Works

"The December 2018 fire never should have occurred in the first place. Its occurrence is directly related to U.S. Steel's intentional strategy of not maintaining its Clairton Coke Works facility"

-Jay Ting Walker, Community Organizer



Mar. 30, 2024

Taxpayer-funded petrochemical plants are polluting communities, report finds

"Taxpayers are paying out of their pockets for plants that manufacture pollution that harms them. There's something terribly wrong with that picture."

-Terrie Baumgardner, Outreach Coordinator

DAILY TIMES

Aug. 3, 2024

Clean Air Council and Johns Hopkins University release health findings of Delaware County's industrial communities

"We have the power to make change and make our communities healthier," Warren said. "That's why we did this survey and study."

-Kearni Warren, Outreach Coordinator



The Philadelphia Inquirer

Oct. 8, 2024

EPA reaches \$4.2 million settlement, largest of its kind, over 2019 Philly refinery explosion

"Communities impacted by historic refinery operations and explosions, as well as Hilco's redevelopment, have repeatedly demanded fence line benzene monitoring at the site in addition to expanded green space and zero-emission vehicle requirements to protect impacted residents from flooding and air pollution caused by the current redevelopment. These funds would be well-spent on those protections."

-Russell Zerbo, Advocate



Mar. 4, 2024

This will be a big year in shaping the future of chemical recycling

"Encina has become a model for how communities can raise their voices, speak up and let folks know about the concerns of a project. You're seeing the results of that in the close look regulators are taking at this project to make sure community concerns are addressed."

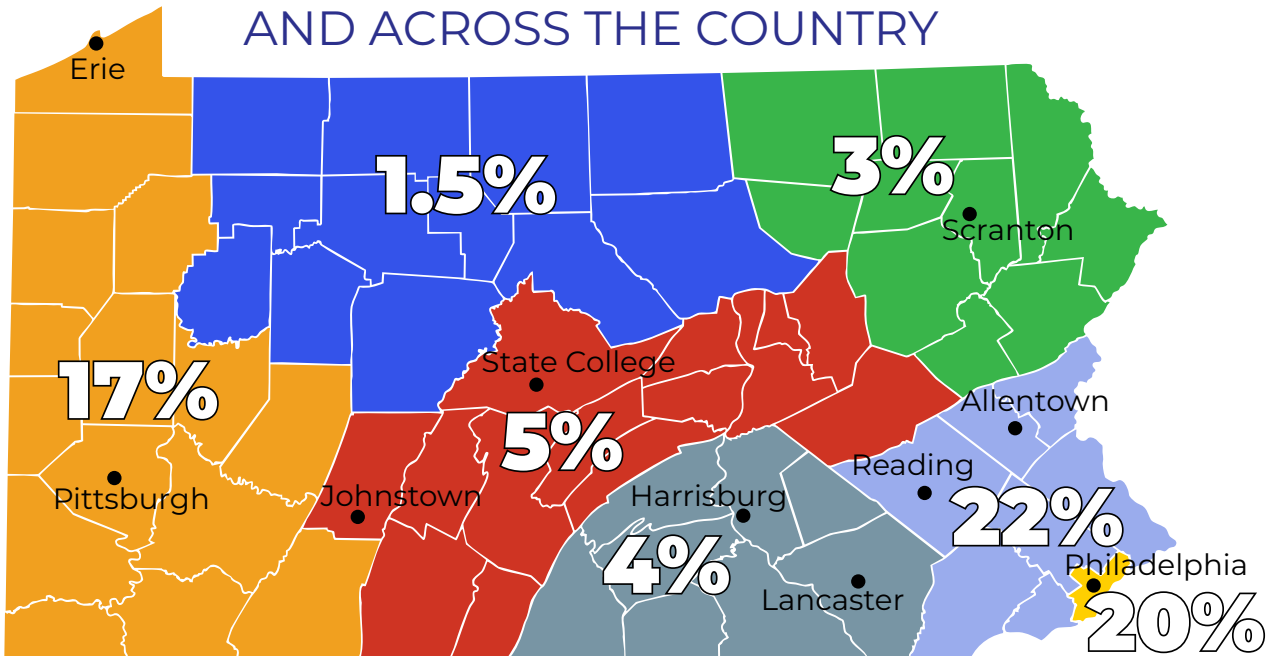
-Sage Lincoln, Legal Fellow



MEMBERSHIP



MEMBERS AROUND PENNSYLVANIA AND ACROSS THE COUNTRY



Members in other states

- 1% Delaware
- 1% Ohio
- 2% New Jersey
- 2.5% New York
- 4% California
- 17% Other

MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

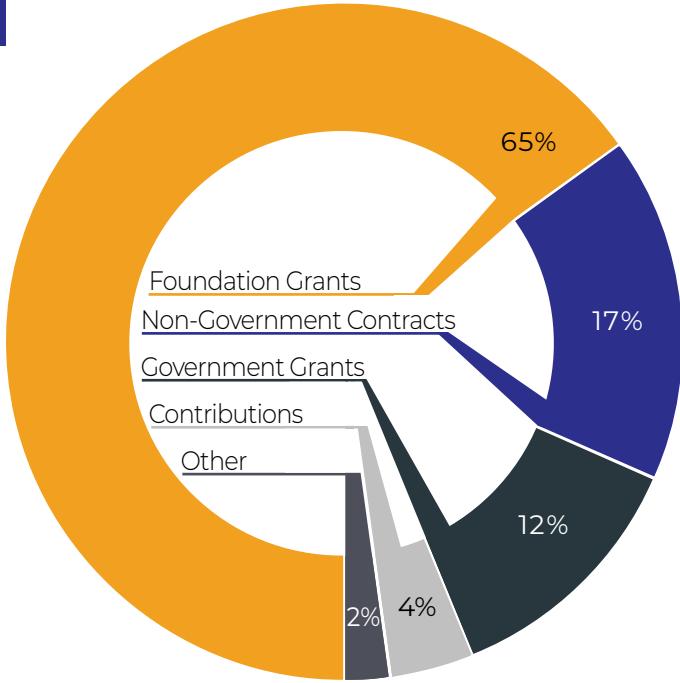


Michele Stonemark has been working with the Council since early 2024. She lives in Cecil Township, PA with a fracking well pad 500 feet from her home. Michele has been integral in advocating for setbacks from fracking operations and in 2024 helped to successfully pass a township ordinance that requires a 2,500 foot setback from buildings such as homes and schools. If it was not for her tireless, constant reporting on her Facebook page along with her support to the community and Cecil Township Council, the ordinance would not have been passed.

FINANCIALS

Fiscal Year 2024 (July 2023 - June 2024)

REVENUE BY SOURCE

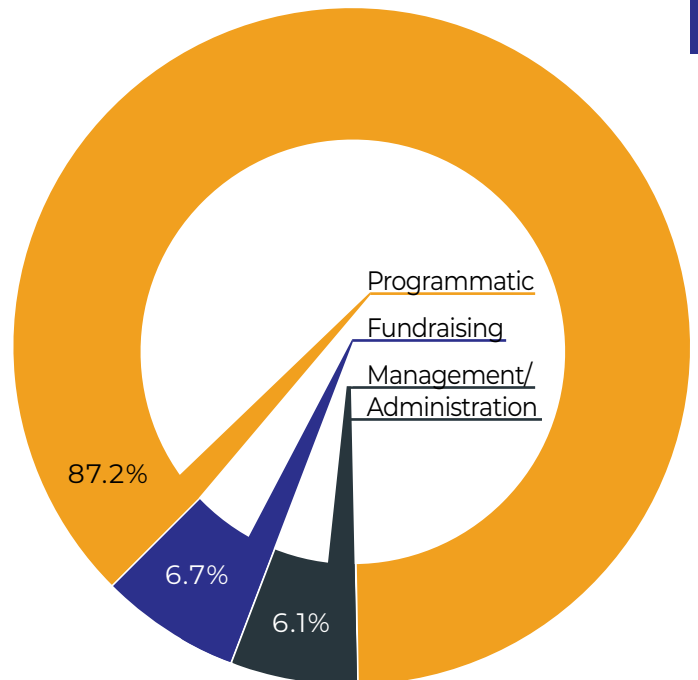


REVENUE SOURCE	DOLLAR AMOUNT	PERCENT
Foundation Grants	\$2,542,800	65%
Non-Government Contracts	\$644,205	17%
Government Grants	\$476,362	12%
Contributions	\$158,266	4%
Other	\$84,079	2%
TOTAL	\$3,905,713	

EXPENSES BY CATEGORY

EXPENSE	DOLLAR AMOUNT	PERCENT
Programmatic	\$3,382,059	87.2%
Fundraising	\$236,589	6.7%
Management / Administration	\$259,860	6.1%
TOTAL	\$3,878,508	

**expense proportions are unaudited estimates at time of report*



THANK YOU!



Staff members at our October 2024 retreat

The Council is a member-supported nonprofit, and working to address climate change is our number one priority.

Since its start in 1967, the Council's effectiveness has depended in large part on collaboration with its members, supporters, funders, and partners.

BECOME A MEMBER TODAY!
DONATE TAKE ACTIONS VOLUNTEER

To learn more, contact pgabrie@cleanair.org

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