



Homeland Security

DHS Climate Literacy Strategy

January 2023

DHS Climate Literacy Strategy

Background

To achieve the Department of Homeland Security’s (Department or DHS) mission to safeguard the American people, our homeland, and our values, we must ensure our readiness in an increasingly dynamic operational environment. Climate change alters our status quo, and we have an imperative to build upon our resilience to better deliver our mission and equitable access to DHS services and decision-making under evolving circumstances. As a Department, we must be prepared to meet the challenge climate change poses. The more ready we are, the better we can deliver our mission, build resilience, and ensure continuity of operations no matter what happens.

Executive Order 14008: *Tackling the Climate Crisis at Home and Abroad*¹ was released on January 27, 2021. In response, the Department updated its Environmental Justice Strategy² in May 2021 to further integrate climate change considerations and released the DHS Climate Action Plan³ in September 2021. Priority Action 5 of this plan is to increase climate literacy across the DHS workforce. It states, “DHS is committed to creating and growing a climate literate workforce that understands the principles of climate change, can assess scientifically credible information about climate, can communicate about climate change in a meaningful way, and is able to make informed decisions about climate change impacts on mission activities.” Later in 2021, DHS published its Strategic Framework for Addressing Climate Change⁴, which lays out goals, principles, and lines of effort for addressing climate change including Line of Effort 5 to “Develop a Climate Change-Informed DHS Workforce.” In addition, on December 8, 2021, Executive Order 14057: *Catalyzing Clean Energy Industries and Jobs through*

¹ Executive Order 14008 of January 27, 2021, Tackling the Climate Crisis at Home and Abroad, 86 FR 7619, <https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2021/02/01/2021-02177/tackling-the-climate-crisis-at-home-and-abroad>

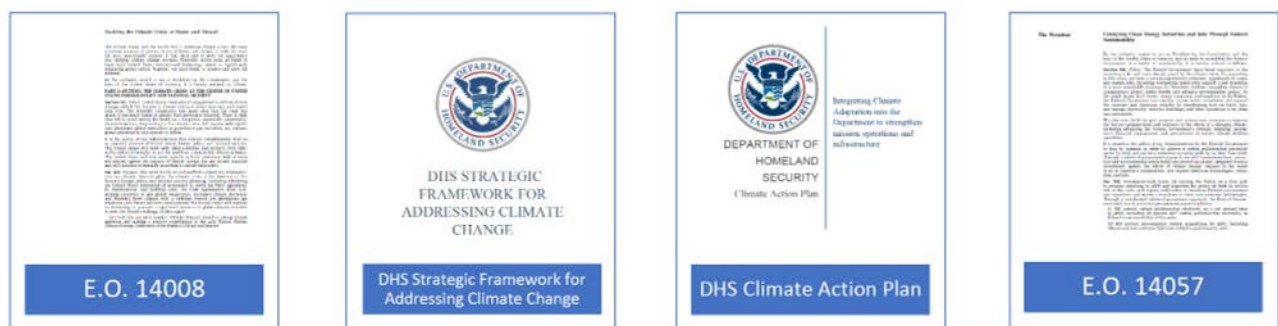
² Department of Homeland Security, Fiscal Years 2021-2025 Environmental Justice Strategy, <https://www.dhs.gov/dhs-environmental-justice-strategy>

³ Department of Homeland Security, Climate Action Plan, <https://www.dhs.gov/publication/dhs-climate-action-plan-address-impacts-ensure-resilience>

⁴ Department of Homeland Security, Strategic Framework for Addressing Climate Change, <https://www.dhs.gov/publication/dhs-strategic-framework-addressing-climate-change>

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*Federal Sustainability*⁵ was issued. It set ambitious goals for reducing greenhouse gas emissions by 2030 and directed Federal agencies to build a culture of sustainability and climate action in the Federal workforce through employee engagement, education, and training. Together, these documents describe the urgency and intent of increasing climate literacy at DHS.



