

ALL-IN CLARK COUNTY FRIENDS AND FAMILY GUIDE



*A toolkit to guide your
climate conversations
with friends and family*

HOW TO START A CLIMATE CONVERSATION

Interactions at home, work, and school are often how we get information, communicate ideas, and share what we care about. Here in Clark County, the vast majority of us believe global warming is real and it is having an impact on our communities. Yet very few of us discuss it, even occasionally (see graph below). We know we all should be talking about climate change – so why aren't we? Everyday conversations about climate change with friends, families, coworkers and those close to you are not always easy, and it often seems overwhelming to even know where to start.



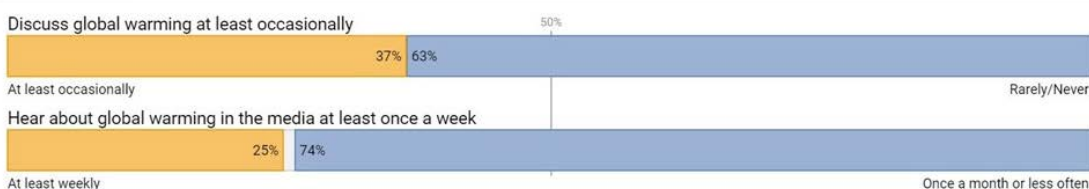
All-In Clark County has created this guide to help you start constructive conversations about climate change. It provides frameworks and discussion questions that link climate action to the values your family and friends hold. Conversations become a great tool to build support and help people become more informed and confident in their abilities to take climate action.

Public Opinion Estimates, Clark County, Nevada, 2020

BELIEFS



BEHAVIORS



KICKING OFF THE CONVERSATION

Starting a conversation on climate change is not always easy, even with friends and family. Many climate conversations start with someone sharing their own experience or action to be more sustainable. Clark County is developing a climate action plan for our whole community, making NOW the perfect time to launch a conversation. If you have taken part at all - by completing a survey, reading a fact sheet, or talking with our Engagement Team at an event - you have a starting point for your conversation. You can also consider the sample questions below.

Sample Questions

- Did you know Clark County is developing All-In Clark County, a plan to ensure we are all resilient to climate impacts like increased heat waves and drought?
- Did you know that reducing greenhouse gas emissions has been a goal for Clark County since 2005?¹ I have taken action to reduce my energy use by.... (add your own action here). *E.g., Changed to LED lightbulbs, set my thermostat down 2 degrees, added insulation.*
- Did you know that half our community greenhouse gas emissions come from buildings and energy?

THE PRINCIPLES OF REAL TALK²

Once you've got the conversation started, consider applying some of the principles of REAL TALK, a framework created by [Climate Outreach](#). These principles can help make conversations feel less intimidating while also providing structure to the conversation.

Respect your conversation partner

Enjoy it

Ask questions

Listen, and show you've heard

Tell your story

Action makes it easier

Learn from the conversation

Keep going and keep connected

Be Respectful and Enjoy!

Do not judge or shame your loved ones if their current actions or views do not yet consider climate impacts. Instead, respect their values (though they may be different than yours) and try to see things from their point of view. Come into the conversation genuinely curious to understand their perspective—not focused on changing their mind right away. Curiosity is a great way to connect with someone about an idea. If you enjoy the conversation, in turn your loved one will likely feel more comfortable.

