



Effective Practices for Implementing Local Climate and Energy Programs: *Working with Contractors*

Lessons Learned *by Communities for Communities*

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WHAT IS IT?

Contractors often do the “real work” of reducing greenhouse gases and saving energy. They are on the front lines of program communication, and they are critical to the reputation, integrity, and quality of many programs.

WHY DO IT?

- Generating work for contractors can create local jobs and economic development.
- Contractors often have the specialized skills, certifications, and contacts to do the work more effectively and efficiently than program staff.
- Contractors can enhance the reach of your program.

WHAT WORKS?

- Emphasize your program’s role in creating opportunities, not competition, for contractors.
- Provide customers with a list of all qualified contractors.
- Hold contractor “open houses” where participants can get multiple bids at one time for energy efficiency or other work.
- When possible, leverage your program’s scope to get discounts for large volumes of work from contractors.
- Have a comprehensive quality assurance program in place to ensure quality work.
- Invite customer feedback on contractor quality.
- Provide training and certification opportunities to local contractors, which helps them get work and invests in the community.
- Establish an equipment “lending library” for contractors.
- Establish a standard format for routine jobs or customer engagement by contractors.

WHAT SHOULD YOU WATCH OUT FOR?

- Ensure that contractors have the right skills and a proven record of honest, reliable service. They will be representing your program in the community.
- Verify that a company’s training requirements meet your program’s needs.

WHAT RESOURCES HAVE PROJECTS FOUND TO BE USEFUL?

- Green for All—Resources on green job creation: greenforall.org
- Efficiency First—Association of energy efficiency contractors: www.encyfirst.org
- Building Performance Institute—Energy efficiency training and certification body that provides a database of certified professionals: www.bpi.org



“They are talking to customers who will use the program (a win for you) and your program will increase business for them (a win for them).”

*Cori, Smarter Sustainable
Dubuque, Iowa*

“Provide direct training and quality assurance for a minimum of 10 implementations, and provided those go well, 10 percent quality assurance thereafter.”

*Keith, Home Energy
Affordability Loan Program,
Little Rock, Arkansas*