Objective

The objective of this Climate Literacy Strategy is to develop a climate literate DHS workforce, ensuring all employees across the Department have a sufficient and up-to-date understanding of climate change and its relevance to the DHS mission. This understanding ensures we are better prepared to execute our mission in everchanging conditions while successfully implementing the executive orders, administrative directives, and regulations relevant to climate change. DHS will do this by supporting climate literacy development and initiatives throughout the Department and being a source of climate change information. Within climate literacy there are many topics including, but not limited to, climate

⁵Executive Order 14057 of December 8, 2021, Catalyzing Clean Energy Industries and Jobs Through Federal Sustainability, 86 FR 70935, <https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2021/12/13/2021-27114/catalyzing-clean-energy-industries-and-jobs-through-federal-sustainability>

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science literacy and climate security literacy. This strategy will evolve to educate the DHS workforce on all topics as necessary. As a starting point, we define climate literacy at DHS as an educated layman's understanding of the (non-technical) basics of climate, climate change, and climate change's implications for DHS.

Actions

The Office of the Chief Readiness Support Officer (OCRSO) is responsible for implementing the DHS Climate Literacy Strategy to address the Climate Action Plan and the Strategic Framework for Addressing Climate Change. A climate literate DHS workforce will be developed through the implementation of the following Actions: (1) administer the Climate Change Professionals (CCP) Program; (2) create a DHS-wide climate website; (3) develop and promote climate trainings; and (4) develop a climate literacy Community of Practice. The following explains each action in more detail.

Action 1: Administer the Climate Change Professionals Program

Action 2: Provide a DHS-Wide Website for Sharing and Coordinating Climate Change Information Among DHS Components

Action 3: Develop and Promote Climate Trainings and Continuing Education for DHS Professionals

Action 4: Develop a Department-Wide Climate Literacy Community of Practice to Champion, Share, and Coordinate Climate Discussions

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Action 1: Administer the Climate Change Professionals Program

In January 2022, Secretary Mayorkas created the CCP Program to recruit recent graduates, professionals, and current federal employees to support the Department's growing focus on climate change adaptation and enhancing resilience. The OCRSO is tasked with administering the Program. With the training and work experiences coordinated by the OCRSO, the CCPs will be a source of relevant and current climate change information. These professionals will have working knowledge of climate change science, risk analysis, and resilience planning. They will be able to understand and summarize relevant scientific literature, keeping abreast of current developments and potential applications to DHS. They will be proactive in disseminating such information and take the lead in implementing this Climate Literacy Strategy across DHS.

Responsible Parties

The Office of the Chief Human Capital Officer (OCHCO) and the OCRSO are responsible for managing the CCP Program by hiring new cohorts, shepherding professionals through four DHS component details, motivating and directing participants' capstone projects, and coordinating full-time placement in components at the completion of two years.

Deliverables

The participants of the CCP Program will become Certified Climate Change Professionals through the Association of Climate Change Officers training and will receive training for DHS personnel as well as training specific to climate change, such as external trainings and symposiums. Through their details, they will gain working knowledge of DHS component policies and programs and will contribute to current projects directed towards climate change efforts. The CCPs will also complete two capstone projects that are directly aligned with DHS's Climate Action Plan.

Action 2: Provide a DHS-Wide Website for Sharing and Coordinating Climate Change Information Among DHS Components

The OCRSO will set up a DHS internal website to serve as a means of highlighting and sharing climate change relevant information among the Components and senior management.

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Responsible Parties

OCRSO will be responsible for development of the content and structure of the website. Component operational representatives and specialists in the areas of environmental policy, energy, sustainability, resilience, civil rights and civil liberties, environmental justice, and tribal affairs, among others, will be consulted during the process to provide input on information relevant to their staff and their current climate literacy efforts. Once structured, input and approval will be sought from upper management/leadership.

Deliverables

The DHS climate change website will focus on increasing climate literacy across DHS and will be comprised of three areas: climate science, which explains the mechanics of climate change and its effects on the physical and human environment and national interests; climate change impacts on DHS, which focuses on how climate change is and will likely affect the DHS mission and workforce; and a resources section which links to DHS policies, directives, DHS climate courses, further trainings, and external information from other agencies. Climate science information will be provided from authoritative, government sources like the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and the US Global Change Research Program, which are scientific bodies. The website will sync with other relevant DHS climate change internal and external content to ensure continuity and the most up to date information.

