Effective Practices for Implementing Local Climate and Energy Programs:
Working with Institutional Partners

Lessons Learned *by* Communities *for* Communities

The views expressed in this document are those of the Climate Showcase Communities grant recipients. U.S. EPA does not endorse any products or commercial services mentioned.

WHAT IS IT?

Partnering with organizations, such as other jurisdictions, utilities, complementary programs, community-based organizations, and others, can help you implement your program and achieve your collective goals.

WHY DO IT?

- Institutional partnerships extend your program's reach and effectiveness, and can give you credibility with a broader range of audiences.
- Partnerships allow sharing of best practices and fill gaps in capacity and services.
- Partners can provide access to new audiences, outreach and education opportunities, and potentially new sources of funding.

WHAT WORKS?

- Focus on networking and ongoing relationship building (for example, through in-person meetings, social events) with people in organizations who have the time, resources, and interest to work with you.
- Understand partners' goals, skills, and constraints.
- Identify common goals and opportunities.
- Identify what your program offers partners. Help them fill gaps in their capacity and services.
- Set clear expectations and roles. Formalize commitments and collaboration in writing, if needed.
- Collaborate on cohesive messaging and watch for inconsistencies.

WHAT SHOULD YOU WATCH OUT FOR?

- Ensure that partners are sharing accurate information about your program.
- Recognize that your partners may have varying levels of experience.
- Recognize that interest can wane if partners are not seeing the value.
- Anticipate competing agendas or priorities between your organization and your partners.
- Recognize that well-established programs may not have the flexibility to work with alternative or progressive programs and/or approaches.
- Anticipate that managing partnerships can be time intensive.

WHAT RESOURCES HAVE PROJECTS FOUND TO BE USEFUL?

- EPA's Local Climate Action Framework, *Reach Out and Communicate* phase: www.epa.gov/statelocalclimate/local/implementation/communicate.html

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> *Climate Showcase Communities program lead*

> *"You can make a 'crazy quilt' of possible resources seem saner for the customer."*
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> *Sarah, Cold Climate Community Solutions, Duluth, Minnesota*

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