



Effective Practices for Implementing Local Climate and Energy Programs: *Action Checklists*

Lessons Learned *by Communities for Communities*

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WHAT IS IT?

Action checklists motivate behavior change by providing a clear and concise list of activities that community members and organizations can use to reduce their carbon footprint and achieve other sustainability goals.

WHY DO IT?

- Action checklists can engage people and organizations in your audience with near-term, achievable actions to create a sense of accomplishment.
- They provide ideas and a starting point for longer-term behavior change.
- The checklists provide a consistent and common language among program partners and with program audiences.

WHAT WORKS?

- Focus on a relatively small number of high-impact actions.
- Provide a menu of options that allows people to choose the activities most appropriate for them.
- Make actions general enough to be adaptable but specific enough to be useful.
- Within organizations, have a responsible party for each action and define a timeline.
- Create opportunities for in-person discussions to go over the checklist.
- Make choosing items fun. For example, use an online “shopping” website for the actions.
- After people complete simple actions, follow up with them and invite them to take additional steps.

WHAT SHOULD YOU WATCH OUT FOR?

- Too much choice in checklist actions can lead to confusion and inaction.
- Make sure that there is an easy path to implement items on the list. Having a list full of items that cannot be reasonably achieved can be discouraging.

WHAT RESOURCES HAVE PROJECTS FOUND TO BE USEFUL?

- “Communities Take Charge” Action List, Corvallis, Oregon:
energizecorvallis.org/takecharge



“Checklists make it easier to engage people because each person can find his or her low-hanging fruit and feel that he or she has accomplished something.”

Linda, Energize Corvallis, Oregon

“Make sure that there is an easy path to implementing the action items on your list.”

Randy, New Jersey Sustainable Energy Efficiency Demonstration Projects, Cherry Hill