

US EPA ARCHIVE DOCUMENT



Effective Practices for Implementing Local Climate and Energy Programs:

Conducting and Evaluating Pilot Projects

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?

Pilot projects are an opportunity to “test the waters” for your project on a small scale, provide insight and data on what works, and adjust your strategy for full-scale implementation.

WHY DO IT?

- Pilots provide data and lessons for the expansion of sustainability initiatives.
- It is easier to widen a pilot than to jump into a project all at once.
- Starting with a small number of pilots allows you to target your services and focus your resources.
- Pilots provide examples for others to emulate and can demonstrate that your idea works. They also can be a source of testimonials for a wider roll-out.
- Data from a pilot establishes a baseline for future projects.

WHAT WORKS?

- Make sure that everyone involved—from program staff to participants—knows that it is an experiment and that it will be okay if things do not work out exactly as planned.
- Be open to trial and error, but make an effort to create an efficient and effective pilot from the get-go.
- Allow the design of the pilot to be flexible enough to adapt as uptake or information increases.
- Learn from similar projects in your region and use them as a source for what to try and what not to try.
- Be clear with the public that the pilot project is a valuable and necessary way to get questions about the project answered.

WHAT SHOULD YOU WATCH OUT FOR?

- A pilot may not provide an example to emulate if it falls short of its goals.
- Making the pilot program relevant to other communities can be a challenge. It can be hard to get beyond perceived differences.
- Don't think too small. Doing a pilot gives you the opportunity to attempt full-scale implementation.
- It can be difficult to run pilots with grants that have short timeframes and need quick results.

WHAT RESOURCES HAVE PROJECTS FOUND TO BE USEFUL?

- Clean Energy Works Portland energy efficiency pilot project:
www1.eere.energy.gov/buildings/betterbuildings/neighborhoods/pdfs/portland_pilot_evaluation_research_report_clean_energy_works.pdf



“Acquired data will establish a baseline for future projects.”

Climate Showcase Communities project lead

“Don’t be afraid to tweak the program if you see that it’s not working!”

Lindsay, Eugene SmartTrips, Oregon