

CARA CLASE

South Jersey / Greater Philadelphia | cmclase93@gmail.com

POLICY RESEARCHER | RESEARCH COMMUNICATIONS | PARTNERSHIP & COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

PROFILE

Public policy researcher with a Ph.D. in Urban Affairs and Public Policy and 10+ years of experience conducting policy-centered research, translating complex findings to lay audiences, and coordinating cross-sector partnerships between nonprofits, universities, and community stakeholders. Well-seasoned communicator experienced in leading policy briefs and public-facing impact reports. Research expertise includes energy insecurity, environmental justice, and the nexus between affordable housing and energy efficiency. Past research experience includes unsheltered homelessness, the opioid epidemic, and post-COVID material hardship.

LANGUAGES

English Native
Spanish Classroom Study/Reading

PROGRAMS/SOFTWARE

Advanced STATA, Qualtrics, Excel
Proficient SAS, ArcGIS Pro

EDUCATION

Urban Affairs and Public Policy, Ph.D.

June 2023

University of Delaware, Newark, DE

Economics, M.A.

Dec. 2017

University of Delaware, Newark, DE

Economics, B.A. - Mathematics Minor

Dec. 2015

Millersville University of Pennsylvania, Lancaster, PA

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE (Last 8 Years)

2023- Present - Professional Specialist and Strategic Communications Lead

Princeton University, Center for Policy Research on Energy and the Environment

Leading strategic communications and helping scholars translate complex research into accessible language for media and donor-facing publications, including press releases and the center's [Impact Report](#).

- Designing and creating digital content to promote the center's research and engage followers
- Cultivating strategic partnerships and research collaborations with nonprofit organizations, environmental justice advocates, universities, and community stakeholders.
- Coordinating cross-disciplinary collaborations across Princeton to maximize research impact.
- Mentoring graduate and undergraduate students through project advisement, program development, and professional training initiatives.

2020- 2025 - Outreach & Strategic Communications Advisor (Pro Bono)

Foundation for a Healthier Senegal, Remote

Co-led strategic communications for an international health nonprofit dedicated to improving maternal health outcomes in rural Senegal.

- Developed donor-facing messaging and community engagement materials.
 - Crafted an impact report that helped secure four grants (~\$200k).
- Produced reports, vision statements, and other strategic communications materials to translate complex public health initiatives and strengthen engagement.
- Collaborated with nonprofit leadership to develop philanthropic partnerships.

2018- 2023 - Policy Research Assistant

University of Delaware, Biden School of Public Policy

- Conducted applied policy research on unsheltered homelessness, the opioid epidemic, and post-COVID financial hardship to support public-sector decision-making.
- Performed literature reviews, policy brief writing, survey design and dissemination, data cleaning, and econometric modeling/regression analysis.
- Contributed to reports commissioned by nonprofit and government stakeholders.
 - Co-authored a report on human-centered approaches to unsheltered homelessness that was cited as an authoritative source in a [U.S. Supreme Court amicus curiae brief](#).

ADDITIONAL PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

2021-2024 **Grants and Partnerships Director - South Jersey Regional Animal Shelter**

Grants and Communications Director for the South Jersey Regional Animal Shelter in Vineland, NJ. Role included writing and managing grant applications, fostering local partnerships, aiding with community outreach events and fundraisers, and writing impact reports for donor audiences and public distribution.

2020-2022 **Sustainability Council Graduate Fellow - University of Delaware**

Worked directly under the Chair of the university's Sustainability Council. Collected campus-wide sustainability data, drafted white papers on relevant sustainability topics for upper University administration, and helped manage the Green Grants program. Was the lead author of the University of Delaware's Sustainability Plan (report can be seen [here](#)), which motivated the University to formally establish an Office of Sustainability.

2019 **Yale Univ. Environmental Fellow - Institute for Energy Economics & Financial Analysis**

2019 Fellow working under [Yale University's Environmental Fellowship Program](#) (EFP). The program assigned each fellow a nonprofit/organization to work for during the summer. I was placed with the [Institute for Energy Economics and Financial Analysis](#) in Cleveland, Ohio, where I conducted research on the Puerto Rican energy crisis and coal-powered electricity in the Midwest. Research findings from the Midwestern coal power project were presented before the Cleveland City Council and local officials.

TEACHING AND MENTORSHIP

2025-Present **Junior Summer Institute, Advanced Statistics Instructor - Princeton University**

Advanced Statistics instructor for Princeton's [Junior Summer Institute](#) (JSI): a quantitatively intense program that prepares students from underrepresented backgrounds for graduate studies and careers in public policy. My course covered topics such as OLS regression, difference-in-differences, regression discontinuity, randomized controlled trials, and the potential outcomes framework. My responsibilities also included student mentorship and engagement, one-on-one tutoring, and continued mentorship of students after the program.

2024-Present **Project Supervisor, Campus as Lab - Princeton University**

Faculty/staff supervisor for Princeton's Campus as a Living Lab program, where undergraduate students engage in experimental learning and applied research opportunities for sustainability and environmental projects on campus.

2024-Present **Instructional Assistant, English Language Institute - University of Delaware**

Instructional Assistant for the Intro to International Politics course at the English Language Institute: a program that helps ESL students improve their English proficiency in preparation for university studies or career advancement.

SELECTED POLICY REPORTS & PUBLICATIONS

Clase, C. (2023). A Tale of Energy-Burdened Cities: Connecting the Low-Income Housing Tax Credit to Energy Insecurity. University of Delaware.

Benson, T., Clase, C. et al. (2022). Bikeshare Report: An Action Plan for the University of Delaware and City of Newark. The Newark Partnership.

Metraux, S., Poppe, B., Clase, C. & Rayl, M. (2020). Local Responses to Unsheltered Homelessness: A Landscape Scan and Review of the Literature. Washington DC: Arnold Ventures, LLC.

Clase, C. (2019). Making a Difference in Energy Equity and Investment. Environmental Grant Makers Association Journal, 30th Anniversary Issue.

DeLorme, L., Clase, C. (2016). Can Dynamic Withdrawals Influence the Decision to Delay Social Security Benefits? The Retirement Management Journal, 6(1), Practitioner Issue.

CERTIFICATIONS

Community Engaged Research and Human Subjects Protections Certification (CITI Program)

Public Relations Strategy Certificate (Madecraft / LinkedIn Learning)

Media Training Essentials Certificate (LinkedIn Learning)