8.2 Provide Effective Community Communications

15 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

Strive to reach all members of your community through strategic communications about municipal operations, services, and events.

What to Do

1. Provide effective community communications. **(15 points)**

   All elements must be completed to receive credit.

   a. Develop your communications strategy. You should:

   - Inventory existing MUNICIPAL communication channels and assess their effectiveness;
   - Engage community stakeholders in the process of developing a municipal communications strategy to target audiences across your community;
   - Outline how, when, and where you will make information publicly available;
   - Describe how you will create and manage an accessible website and social media pages, an easily updatable community events calendar, and consider establishing a two-way communication channel for citizens to post content; and
   - Describe what type of information you will convey via printed or electronic brochures and booklets and why this is the best channel for such information.

   Submit: A copy of your communications strategy and a completed worksheet.

   Timeframe for Credit: Eligible for new action credit and rolling credit. This action falls under the action type "Websites, Maps, Inventories, Checklists, Assessments, Plans, Ordinances, Policies, Regulations and Resolutions" (see "Timeframe for Credit" Guidance Document for submission requirements).

   b. Implement your municipal communications strategy.

   Submit: A description of how your communications strategy is being implemented.

   Timeframe for Credit: Eligible for new action credit and rolling credit. This action falls under the action type "Websites, Maps, Inventories, Checklists, Assessments, Plans, Ordinances, Policies, Regulations and Resolutions" (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 communications, economic development, library, parks and recreation, senior services, and youth services departments, community organizations, local news media representatives, social media experts, and public school representatives may 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)
- 2021 Sustainable CT Community Match Fund

Resources

Toolkits, Calculators, Guidance Documents

- Edge Toolkit through the CT State Library
- GovLoop, "The Government's Guide to Using Facebook"
- Institute for Local Government, "Inclusive Public Engagement"
- Institute for Local Government, "Sample Social Media Policies"
- CT State Library: Division of Library Development, "Welcome: Library Services to Multi-Lingual Communities in Connecticut: About & Discussion List"

Why This Matters

Open communications are essential to making your local government inclusive. Effective community communications channels facilitate government transparency, build trust within your municipality, and create cohesion between and among community members. Information should be accessible to all, and should respond to changing demographics within a community.

Traditional communications channels send the stream of information in one direction: from the person or organization in power to the citizens. Using newer forms of media, you can foster a two-way flow of information that connects your municipality with citizens "where they are," and with the type of media available to them.

Benefits

By creating open communications channels, you will enable your citizens to stay abreast of local initiatives, policy developments, and events.

Making communications a two-way street will empower all residents in your community to speak their minds and participate in local government at whatever level is comfortable for them.

CT Success Stories

- East Hartford - Oct 2019 Certification
- Manchester - Oct 2019 Certification
- Middletown - Oct 2019 Certification
- Waterford - Oct 2019 Certification
- Bolton - Oct 2020 Certification
- Old Lyme - Oct 2020 Certification