

Caesar Garduno, 2023 EDI Fellow for Fort Collins, Colorado



Project Overview and Role:

This fellowship aimed to strengthen community bonds and elevate the voices of historically excluded community members in climate action planning. My role was focused on supporting the creation of the Climate Equity Committee, which is focused on equity accountability and helping develop civic leadership skills.

What did you learn from the project?

I learned that public service, especially at the local level, offers unique opportunities for driving positive change. This experience illuminated the urgent need to envision and co-create systems that allow for the flourishing of everyone in communities. It taught me the importance of listening to the community, especially those most affected by environmental and social issues, as a pathway to finding innovative and equitable solutions.

Furthermore, the fellowship emphasized that environmental justice can't be separated from the broader context of multiple forms of injustice. It deepened my understanding of these interplays and reaffirmed my commitment to seeing systemic change. The approach of sharing or ceding power to communities stood out as beneficial and necessary, setting the stage for a culture where equity can genuinely take root. As I continue my journey this nuanced understanding I gained from this fellowship will serve as an invaluable guide, equipping me to contribute more effectively to the public good.

What was the impact of your work?

Initiatives like this allow often-ignored voices to be heard by creating an environment that values shared power and community insights, the long-term impact aims at fostering a cultural shift within the city's approach to environmental issues, thereby contributing to a more equitable and sustainable future for all.

Any links to project deliverables?

<https://www.fcgov.com/climateaction/cec>