7.7 Implement a Community Energy Campaign

10 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 2020)

Objective

Through increased guidance on energy-related issues, create opportunities for the residential, commercial, and/or industrial sectors to reduce their overall energy use and costs.

What to Do

1. Implement a community energy campaign. **(10 points)**

   All elements must be completed to receive credit.

   a. Identify a target audience and area of efficiency on which to focus your energy campaign. Your target audience may be residents, local business owners, or multifamily property owners, and your area of focus may be solar-energy, renewable thermal, electric vehicles, renewable heating and cooling, etc. Low- to moderate-income (LMI) residents spend upwards of 10% of their income on energy costs, creating a crushing energy burden. Consider targeting LMI residents where energy efficiency and renewable energy can make a greater impact. Partnering with the CT Green Bank, the utilities, and vendors that serve LMI communities can greatly enhance outreach efforts.

   Submit: A description of your campaign's target audience and goal.

   Timeframe for Credit: Eligible for new action credit and rolling credit. This action falls under the action type "Outreach, Education, Programs, Campaigns, Recognition/Designation in External Program, and Funding" (see "Timeframe for Credit" Guidance Document for submission requirements).

   b. Select or design a campaign to educate your audience about available programs that encourage implementation of energy efficiency measures designed for that audience. A campaign must organize multiple activities and demonstrate multiple outreach efforts. Consider how useful resources or educational programs are to residents of different income and education levels. For example: undertake a thermalize campaign to encourage residents to install renewable heating and cooling technologies; run a solarize campaign to encourage residents to install solar PV; and/or run an energize campaign to encourage residents to undertake energy assessments. Partner with local lenders to educate residents about the availability of energy financing options and loans that can address solar, energy efficiency and health and safety issues. Support clean energy for low-income residents by promoting subscriptions to a shared clean energy facility, like Solar For All. See examples of campaigns in the "Resources" section.

   Submit: The outline of your campaign and steps taken to achieve the campaign mission.

   Timeframe for Credit: Eligible for new action credit and rolling credit. This action falls under the action type "Outreach, Education, Programs, Campaigns, Recognition/Designation in External Program, and Funding" (see "Timeframe for Credit" Guidance Document for submission requirements).

   c. Carry out the campaign.

Submit: A description of how the audience was engaged throughout the campaign, plus information about the number of participants, time period offered, impact (if possible), and lessons learned.

Timeframe for Credit: Eligible for new action credit and rolling credit. This action falls under the action type "Outreach, Education, Programs, Campaigns, Recognition/Designation in External Program, and Funding" (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

Depending on the campaign selected, any number of municipal department staff should be involved, as well as a local energy task force or other relevant committee.

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)
- 2021 Sustainable CT Community Match Fund

Resources

Toolkits, Calculators, Guidance Documents

- Pre-development financing for energy & health & safety measures. The Connecticut Green Bank offers two pre-development loan products for multifamily buildings that provide property owners an affordable, low-risk, solution to analyze, design and arrange financing for green energy upgrades.
- Term Financing in the form of several different financial products are available for multifamily property owners interested in making energy efficiency, clean energy and health and safety upgrades to their buildings.
- GoSolar CT – GoSolarCT is an excellent resource for homeowners looking to go solar, from finding a contractor to learning about the process – this website is a one stop shop for educating residents all about solar.
- Smart-E loans for residential clean energy and energy efficiency improvements. Through participating local lenders, the Smart-E loan is a multi-measure loan that finances clean energy and energy efficiency

improvements for single family residences including natural gas conversion, renewable heating & cooling, solar, electrical vehicle chargers and storage. Customers that bundle certain technologies receive discounted rates. There is also a credit challenged version of the loan for credit-challenged customers.
- Energize CT Financing – Energize CT loans finance a wide range of measures, including home heating equipment and energy conservation measures including rates as low as 0% for some products.
- Energize Connecticut™ campaign – Work with utility to promote Energize Connecticut™ program offerings to homeowners and businesses throughout the community. Home Energy Solutions (HES) is a subsidized energy assessment program for homeowners that can lead to savings on upgrading homes with energy saving measures.
- Solarize CT – Implement an 18 week Solarize campaign to increase residential solar within a town/city. Campaign includes participation in choosing a solar installer and working with non-profit Smart Power to provide educational opportunities and outreach to the community members. It offers discounted pricing, too.
- C-PACE – C-PACE allows building owners to finance qualifying energy efficiency and clean energy improvements through a voluntary assessment on their property tax bill. Property owners pay for the improvements over time through this additional charge on their property tax bill, and the repayment obligation transfers automatically to the next owner if the property is sold. Capital provided under the C-PACE program is secured by a lien on the property, so low-interest capital can be raised from the private sector.
- Green Bank PPA – The Green Bank Solar Power Purchase Agreement (PPA) allows building owners to experience the benefits of solar energy without the responsibility of owning or maintaining a solar PV system. With Connecticut Green Bank's Solar PPA program, you buy the energy you need with no monthly fee.
- Small Business Energy Advantage (SBEA) and New Construction program offerings provide businesses, developers, and other key community groups with access to financing, incentives and technical resources as they pertain to energy efficiency and conservation.
- EESmarts Curriculum Development for Schools – Work with local teachers to implement an EESmarts curriculum in local schools. Eesmarts is an energy efficiency and clean, renewable energy learning initiative funded by the Connecticut Energy Efficiency Fund. Each eesmarts lesson features materials for students, hands-on activities, detailed teacher guidebooks, extensions and evaluation tools. The lessons are flexible and interdisciplinary and the program fits seamlessly into any class curriculum.
- Acadia Center, "Community Energy Vision, Action Guide for Connecticut"
- CT Green Bank: No-cost technical support

Organizations and Relevant Programs

- EnergizeCT
- eeSmarts
- SolarizeCT
- Operation Fuel
- The Solarize Guidebook
- Enterprise Green Communities
- Stamford 2030 District
- Connecticut Green Building Council

Why This Matters

Achieving sustainability in your community is possible when you engage all sectors in meeting your energy use reduction goals and implementing actions. As members of local government, you have the power to bring stakeholders together to educate each other and build awareness of sustainability goals and opportunities in the community. You can help residents and businesses take advantage of programs that can reduce their environmental impact. Numerous existing programs are intended to reduce energy costs in various segments of the community, and a municipality often can participate in these programs at little to no cost.

Community resilience stems from healthy citizens. While, you, as a municipality, cannot afford to help every home or business owner reduce costs and become energy efficient, you can provide programs that assist residents without costing your city or town.

Benefits

Energy efficiency and conservation programs result in cleaner air, more affordable energy bills, and access to many financing, incentive, and technical resources.

Programs that help residents go solar decrease the burden on the electrical grid and help prevent brown-outs during peak demand. Providing residents with programs that help them save money and energy increases their satisfaction with their community and increases civic participation.

CT Success Stories

- Middletown - Oct 2019 Certification
- Scotland - Oct 2019 Certification
- Vernon - Oct 2019 Certification
- Windham - Oct 2019 Certification
- Bristol - Oct 2020 Certification
- Litchfield - Jun 2021 Certification