

Mason 4C

# A Think and Do Tank

2023 ANNUAL  
REPORT



GEORGE MASON UNIVERSITY  
CENTER *for*  
CLIMATE CHANGE  
COMMUNICATION

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# Letter from the Director

Ed Maibach



## Dear Friends,

As predicted, 2023 was the **hottest year on record**. Climate-related weather events and disasters affected communities across the U.S. in new and more damaging ways. This makes our work as a “think-and-do tank” on climate communication even more critical than ever.

We conduct audience and message research to identify promising new ways of building public will and political will for climate solutions. Findings from our **Climate Change in the American Mind** public opinion polls conducted with Yale, and our **Global Warming’s Six Americas** research, are used by countless organizations large and small to inform their educational and communication programming on climate change. We put those research insights into practice by activating trusted climate communicators in communities across America, including:

- **Doctors and other health professionals through our Medical Society Consortium on Climate and Health**, a program led by pediatrician Dr. Lisa Patel that has grown to include 52 medical societies and 25 state-based climate and health organizations. Our research shows that health professionals have, perhaps uniquely, great potential to generate public will for climate solutions among Americans across the political spectrum.
- **Conservative Americans who are concerned about climate change through our RepublicEn program**, a program led by former GOP Congressman Bob Inglis that seeks to encourage Republican elected officials that many of their constituents support climate solutions.
- **TV weathercasters and other local journalists through our Climate Matters program**, a climate reporting resource program we created with Climate Central that helps nearly half of America’s TV weathercasters educate their viewers about the local impacts of global climate change.

The global challenges we confront are serious, urgent, and intensifying. By identifying effective messages and messengers, and activating them at scale, our work is making a difference.

None of this would be possible without the unwavering support of people like you who believe in our mission. **Thank you** to our funders, our partners, our University, our Advisory Council, and all who make this work possible. I look forward to working with you in 2024 and beyond.

**Onward and Upward!**



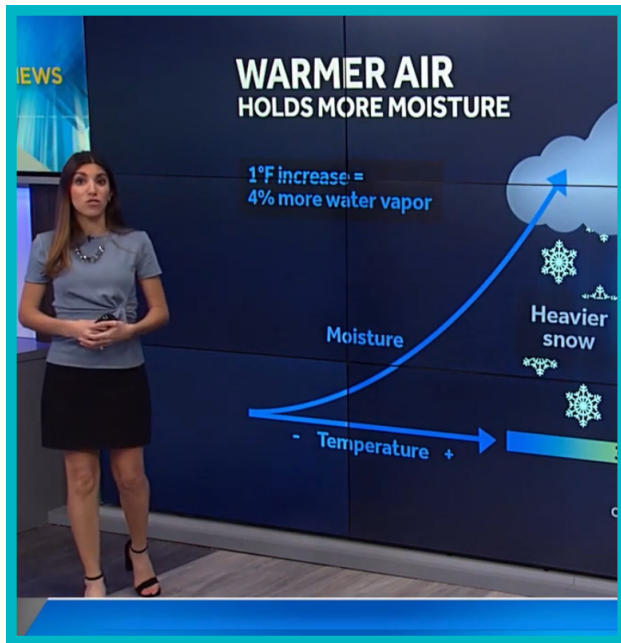
Ed Maibach

# Our Impact in 2023

- Our **Climate Change in the American Mind (CCAM)** polling project with the Yale Program on Climate Change Communication has grown into the largest, most comprehensive, and freely available resource of information on American public opinion about climate change. Our research continues to show an increase in public concern and public understanding about climate change. About two-thirds of Americans (66%) say they are “somewhat worried” about global warming. A majority (61%) understand global warming is human caused. Those who think global warming is happening now outnumber those who think it is not happening by a ratio of nearly 5-to-1 (74% vs. 15%). Findings from our surveys were featured in the Washington Post, Scientific American, TIME, Forbes, The Hill, and the New York Times.
- The **Medical Society Consortium on Climate & Health (MSCCH)** is now the largest climate and health organization in America. Since 2016, our membership has grown rapidly to 52 national medical societies representing more than 700,000 physicians (70% of U.S. doctors). We have more than 75 partner organizations representing millions of health professionals across the spectrum of health care and public health. This year, co-founder and executive director emeritus Dr. Mona Sarfaty retired. To recognize her incredible contributions the Consortium and the field of medicine, we established **The Mona Sarfaty Fund for Climate, Health and Equity** that will support our state groups, our outreach efforts, and our environmental justice work. Since launching in Summer 2022, we’ve raised more than \$350,000 for this current-use fund. **Dr. Lisa Patel**, Stanford Medicine pediatrician and climate and health leader, stepped in as executive director. Dr. Patel has served as deputy executive director since January 2022. In March 2023, our MSCCH Annual Meeting, **“Seize the Moment for Climate Action: Building the Climate and Health Movement”** was held at Mason’s Arlington Square in a hybrid format. This was our first in-person annual meeting in more than three years. More than 300 registrants and 100 in-person attendees gathered for the two-day event, with remarks from top leaders in climate in health, including Senator Edward Markey, CEQ’s Dr. Jalonne White-Newsome, and President Biden’s climate advisor, John Podesta.
- We also grew the impact of our **Climate and Health Equity Fellowship (CHEF)** which serves to empower doctors of color to become leaders in climate and health equity education, advocacy, and policy solutions. With support from Johnson & Johnson, the Energy Foundation, the National Medical Association, the American Medical Association, and NOAA,

