Sustainable CT
Local Actions. Statewide Impact.®

7.4 Increase Use of Renewable Energy in Municipal Buildings

10 — 100 Points

Action Updates

This action has been revised for the **current certification cycle**. A version of this action from the prior program year is available for comparison. Edits are highlighted in yellow. (Last updated 2021)

Objective

Increase the use of renewable energy in your municipal buildings and public spaces.

Note: The US Environmental Protection Agency defines "renewable energy certificate" (REC, pronounced "rek") as a market-based instrument that represents the property rights to the environmental, social, and other non-power attributes of renewable energy generations. RECs are issues when one megawatt-hour (MWh) of electricity is generated and delivered to the electricity grid from a renewable energy source.

What to Do

1. Increase renewable energy use in municipal buildings

    All elements must be completed to receive credit.

    a. Complete Sustainable CT Action Benchmark and Track Energy Use.

    Submit: Proof of successful completion of Action 7.1.1, Benchmark and Track Energy Use, which can be achieved by responding to the SCT Portfolio Manager data request.

    Timeframe for Credit: Eligible for new action credit. This action falls under the action type "Data Tracking/Benchmarking and Meeting Performance Metrics" (see "Timeframe for Credit" Guidance Document for submission requirements).

    b. Power municipal buildings (including Board of Education) with electricity produced by on-site solar installation and/or via virtual net metering. Electricity produced by the on-site installation and via virtual net metering will count towards this action. 10 points will be awarded for each 10% of your energy use that is powered by renewable sources. The purchase of renewable energy certificates (RECs) can also earn credit toward your municipality's increased renewable energy use. For more information, click here. As a result of limited operations due to COVID-19, you may only submit data for buildings that have been in normal operations. "Normal operations" is defined as a building operating at 50% or greater capacity (as defined by operating hours or building occupancy) **(up to 100 points)**

    Submit: Submit the report generated through the SCT Portfolio Manager data request and follow the instructions within the data request on how to submit for points under this action.

    Timeframe for Credit: Eligible for new action credit. This action falls under the action type "Data Tracking/Benchmarking and Meeting Performance Metrics" (see "Timeframe for Credit" Guidance Document for submission requirements).

Timeframe for Credit

Actions can either be "New" or considered for "Rolling Credit."

New Action Credit. Any action completed within the past three years (from January 1 of the year seeking certification) is eligible for potential certification points. If you are applying for recertification in your year of expiration, you may not claim New Action Credit for items that previously received credit.

Rolling Credit. For any action older than three years (from January 1 of the year seeking certification), you must demonstrate ongoing, currently relevant, and meaningful impact in your community to be considered for certification points. If you are applying for recertification in your year of expiration, you must apply for Rolling Credit for any item that previously received credit, even if it was completed within the past three years.

View the "Timeframe for Credit" Guidance Document for detailed submission requirements.

Engaging Partners

Sustainable CT encourages regional collaboration and other forms of partnership. For every action, please complete the "Partners" box in your submission, indicating the name(s) of any municipalities and/or organizations you partnered with (if any) and a brief description of your municipality's role. If you collaborate with other municipalities, each community will receive points. For additional information, please see the "Partners Guidance Document".

Potential Municipal and Community Collaborators

Staff from the public works, town council, finance, purchasing, information systems, planning and zoning departments, building managers, and energy commission could be helpful in implementing this action.

Funding

If available, below are potential funding sources specific to this Action. For a complete listing of potential funding opportunities to assist with implementing Sustainable CT Actions, please visit the Sustainable CT Grants Portal, which is searchable by Action. Please also visit the Support for Your Town page for opportunities for technical assistance and other supports.

- Urban Act Grant Program
- Municipal Grant Program (MGP)
- 2022 Sustainable CT Community Match Fund

Resources

Toolkits, Calculators, Guidance Documents

- Free ENERGYSTAR Portfolio Manager Benchmarking Assistance for Sustainable CT Communities
- US Environmental Protection Agency's ENERGYSTAR Portfolio Manager

Organizations and Relevant Programs

- Energize CT
- CT Green Bank
- US Department of Energy, Office of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy

Why This Matters

Other than personnel costs, energy (electricity and heating fuel) is usually every municipality's highest expense. Traditional fossil fuels, like natural gas, propane, diesel, and heating oil, are not renewable, have fluctuating costs, and generate significant adverse environmental impacts through their extraction and combustion.

The use of fossil fuels to generate electricity leads to harmful emissions of both greenhouse gases and air pollutants. Greenhouse gases have a long-term detrimental effect on public health and the environment. Additionally, criteria pollutants such as sulfur dioxide, nitrous oxide, ozone and particulate matter immediately affect public health. These emissions include known carcinogens and contribute to an increased incidence of pulmonary diseases in both children and the elderly. Connecticut is nonattainment for both particulate matter and ozone.

Benefits

Renewable energy generation reduces your community's reliance on finite fossil fuels, and shields your town or city from the price volatility of the fossil fuel market.

Converting to renewable energy can reduce or eliminate the detrimental impacts of fossil fuels. Your community may save money after the initial upfront cost on renewable energy installation is paid back by generating on-site, clean energy.

CT Success Stories

- Avon - Oct 2020 Certification
- Chester - Nov 2021 Certification
- West Hartford - Nov 2021 Certification