



Valerie Costa

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Personal Statement

Long-time social change organizer and activist seeking to spend a year in a collaborative learning and become a more strategic and visionary leader. 10 years of experience in climate/environmental justice organizations, working to stop fossil fuel expansion and spark conversations on degrowth and climate solutions. Accomplished ecosystem facilitator and organizational growth specialist aiming to transform the global economic system and extractive individualist cultural norms, with a goal of building healthy, thriving, joy-filled communities within the confines of a finite planet and decades of locked in climate impacts.

Work Experience

350 Seattle, Seattle, WA

Jan. 2017 – Nov. 2021

Interim Executive Director (May '20–Nov. '21); **Staff Collective member** (Jan. '17–Nov.'19)

- Key leader in growing 350 Seattle into the largest city-based 350 local group in the United States (of 160 groups)
- Designed and implemented, through a collaborate process, a distributed leadership structure for the organization that engaged hundreds of volunteers.
- Grew organization's budget from \$15,000 to \$850,000 within five years drawing from diverse revenue sources
- Project managed multiple large events, including a four-day long mass direct action at two oil refineries with over 2,000 total participants.
- Campaign strategist 350 Seattle's Seattle for a Green New Deal campaign, Defund/Divestment work (targeting the finance sector's funding of fossil fuel projects), and Fossil Fuel Resistance campaigns. Seattle's Green New Deal campaign has already secured over \$200 million annually for weatherization and housing solutions.
- Started campaigns to stop growth of air traffic and cruise ships at the Port of Seattle.
- Started 350 Seattle Action, a 501 (c)4 political sister organization to 350 Seattle and managed two political endorsement processes, leading to the mobilization of thousands of people to vote for climate champions.
- Formally supervised nine staff, primarily serving as a mentor and support for their growth and leadership development.

- Facilitated challenging conversations among the 350 Seattle leadership to take positions on complex issues such as nuclear energy, carbon pricing proposals, and positions on social justice issues outside the mission of the organization.
- Speaker at general meetings, public hearings, press conferences, and rallies.
- Led hundreds of participants in trainings around direct action, legal and jail support, amplifying actions on social media, lobbying, fundraising, and horizontal organizational development.
- Developed all internal infrastructure and systems for 350 Seattle: database, accounting systems, human resources policies, etc.

Aril Consulting, Seattle, WA

Jan. 2011 – Present

Director / Owner

A management consulting firm committed to helping non-governmental organizations with resource development and organizational management.

- Consulted with more than a dozen organizations to develop and successfully execute their first fundraising plans.
- Extensive track record of helping clients double or even triple their fundraising revenue within the first year of work together.
- Designed, developed the curriculum for, and was the lead trainer of a 10-week fundraising group coaching series for 350 local group leaders
- Co-led of Heart & Muscle, a leadership training program for ten groups in the 350 local group network
- Established record of strong foundation retention and sustained giving by helping organizations prioritize stewardship and authentic connection. Introduced organizations to new funding networks.
- Conducted development assessments that reduced organizations' reliance on event revenue by their individual donor cultivation, thereby increasing revenue and decreasing workload.
- Coached Executive Directors to become successful fundraisers.

Sound Generations, Seattle, WA

Nov. 2004 – Apr. 2010

Vice President/Chief Development Officer

Development generalist excelling in managing a diverse revenue generation plan.

- Directed all private sector fundraising and community relations efforts. This included oversight of all development functions (major gifts and planned giving, events, corporate and foundation support, annual campaign, direct mail, and online fundraising), \$3 million endowment, as well as agency public relations and marketing.
- Ensured that agency fundraising goals (\$2.4 million in 2010) were met through the creation and management of annual development plan and budgets.
- Relied on previous organizing background to better “connect the dots” in enhancing fundraising engagement. Was recognized as a key contributor in “building a culture of

philanthropy" within the organization.

- Participated in the Executive Team, advising on agency-wide issues and strategic planning.

Education & Training

- B.A. in History & International Relations, Boston University. Sept. 1999—Jan 2003
- Certificate in Fundraising Management, Univ. of Washington, Oct. 2006 – May 2007
- Certificate in Sustainable Building & Design, Yestermorrow D/B School
- Certificate, Cultivating Success Sustainable Small Farms, WA State Univ. 2021
- Certificate, Project Management, Google. In progress.

Relevant Trainings: Completed Undoing Institutional Racism and Beyond Inclusion trainings; Rockwood Leadership Institute, Art of Leadership

Additional Information

Languages: English, mother tongue. Spanish, Independent user

Volunteer Experience:

- Board President – 350 Seattle Action
- Board member – Puget Sound Mycological Society
- Board member – TERRA Collaborative
- Past Board member – International Campaign for Justice in Bhopal
- Past Board member – Amnesty International Puget Sound
- Past Corporate Action Network Coordinator, Pacific Northwest – Amnesty International USA
- Writer, Student Underground newspaper at Boston University; one article, "Practice what you Preach" is referenced in the "Activism 101" book
- Lead organizer of the Boston Anti-War Coalition and the Student Labor Action Project (citywide campus organizing projects)

Presentations:

- Fearless Cities, 2018 - "Beyond the Membership Model: Experiments in Emergent Organizations"
- Nonprofit Democracy Network Inaugural Gathering, 2017 – "Staff Collectives"