our class of 13 fellows (up from 6 fellows in 2021) participated in monthly seminars, attended skill-building workshops, and met with experts in the field. Each fellow completed a capstone project that responds to ways they can elevate climate and health equity solutions and help decarbonize the medical sector.

- Our **Climate Matters in the Newsroom** project supports local news weathercasters and journalists in more than 95% of America’s media markets. Produced in partnership with Climate Central, the Climate Matters program has enrolled more than 1,100 TV weathercasters and almost 1,000 local journalists. Last year, we celebrated the program’s 10th anniversary.



- The **Virginia Climate Center (VCC)** is a newly developing climate extension service based in the Center for Land-Ocean-Atmosphere Studies (COLA) and Mason 4C. Our Center contributes to VCC’s research, public outreach, communication strategy, and co-branded events. We assisted with the launch of the VCC’s website in early 2023, and have co-written and published op-eds with VCC leadership. We contributed to and published an analysis on, “The public health benefits of a zero-emissions power sector in Virginia” in January 2023.
- Our influential **republicEn** program continues the worthy effort to engage climate leadership among conservatives. Former Congressman **Bob Inglis**, who served six terms representing South Carolina’s 4th Congressional district, is the driving force and voice behind the program.



RepublicEn surpassed 20,000 members in FY23, with all 50 states represented. The program leverages media, events, and experiential learning to reach thousands each year. Through their EnCourage Tour, Bob and the team traveled around the country for climate action.

In addition, republicEn publishes a popular podcast—EcoRight Speaks—via Spotify and other major podcasting platforms. This past year they crossed the threshold of 100 episodes. Conversations featured several first-time guests, including Sarasota, Florida Mayor Erik Arroyo, R Street Institute founder Eli Lehrer, and a suite of experts from Florida to talk about the impacts of Hurricane Ian and where the state goes from there. They also featured two authors, repeat guest Utah Congressman John Curtis, and former EPA Administrator under President George H. W. Bush, Bill Reilly.

- This year we welcomed **four new postdoctoral research fellows** to our team. With funding from George Mason University’s Strategic Investment Fund, we launched our Research-to-Practice Postdoctoral Research Fellowship program. Drs. Kathryn Thier and Nic Badullovich joined our team to conduct applied research and work with practitioner organizations—as well as our Mason 4C programs—to apply evidence-based climate communication strategies. We also welcomed Drs. Julia Fine and Joshua Ettinger to our team to conduct climate and health research through support from Wellcome Trust.

- At the June 2023 Conference on Communication and Environment (COCE) at James Madison University, a team of Mason 4C students were awarded the COCE “Top Poster Award” for their research on public reactions to climate change civil resistance. Their research was the output of the COMM 701 class led by Ed Maibach and postdoctoral fellow Nic Badullovich. Members of the research team included Ph.D students Lia Zakiyyah, Doran Tucker, Richard Amoako, Patrick Ansah, Briana Davis and Urszula Anna Horoszko



- Prominent climate communicator, chief scientist at The Nature Conservancy, and friend of 4C, Dr. Katharine Hayhoe joined us in October 2023 for the Beck Environmental Lecture series at Mason. Prior to the event, Dr. Hayhoe sat down with our graduate students and our extended team to share her insights and experiences, and she even did a short video explaining how our Six Americas framework is effective as a climate communication tool



# Thank You to our Funders

Our major grant funders include the Energy Foundation, Wellcome Trust, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Association, Environmental Protection Agency, National Park Service, Kresge Foundation, Johnson & Johnson, Clayton Baker Trust, Lockhart Vaughan Foundation, Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, High Tide Foundation, Northlight Foundation, and the Skoll Fund.

