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Effective Practices for Implementing Local Climate and Energy Programs: *Working Across Ideological Differences*

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?

Within communities, people have varying views when it comes to climate change. Many communities have found ways to work across ideological differences and focus on common values and goals.

WHY DO IT?

- Broad, diverse support improves project credibility and provides momentum.
- Bridging differences is important for achieving your goals.
- Your program or project may serve a diverse constituency. You may need support and advocates from a variety of backgrounds.
- Initial skeptics can become your most powerful advocates. Listen to and learn from credible, diverse views.

WHAT WORKS?

- Seek out common values and goals.
- Listen patiently. Focus on what is driving people's interests and opinions, and address their priorities.
- Draw on people from the ideological groups that you are trying to work with to form stakeholder groups or advisory boards.
- Get support from your board, council, committee, or other management body when engaging audiences with a wide range of views.

WHAT SHOULD YOU WATCH OUT FOR?

- Avoid jargon that may not resonate across diverse audiences.
- Provide opportunities for everyone to join the conversation. Enlist good facilitators who can give everyone a voice.

WHAT RESOURCES HAVE PROJECTS FOUND TO BE USEFUL?

- Barrett Values Centre—Tools to help identify common values: www.valuescentre.com
- *Moral Ground: Ethical Action for a Planet in Peril*—Book and website on moral issues related to climate change: moralground.com



"You get an 'ah-ha!' moment when you find common ground!"

Sam, Central New York Climate Change Innovation Program, Central New York Regional Planning and Development Board

"We can't build showcase communities without working across ideological differences."

Carly, Energize Corvallis, Oregon

"Don't get too technical about greenhouse gas accounting with the wrong audience. (Hint: Almost no one is the right audience in many municipalities.)"

Emily, Red and Blue and Green All Over, Cary, North Carolina