

US EPA ARCHIVE DOCUMENT



Effective Practices for Implementing Local Climate and Energy Programs: *Working with Students*

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?

Students, individually or in teams, are a volunteer workforce that offers resources to implement projects. In turn, these students are given a valuable hands-on learning experience, academic credit, and a career boost.

WHY DO IT?

- Engaging students helps build their job skills, resumes, and careers, while getting them excited about working in the climate and energy field.
- Students can bring energy, creativity, and knowledge of the latest technologies to a program, often at low or no cost.

WHAT WORKS?

- Make sure that students understand the big picture regarding your program and give them specific tasks to help you reach your goals.
- Leverage students' knowledge of the community to guide outreach.
- Get students out of the classroom and into the field so that they have context for the work that they are doing and can come up with better solutions based on hands-on experiences.
- Provide oversight and guidance. Have clear outlines, deadlines, and goals for student projects.
- Give students ownership of their projects and make them accountable.
- Collaborate with teachers first in order to build institutional support for your program so that it will last beyond short-term student projects.
- Seek teachers' advice on working with students.
- Use teams to tap disciplines from multiple college departments (for example, statistics, marketing, journalism, film, environmental studies).

WHAT SHOULD YOU WATCH OUT FOR?

- Students may need close mentoring, training, and clear tasks that meet their level of experience. Plan accordingly.
- Manage the scope of your project. Enthusiasm can lead to unachievable goals.
- Students may have competing priorities. Help them stay on track with regular check-ins.
- Make sure that you coordinate with semester or quarterly schedules.

WHAT RESOURCES HAVE PROJECTS FOUND TO BE USEFUL?

- The Student Conservation Corps, West Chester County, Pennsylvania:
www.blurb.com/books/2225230-the-student-conservation-corps



"Teachers like teaming up with community clients to do meaningful work."

Juliette, Humboldt County Waste Management Authority, California

"Give presentations to middle school science classes on renewable energy systems. For our program, this has gotten teachers and students interested in doing more."

Lisa, Green Homes Challenge, Frederick County, Maryland