

**Habeebah Yasin, Newark, NJ**



**Project Overview and Role (1-2 Paragraphs):**

In the past few months, I have had the opportunity to serve as the Equity, Inclusion, Diversity Fellow. In this role, I coordinated the Climate Justice Ambassadors Program through the Office of Sustainability, under the leadership of Nathaly Agosto Filión. The Climate Justice Ambassador program trains a cohort of Newark students on climate related topics within 5 weeks, so they can feel confident speaking to family, elected leaders, and their community about the climate related issues that directly impact their communities. The program has 3 main goals

for ambassadors, learning from experts, strengthening leadership and public speaking skills, and joining local urban environmental excursions. On Mondays and Tuesdays, students were trained in the classroom in person, on Wednesdays, they would go on an educational, fun excursion, and Thursdays were virtual days. Total hours were 16 hours per week, allowing students the opportunity to partake in other activities outside of the program.

My role was to facilitate training sessions, conduct outreach to community organizations, presenters, and guest speakers, prepare ambassadors for final presentations, and coordinate field trips. Presenters and guest speakers were invited to speak both virtually and in person. I reached out to individuals within the sustainability, clean energy, grassroots sector to speak about their work, experiences and call to action from students. Besides building the curriculum, I presented to students instructional material so they were in the know before completing a task and going forward in the program. During the end of the work day, I allowed for daily wrap ups and answered questions. At the end of each week, I would also send students a weekly summary so they can have resources and potentially reach out to guest speakers for future opportunities and allow them to have access to a list of resources, companies, and organizations they can collaborate with when raising awareness about a climate justice issue.

**What did you learn from the project?**

My experience is full of gratitude as I reflect on the success of this program. I learned how important it is to involve Newark students in speaking about the climate justice

crisis that impacts them directly. Community mobilization is extremely important and utilizing their skills to speak about climate change in a way that's relevant to their community is extremely important.

More so than that, I have learned that:

- It's important for individuals to see leaders of climate change being spoken about by individuals who look like them or belong to the same communities
- Training programs are an ideal method to funnel students into career exposures based on environmental concerns
- There are many spaces for Black students and students of color in the climate justice, sustainability field
- Newark has many resources and programs that combats the climate crisis, unbeknown to residents

### **What was the impact of your work?**

The impact of this work is making connections to Newark students and helping them to realize that sustainability is not a foreign concept, rather it relates to how their neighborhoods are impacted when it rains, how their family and friends may be impacted when there aren't enough green safe spaces and more. I believe this kind of work is transformative, inclusive, and sets the standard on best practices of how cities should involve students in conversations about policies. After this program, they can consider themselves growing professionals on climate change as it relates to Newark, NJ. Now that students have an understanding of the ways in which they can live a sustainable life, they can not only direct community members to the office to partake in sustainability projects, but also they can be the model of how to think differently about treating their environments.

### **Any links to project deliverables?**

<https://fb.watch/f1qZUea3SL/>

[https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1gomvsdzo6plDYLC5qJPoRV3\\_2ReShcUVJxx6RAdjoPA/edit?usp=sharing](https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1gomvsdzo6plDYLC5qJPoRV3_2ReShcUVJxx6RAdjoPA/edit?usp=sharing)

[https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/12YQsZcYB\\_9VVXza2S9Kzgeqw7h6AvsV2LkFznZJaEaw/edit?usp=sharing](https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/12YQsZcYB_9VVXza2S9Kzgeqw7h6AvsV2LkFznZJaEaw/edit?usp=sharing)

<https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1kXzqOj3AYOlbdtlQiouSqSrQdLxKjoHAjvr27Q1KRVs/edit?usp=sharing>