Sample Questions

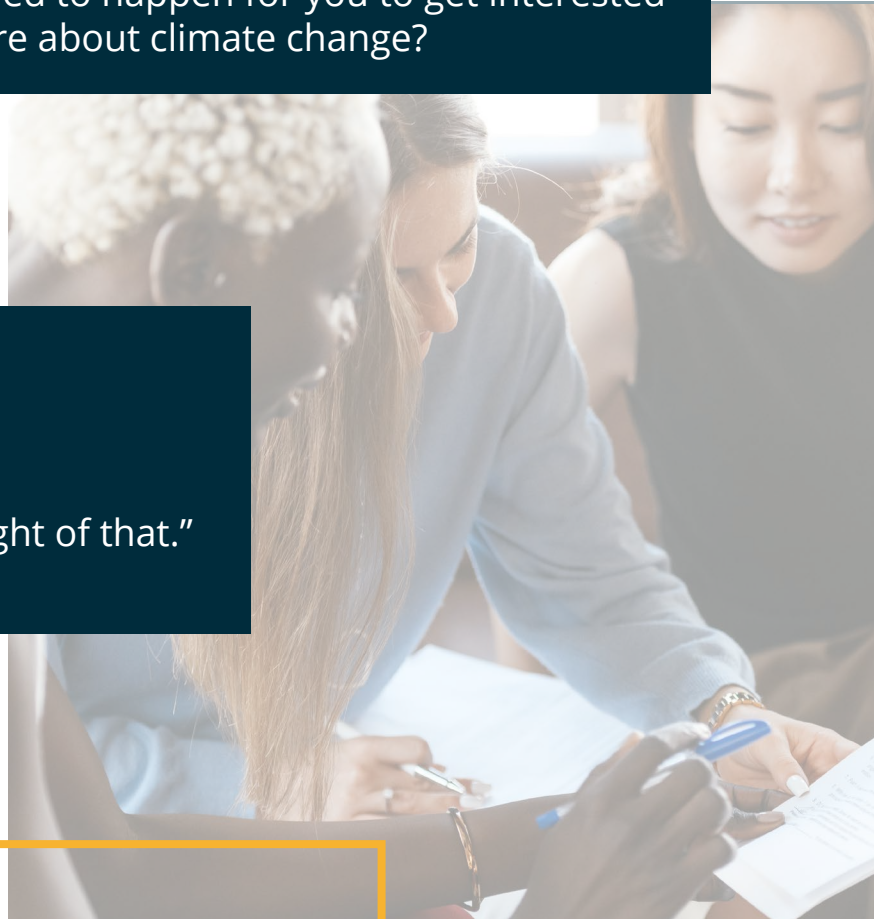
- What have you heard about climate change?
- How did you arrive at that position?
- What would need to happen for you to get interested in learning more about climate change?

Sample Phrases

- “I really agree with you on that”
- “I find that really hard as well”
- “Like you said...”
- “That’s a good point, I never thought of that.”
- “I respect the way you...”

PRO TIP

90% of people felt more hopeful about climate change when exposed to good-natured comedy on the subject - and more likely to take action.³






Ask Questions and Listen

When you know a lot about climate change, it is very easy for the conversation to become a lecture. Make sure to take time to stop, pause, ask questions about what climate change means to them and give them time to reflect on their own experiences. Make sure you validate what they are saying! You need to make sure you are genuinely listening to your family members' words and responding to their questions, comments, and concerns.

MAKING THE CONNECTION

People are more receptive to talking about, and taking action on, climate change if they see how it connects to their values. Listen to find out what is important to your conversation partner, and make the connection to climate change. Here are some examples of values and how you can connect them to impacts we're feeling in Clark County.

| Value/Interest | Local Connection | Climate Impacts |
|--|---|---|
| Health  | Hotter temperatures and more frequent/longer periods of extreme heat pose a health risk, especially for vulnerable people like children and the elderly. | In Clark County, we will see 30 days a year over 106°F by mid-century. These higher temperatures can lead to heat-related illness and poor air quality that can be dangerous, especially to our elderly family members. |
| Equity  | Climate change doesn't impact everyone equally. Community members with fewer resources to adapt and recover are burdened more from impacts (low-income, people of color, elderly, immigrants, etc.) | Clark County's most vulnerable community members are hit hardest by impacts like increasing heat, drought, flooding, high energy costs, and poor air quality. |
| Outdoor Activities  | Loss of wildlife/ecosystems is expected due to higher local temperatures and more frequent/intense disasters, including wildfires and flooding. | Climate change is causing a decline in our local wildlife populations and threatens the health of our beloved natural spaces. It's less fun to enjoy the outdoors when habitats and ecosystems are impaired. |



Stories Over Statistics

Most often for a successful conversation you don't need to share all the nitty gritty of climate processes. Just being able to share your experiences about our changing world and why you are passionate is a great, if not one of the best, communication tools. You can also point to the changes closer to home! Clark County is [experiencing climate change firsthand](#); ask if your loved ones have ever thought about, or noticed, the things happening in your community.

