

US EPA ARCHIVE DOCUMENT



Effective Practices for Implementing Local Climate and Energy Programs:

Community-Based Social Marketing

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?

Community-based social marketing (CBSM) uses direct neighbor-to-neighbor communication and influence to promote behavior change. In-person communications are often complemented by electronic social media tools.

WHY DO IT?

- Using existing, trusted community networks and relationships can inspire cost-effective “viral propagation” of messages.
- CBSM encourages and rewards peer advocates.
- A focus on small steps leading to bigger steps can create sustained behavior change over time.

WHAT WORKS?

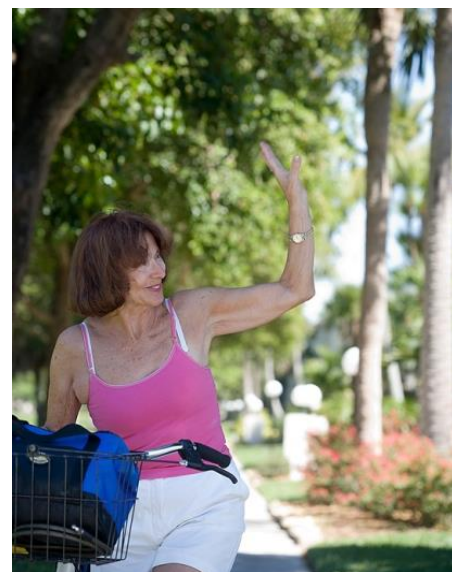
- Choose one action that you would like community members to take and focus the CBSM campaign on this action.
- Identify community members who are already taking the action. Learn about their challenges and tell the stories about how they overcame them.
- Develop a message that is appropriate for the community by working with neighborhood organizations, using stakeholder groups, or conducting pilot projects.
- Ask community leaders and volunteers to spread the word.
- Create “buzz” in the community through neighborhood events; friendly competitions; and free resources, such as events and materials.
- Show what others are doing through testimonials, yard signs, and other highly visible illustrations of community members taking action.
- Use personal pledges and be persistent with reminders (for example, send postcards).
- Make participation in your program easy and accessible.

WHAT SHOULD YOU WATCH OUT FOR?

- Beware of not fully implementing your strategy (for example, not keeping current with online posts and using static content instead of dynamic content).
- Avoid losing control of the content if your methods allow “open source” communication.

WHAT RESOURCES HAVE PROJECTS FOUND TO BE USEFUL?

- *Fostering Sustainable Behavior*, website and book by Doug McKenzie-Mohr:
www.cbsm.com



“Keep them accountable: Leverage the ‘social contract’ and peer pressure.”

Lindsay, Eugene SmartTrips, Oregon

“Too many items communicated means that nothing is communicated. Focus your message.”

Randy, New Jersey Sustainable Energy Efficiency Demonstration Projects, Cherry Hill