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# Effective Practices for Implementing Local Climate and Energy Programs: *Working with Institutional Partners*

## 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?

Partnering with organizations, such as other jurisdictions, utilities, complementary programs, community-based organizations, and others, can help you implement your program and achieve your collective goals.

### WHY DO IT?

- Institutional partnerships extend your program's reach and effectiveness, and can give you credibility with a broader range of audiences.
- Partnerships allow sharing of best practices and fill gaps in capacity and services.
- Partners can provide access to new audiences, outreach and education opportunities, and potentially new sources of funding.

### WHAT WORKS?

- Focus on networking and ongoing relationship building (for example, through in-person meetings, social events) with people in organizations who have the time, resources, and interest to work with you.
- Understand partners' goals, skills, and constraints.
- Identify common goals and opportunities.
- Identify what your program offers partners. Help them fill gaps in their capacity and services.
- Set clear expectations and roles. Formalize commitments and collaboration in writing, if needed.
- Collaborate on cohesive messaging and watch for inconsistencies.

### WHAT SHOULD YOU WATCH OUT FOR?

- Ensure that partners are sharing accurate information about your program.
- Recognize that your partners may have varying levels of experience.
- Recognize that interest can wane if partners are not seeing the value.
- Anticipate competing agendas or priorities between your organization and your partners.
- Recognize that well-established programs may not have the flexibility to work with alternative or progressive programs and/or approaches.
- Anticipate that managing partnerships can be time intensive.

### WHAT RESOURCES HAVE PROJECTS FOUND TO BE USEFUL?

- EPA's Local Climate Action Framework, *Reach Out and Communicate* phase:  
[www.epa.gov/statelocalclimate/local/implementation/communicate.html](http://www.epa.gov/statelocalclimate/local/implementation/communicate.html)



*"You can gain new contacts, knowledge, and networks through working on a project with new partners."*

*Climate Showcase Communities program lead*

*"You can make a 'crazy quilt' of possible resources seem saner for the customer."*

*Sarah, Cold Climate Community Solutions, Duluth, Minnesota*