

## PE9 Action: Local Climate Action Website

3 Points

### A. Why is this action important?

Maintaining a website about the local government's climate initiatives is a convenient and low-cost way to deliver information to community members. Such a website is a place where the local government can describe its participation in the Climate Smart Communities (CSC) program and other state programs that support clean energy and sustainability. Residents, businesses and other stakeholders can learn about their local government's climate action efforts, review progress reports, learn who is involved in the planning process, understand their role in achieving the local government's climate action goals, and learn about upcoming educational events and meetings.

### B. How to implement this action

Local governments should first consider their staff capacity to build and maintain the website; some may choose to hire a consultant who has the technical expertise to build the site. It is critical, however, that local government staff have the capacity to update the website with ease to keep it relevant and maintain its quality over time. The development of training materials, user guides, and web policies is recommended. For points under this CSC action, local governments must have updated their climate-related webpage(s) within the past year prior.

To implement this action, local governments must demonstrate that they have at least one webpage dedicated to local government and community efforts to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and adapt to climate change. At minimum, the webpage(s) must include the following components:

- A description of the local government's goals and projects related to local climate change mitigation and adaptation: This can include links to local reports and plans, such as GHG inventory reports, climate action plans, vulnerability assessments, and reports on progress made toward achieving GHG targets and other goals.
- Ways that residents and businesses in the community can participate in efforts led by the local government to reduce GHG emissions and build community resiliency to climate change
- A summary of actions that residents and businesses in the community can take to reduce their GHG emissions: This can include links to external resources that provide more information and describe the support available for actions related to, for example, energy efficiency, renewable energy, healthy vegetarian diets, and clean transportation options, such as electric vehicles.

Optional information or features to incorporate into the website include the following:

- Maps and information that describes local risk factors and areas vulnerable to climate hazards (and any related tracking of indicators)
- Descriptions of sponsors and partners involved in local climate action
- Calendar of events related to climate change (hosted by the local government or its partners)
- Webpage or form for people to enter feedback and ideas
- Tools to help users find resources and contacts, such as tool kits, indices, and/or search functions
- Local, state, national, and international resources and links related to climate change

### C. Time frame, project costs, and resource needs

Implementing this action may take a couple months to a year depending on whether the local government seeks to create an entirely new website with a new design, or webpages as part of the government's existing website. The number of pages and functionality of the site will also dictate the cost and time frame for building the site. Project costs may include staff time, consultants' time, and hosting the website. Local governments should assign a staff member to regularly monitor the site and update the site's content.

#### **D. Which local governments implement this action? Which departments within the local government are most likely to have responsibility for this?**

This action is applicable to all types of local governments. The department or office with the responsibility for leading the climate efforts is most likely to be responsible for this action. Other potentially responsible departments could include the chief elected official's office, environmental educators or public affairs specialists, or the departments of environment or planning.

#### **E. How to obtain points for this action**

Three points are available for applicants who create a website that meets the minimum requirements described above.

#### **F. What to submit**

Submit a link to at least one webpage that contains the three minimum components: 1) a description of the local government's efforts related to local climate change mitigation and adaptation, 2) how local residents and businesses can participate in those efforts led by the local government, and 3) a summary of actions that residents and businesses in the community can take to reduce their GHG emissions. These components can be on separate webpages.

In addition, provide a description of new content that was posted to the website within the past year. If available, also submit any staff training materials, user guides, and/or web policies.

All CSC action documentation is available for public viewing after an action is approved. Action submittals should not include any information or documents that are not intended to be viewed by the public.

#### **G. Links to additional resources or best practices**

- [Ulster County, NY, Department of the Environment, Sustainability & Energy Webpage](#)
- [Town of Lake George, NY, Green Initiatives](#)
- [Albany, NY, Mayor's Office of Energy and Sustainability](#)
- [New Rochelle, NY, Sustainability Webpage](#)
- [New York Climate Change Science Clearinghouse](#)

#### **H. Recertification requirements**

The recertification requirements are the same as the initial certification requirements.