Action and Engagement

Speaking about the climate action you have taken is an excellent way for another person to have a real-world examples. It's important to acknowledge the complexity of the issue, but equally important to stress that small efforts make a difference. Use this opportunity to also recognize a different perspective on climate change. Reflect on their feelings towards climate change and compare them with your own.

Sample Talking Points

- Data has shown that Southern Nevada is the [fastest warming region in the country](#). Our average temperatures have increased by more than 5°F since 1970!⁴
- Volunteering for Clark County Parks is an easy way to take action, have you ever considered it?
- Did you know that our County sent enough waste to the landfill⁵ to fill [Allegiant Stadium](#) more than 33 times in 2019? I am trying to find ways to reduce waste to be part of the solution.

DON'T LEAVE THEM HANGING

After the conversation, offer to share some resources on anything you talked about. This is particularly important if you discussed ways to take action. Keep the other person in the loop and let them know you care by respectfully continuing the discussion. With their permission, send them news articles or social media posts about climate change, especially related to the topics they're interested in.

SPEAKING WITH PEOPLE WHO ARE STRONGLY OPPOSED TO ACTION ON CLIMATE CHANGE

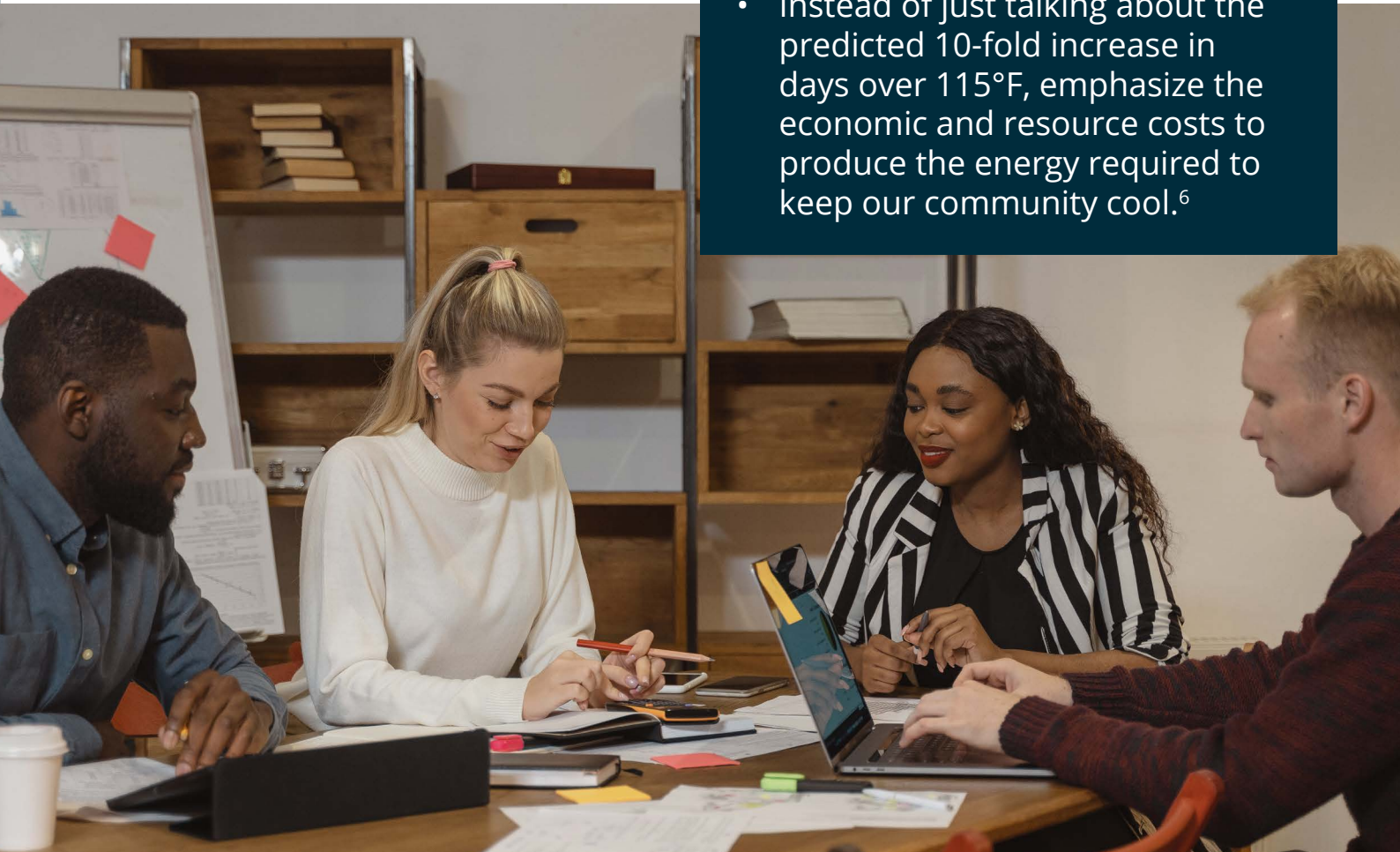
This may be the most challenging audience you speak with, but it also has the potential to be the most interesting conversation.

