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

Lessons Learned *by Communities for Communities*

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WHAT IS IT?

Energy utilities are well established and often have energy efficiency and environmental commitments to meet. They can be key partners, especially for local energy efficiency programs.

WHY DO IT?

- Community programs can help utilities reach people and disseminate information about renewable energy and energy efficiency incentives.
- Utilities can reach a wide audience and provide programs with extensive energy use data.
- Partnerships with utilities can add credibility to a project/program and provide access to technical expertise.

WHAT WORKS?

- Become familiar with state demand-side management and renewable energy requirements because they provide a key motive for utilities to work with local programs.
- Work with utility staff to design a project that advances common goals. Help them understand how your program adds value.
- Find the right contact at the utility, such as someone who sees the benefits that your organization or program can provide.
- Formalize your collaboration in writing.
- Invite utility representatives to participate in educational workshops.
- Leverage utility rebates by bundling them into program offerings.

WHAT SHOULD YOU WATCH OUT FOR?

- Utilities may have well-established programs that do not have the flexibility to work with alternative or progressive programs/approaches.
- Utilities face perceived and real constraints by state and public utility commission regulations.
- Some utilities may not be able to release data to third parties.
- Substantial reporting and administrative work may be required to access rebates for customers.

WHAT RESOURCES HAVE PROJECTS FOUND TO BE USEFUL?

- Public utility commissions' websites and proceedings
- Database of State Incentives for Renewables and Efficiency: www.dsireusa.org



“Utilities can provide a funding match or cash incentives to enhance program offerings.”

Laura, Tri-County Small Business Efficiency Program, Lewis and Clark County, Montana

“Build relationships with utilities to provide better information about rebate and incentive programs.”

Sabrina, Green Homes Challenge, Frederick County, Maryland