

PE9 Action: Social Media

3 Points

A. Why is this action important?

Social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, YouTube and Tumblr are used to connect audiences of all demographics, and to inform and engage the public on events as they are happening. It is important to analyze how these platforms can help the local government distribute information about the community's energy and climate efforts, and solicit participation and input from the public in real-time.

B. How to implement this action

Using social media to engage the community can be a low-cost and effective method, but it is important for local governments to consider which platform will best serve their needs as well as their capacity to build and maintain the account(s). Local governments should take the following considerations into account when deciding how to use social media:

- Who is the target audience? Which social media platforms are they most likely to use?
- What type of information must be communicated?
- Which platform(s) provide the best framework for what the local government wants to do? E.g., If the local government wants to get information out quickly in real-time, a platform such as Twitter may be useful.
- What is the staff capacity to build and maintain the accounts?
- What local, regional, or national organizations' or individuals' accounts should the local government connect to for the greatest exposure?
- At what frequency does the local government want to post content (e.g., a couple times a day, once a day, every couple days)?
- Does the press office have any requirements or policies around using social media that must be considered?
- What mechanisms have been established for rapid review?

Local governments should consider developing guidelines for using and managing the selected social media accounts. The guidelines should cover the process for updating the accounts, any necessary approvals for posting certain types of updates, and any standard language or communications policies relevant to using the account.

Points for this Climate Smart Communities (CSC) action are available to local governments that create at least one social media account (such as a Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, or Tumblr) and use it to inform the community about local government efforts and engage the community in accomplishing the climate-related actions led by the local government has committed. Applicants must show that new content has been posted within one year prior to the application date.

C. Time frame, project costs, and resource needs

Building a social media account can take as little as an hour or up to a few days depending on how much content the local government seeks to post and how many layers of people are involved with creating, approving, and posting content and connecting to other accounts. Costs associated with building and maintaining social media accounts may include staff time and annual fees to operate the accounts.

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 any local government. Departments that are most likely to be involved can vary and may include the mayor's office, sustainability or energy departments, planning departments or boards and committees that manage energy and climate efforts in the local government.

E. How to obtain points for this action

Three points are available for completing this action in a manner consistent with the requirements described here.

F. What to submit

Submit the website address of at least one social media account managed by the local government. Demonstrate how the accounts have been used to support clean energy and climate initiatives. New content must have been posted within one year prior to the application date. If applicable, local governments should submit their social media guidelines as well.

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

- [Dobbs Ferry, NY, Renew Dobbs Ferry Facebook Page](#)
- [Bedford, NY, Energize Bedford Facebook Page](#)
- [Albany, NY, Mayor's Office of Energy and Sustainability Facebook Page](#)
- [Albany, NY Mayor's Office of Energy and Sustainability Twitter Account](#)

H. Recertification requirements

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