When speaking to family members who strongly oppose taking action on climate change, you need to think about what is important to them and frame the conversation around that. Climate change touches many areas in all our lives; so focusing on health, the economy, and damage to personal property instead of solely environmental topics will be helpful in bridging a gap in your conversation.

In some cases, it may be impossible to have a constructive conversation and it then might be best to pull away from the chat. While disappointing, it is better to have a short yet respectful conversation with the potential for a small shift in perspective.

Sample Topics

- Instead of talking about rising CO₂ emissions, instead mention the health risks to elderly family members if warmer days continue
- Instead of just talking about the predicted 10-fold increase in days over 115°F, emphasize the economic and resource costs to produce the energy required to keep our community cool.⁶



OVERCOMING CHALLENGES WHEN SPEAKING ABOUT CLIMATE CHANGE

Challenge #1: Simply Overwhelmed

With all that is already going on in the world and a record number of natural disasters happening every day, your conversation partner may feel overwhelmed and even a bit distressed when you bring up the subject of climate change.

Sample Fact

- Clark County has reduced water use per person by 52%, even while population has grown by 48%!

Challenge #2: On the Defensive

Accidentally making the other person feel judged for their current actions is an easy way to shut down the conversation quickly. This may lead to someone to become defensive, rendering the conversation no longer constructive.

Sample Fact

- Did you know Clark County generates about 60% of all solid waste generated in Nevada? I am working on minimizing my personal waste by buying used items and bringing my own bags to the store.

Solution #1

To avoid the potential doom and gloom of the conversation, speak about solutions. This is not to say avoiding all of your negative emotions—climate change is a serious issue—but make sure to have a variety of positive and negative views and opinions in your conversations.

Sample Fact

- Clark County's tree canopy reduces annual stormwater runoff volume by 7.7 million gallons, which protects us from climate impacts like flooding.⁷

Solution #2

Make sure when you are speaking to also include what you want to improve on in your own climate action. This will pull you away from possible lecturing and brings you back to an equal playing field.

ALL-IN ON CLIMATE ACTION

One of the most important things you can do for the climate is also the simplest—**talk about it!** While these conversations can feel intimidating, practicing these tools will help you approach climate chats confidently and with a set strategy. Every conversation, no matter the outcome, helps you grow as a communicator. We hope you are able to communicate successfully with your loved ones to help them become more climate-conscious and maybe even come to share your passions! If more of us start these climate conversations, then more of us will be **All In** for change.

For more resources, visit AllInClarkCounty.com



References

- ¹ Clark County. Eco-County Initiative. (2008).
- ² Climate Outreach. [How to talk about Climate Change Over the Holidays](#). (2019).
- ³ Changing America. [Jokes are a surprisingly effective way to talk about climate change](#). (2020).
- ⁴ CNAP. [Climate Conditions in Clark County, NV](#). (2018).
- ⁵ Nevada Department of Conservation and Natural Resources Division of Environmental Protection. Recycling and Waste Reduction Report. (2019).
- ⁶ RTC Regional Planning. Extreme Heat Vulnerability Fact Sheet. (2020).
- ⁷ Clark County. Urban Forest Resource Analysis of Inventoried Park Trees. (2013).