We would also like to thank Mason's College of Humanities and Social Sciences. We are especially grateful for the College generously supporting our work with vital resources including office space, utility costs, and salary support.

Furthermore, we are grateful for the generosity of all our philanthropic donors throughout 2023. Our work would not be possible without the generous support of many.



We are seeking additional investment to grow our community and enable our Center to make faster progress towards helping more groups of Americans better understand the climate solutions within our reach. If you would like to support Mason 4C, please contact Associate Director, Dan Reed at [dreed21@gmu.edu](mailto:dreed21@gmu.edu) or [go.gmu.edu/GiveToMason4C](https://go.gmu.edu/GiveToMason4C) or scan the QR code with your mobile device.





# Mason 4C Advisory Council

In September, we launched the **Mason 4C Advisory Council** to help lead our Center into the future. Our council is chaired by environmental leader and philanthropist Will Baker, former president of the Chesapeake Bay Foundation. We are grateful to our council's sage guidance, connections, and financial support as we grow and scale our research and programs.



**Will Baker,**  
**4C Advisory Council Chair**  
Former President, Chesapeake  
Bay Foundation



**Jennifer Laszlo Mizrahi**  
TCo-Founder and Director,  
Mizrahi Family Charitable Fund



**Solomon "Sol" Salinas**  
Global Executive Vice President,  
Capgemini



**Rohan Patel**  
Senior Global Director,  
Public Policy and Business  
Development, Tesla



**Dr. Mona Sarfaty**  
Founder and Emeritus  
Executive Director, Medical  
Society Consortium on  
Climate and Health



**Sumeet Shrivastava**  
Vice Chair, GMU  
Foundation Board  
of Trustees

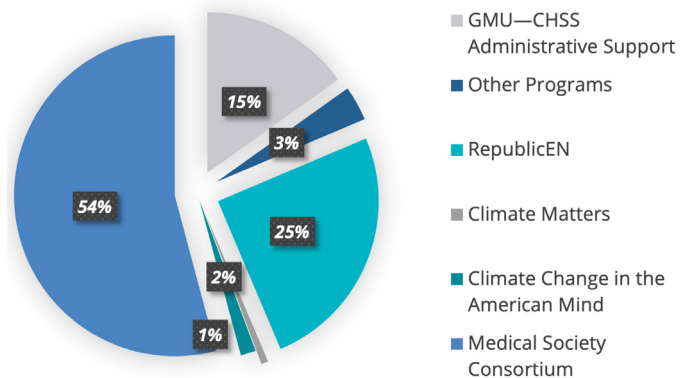
# Financial Summary - FY23

PROGRAM AREA	TOTAL REVENUES	TOTAL EXPENSES
GMU-CHSS Administrative Support	\$435,671	\$435,671
Medical Society Consortium	\$1,584,468	\$1,560,261
RepublicEn	\$724,333	\$720,581
Climate Matters in the Newsroom	\$0	\$20,286
Climate Change in the American Mind	\$0	\$43,819
Other Programs	\$258,575	\$100,711

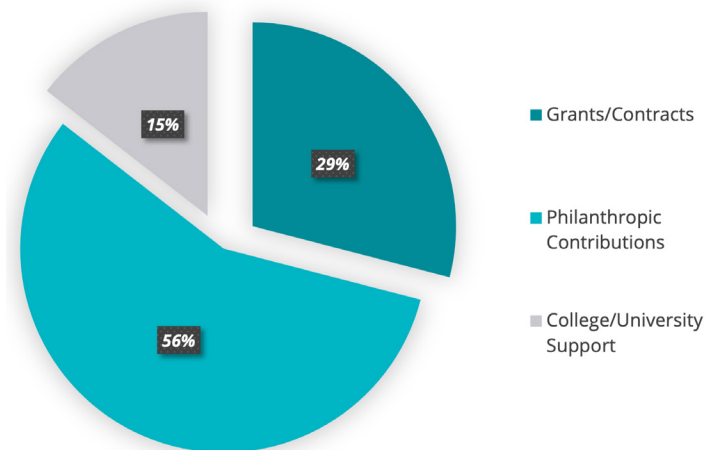
REVENUE TYPE	AMOUNT*
Sponsored Research Grants/Contracts	\$871,726
Philanthropic Contributions	\$1,695,649
College/University Support	\$435,671

\*A portion of this revenue is allocated to cover expenses in future fiscal years

TOTAL EXPENSES BY PROGRAM AREA



REVENUES BY TYPE





College of Humanities  
and Social Sciences



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 [climatechangecommunication.org](http://climatechangecommunication.org)

Graphic Design by Richard Amoako