Action 3: Develop and Promote DHS Climate Change Trainings and Continuing Education for DHS Professionals

The OCRSO will identify, develop (in coordination with a contractor), promote, coordinate, and administer DHS climate change trainings and continuing education, beginning with a DHS-wide climate literacy short course to brief all DHS employees on the basics of climate science, factors driving climate change, and the critical importance of climate resilience for the DHS mission and communities we serve. This mandatory course will equip employees with the knowledge to incorporate a resilient approach to climate change within the context of daily taskings, decision-making, appropriate stakeholder engagement, and future project execution. It is anticipated that this short course will be no

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more than one hour in length and an educational, non-technical approach to climate change to appeal to all DHS employees. Subsequently, the OCRSO will identify and inform DHS staff of relevant and current climate change continuing education opportunities appropriate and amenable to working professionals.

Responsible Parties

Training content and development will be spearheaded by the CCPs. OCHCO will administer the training through the DHS Learning Site, while a representative from OCRSO will be responsible for ensuring training content is relevant, up to date, and supports the climate initiatives across the Department.

Deliverables

The primary deliverable for this initiative is a comprehensive Climate Change Education 101 training via the DHS training platform. Also in development is a method of surveying trainees on current climate change awareness, including other components' climate literacy plans and programs. Evaluating the need for subsequent trainings targeted to supervisory roles or specific components is an ongoing process.

Action 4: Develop a Department-Wide Climate Literacy Community of Practice to Champion, Share, and Coordinate Climate Change Discussions

The OCRSO will motivate, organize, and promote a DHS-wide climate literacy Community of Practice (CoP). The DHS Climate Change Professionals will be instrumental in promoting the agenda and leading some efforts. As additional Climate Change Professional cohorts onboard, they will contribute to the CoP and assist in growing literacy efforts throughout the DHS enterprise. Participation in the CoP is not required, but broad representation from others throughout DHS Headquarters and relevant component program offices is welcome. The purpose of the CoP is to focus on climate literacy within the Department by offering resources and training (Actions 2 and 3). This CoP will brief out through existing Working Groups as necessary. Finally, the CoP will, on an annual basis, evaluate the efficacy

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of the Climate Literacy Strategy and update it as needed. This is the structure through which we will ensure the continued success of the strategy.

Responsible Parties

The OCRSO will oversee and advise the CoP, while the CCPs and participants of the Climate Literacy CoP will implement actions and events. As the CoP matures, speaker events may be hosted, requiring collaboration with other offices throughout DHS Headquarters.

Deliverables

The primary deliverable for this initiative will be regular administration and updating of the Climate Literacy Strategy.

Action Timelines

Action	Audience	Timeline
Action 1: Administer the Climate Change Professionals Program	The CCP Program will enhance climate change efforts department wide.	First cohort onboarded 3 rd quarter FY 2022 and began rotations in the 1 st quarter of FY 2023. New cohorts are anticipated to onboard every year.
Action 2: Provide a DHS-Wide Platform for Sharing and Coordinating Climate Change Information Among DHS Components.	All DHS employees.	The structure and content will be finalized by the end of 2 nd quarter FY 2023. The DHS climate website will be up and running by end of 3 rd quarter of FY 2023.
Action 3: Develop and Promote Climate Trainings and Continuing Education for DHS Professionals	Mandatory for all DHS employees.	Development of courses and identification of trainings began in 4 th quarter FY 2022 and will continue through FY 2023.

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<p>Action 4: Develop a Department-Wide Climate Literacy Community of Practice to Champion Climate Discussions</p>	<p>The CoP will be open to climate champions from across DHS, preferably those whose duties are closely related to climate change including the program or strategic implementation of climate-related work.</p>	<p>The first CoP will be held in mid-FY 2023. As the group develops, the CoP may plan to host its first speaker events by the end of FY 2023.</p>
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Next Steps

Increasing climate literacy within a workforce is an ongoing and essential undertaking to ensure departmental readiness in a changing climate. While this strategy delineates actions for the coming year, as the interagency climate space coalesces and produces more unified work, this strategy will also evolve to take advantage of the best materials for use by the DHS workforce. Over the next few years, as more CCP cohorts onboard, they will collaborate with previous CCPs to improve upon and expand literacy initiatives with the goal of making DHS more climate literate. Together, we can prepare for the safety, security, and resilience of the homeland.