

Climate Smart Communities Certification Program



Certification Manual

PLEDGE ELEMENT 1: PLEDGE TO BE A CLIMATE SMART COMMUNITY

Adopt the pledge to reduce GHG (GHG) emissions and adapt to a changing climate. Designate a point person and a Climate Smart Communities task force. Join a regional or national climate campaign focused on reducing GHG emissions or enhancing sustainability.

Action #	Action Name	Action Pathway Phase	Possible Points	Priority
Pledge Element 1: Pledge to be a Climate Smart Community			31	
1.1	Pass a resolution adopting the CSC Pledge	Commit	4	v (Req)
1.2	Create a community task force focused on climate change mitigation and adaptation	Build capacity	8	v
1.3	Appoint a Climate Smart Community coordinator	Build capacity	8	v (Req)
1.4	Create an internal green team focused on climate change mitigation and adaptation	Build capacity	8	v
1.5	Join a national or regional climate campaign or program	Build capacity	3	

Please note: The recertification requirements for each action are subject to change in future versions of the CSC Certification Manual.

1.1 PASS A RESOLUTION ADOPTING THE CSC PLEDGE

Action pathway phase: Commit

Eligibility timeline: Any time prior to the application date

Total possible points: 4

Required priority action for all certification levels

A. Why is this action important?

To ensure commitment at the highest level of the local government, the legislative body of each interested community must pass a resolution adopting the CSC pledge in its entirety.

B. How to implement this action

The local legislative body must adopt a resolution that adopts the CSC Pledge in its entirety. However, the president of each of the five boroughs of New York City may adopt the CSC pledge on behalf of the

borough by proclamation. Local governments may amend the preamble to the pledge, but the pledge itself must remain intact. Questions regarding adoption or rescission of local resolutions may be referred to the Department of State Office of General Counsel (<http://www.dos.ny.gov/cnsl/counsel.htm>).

C. Time frame, project costs, and resource needs

Implementing this action takes roughly the same time to draft and adopt as other resolutions, the project costs and resources are nominal and dependent upon staff time.

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 effort would most likely be led by the department that is responsible for climate action activities, with approval from the top elected official and support from the clerk or the office responsible for supporting the legislative body.

E. How to obtain points for this action

A local government must adopt the CSC Pledge through its typical legislative resolution adoption process.

F. What to submit

Local governments must submit a certified copy of the adopted resolution, with adoption date clearly noted, and any relevant clerk stamps or signatures. The resolution must have been adopted prior to the application date.

G. Links to additional resources or best practices

- Climate Smart Communities, CSC Pledge and Model CSC Pledge Resolution: <http://www.dec.ny.gov/energy/65494.html>
- Climate Smart Communities, A Guide for Local Officials: http://www.dec.ny.gov/docs/administration_pdf/cscguide.pdf

H. Recertification requirements

Unless the resolution is rescinded by the local legislative body, the community will remain a CSC.

1.2 CREATE A COMMUNITY CLIMATE SMART COMMUNITY TASK FORCE FOCUSED ON CLIMATE CHANGE MITIGATION AND ADAPTATION

Action pathway phase: Build capacity

Eligibility timeline: Currently active

Total possible points: 8

Priority action

A. Why is this action important?

To engage the public, and promote transparency and accountability, local governments should form a community task force consisting of local officials, residents, local government staff members, and other stakeholders to support the planning and implementation of climate action strategies. The task force will act as an advisory board or steering committee, to advise the local government in its climate action actions.

B. How to implement this action

Invite stakeholders from the community that include residents, local government elected officials, local government staff representatives from relevant departments, businesses, academia, philanthropic organizations, organized labor, faith-based groups, and other local interest groups. The task force will serve three purposes: to help the local government define the objectives of the process to develop the climate action plan (or related plan), to contribute technical expertise and other resources to help the local government complete the plan, and to assist with engagement of the public in the creation and implementation of the plan. In addition to the overarching community task force, local governments can consider forming subcommittees of the task force, in order to research or focus on specific details of a strategy or component of a plan. Questions regarding requirements under the Open Meetings Law may be referred to the Department of State Committee on Open Government (<http://www.dos.ny.gov/coog/>).

C. Time frame, project costs, and resources needs

Establishing a task force should take no more than a couple of months. The project costs are related to staff time. The individual coordinating the task force should have a good understanding of stakeholder groups in the community and who from those stakeholder groups will be best suited to provide the technical expertise to help develop and implement the plan and/or climate action strategies (e.g., a small business owner that sits on the external advisory board can commit to helping engage other small businesses in energy reduction measures).

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

Applicable to all types of local governments. The department or office with the responsibility for managing the climate action program is typically responsible for convening and managing the community task force. The task force could be a newly formed group of relevant stakeholders, or it could be an existing group, such as a conservation advisory council, that has climate mitigation and adaptation included in its mission or mandate.

E. How to obtain points for this action

Local governments should form a community task force and actively convene this group to support the development and implementation of climate action strategies. To receive points for this action, local governments must demonstrate that the task force has met at least twice during the year prior to the submittal date.

F. What to submit

Local governments should submit a copy of the memorandum, resolution or executive order establishing the task force, a list of the task force members and the organizations they represent, and meeting minutes from two of the task force meetings held within the past year. If another local committee, e.g., an energy task force or conservation advisory council is to serve as the CSC task force, the local government should submit a copy of the resolution or executive order indicating so.

G. Links to additional resources or best practices

- DEC's How to Set Up a Climate Smart Community Coordinator or Task Force: <http://www.dec.ny.gov/energy/65489.html>

- ICLEI, Creating a Climate Action Plan Task Force: <http://www.icleiusa.org/action-center/planning/climate-action-planning/creating-a-climate-action-plan-task-force>

H. Recertification requirements

The recertification requirements are the same as the initial certification requirements, although local governments are not required to pass a new resolution or amend the existing resolution, if one exists. To qualify for recertification, local governments must demonstrate that the task force has met at least twice during the year prior to the submittal date and provide an update to the membership list.

1.3 APPOINT A CLIMATE SMART COMMUNITY COORDINATOR

Action pathway phase: Build capacity

Eligibility timeline: Currently active / position filled

Total possible points: 8

Required priority action for all certification levels

A. Why is this action important?

To ensure steady progress on local climate action, a staff member or team should take ownership over the climate action program and ensure that progress is ongoing. The CSC coordinator can be a part-time or full-time position within local government, or a volunteer could assume the CSC coordinator role. In most cases, the CSC coordinator would chair the CSC task force (Action 1.2), be a member of the green team (Action 1.4) and serve as a liaison between the CSC task force and the chief executive officer and other elected officials.

B. How to implement this action

Identify the individual responsible for climate action activities.

C. Time frame, project costs, and resources needs

Determine the individual best suited to serve as the CSC coordinator taking into account his or her capacity to execute the tasks associated with this role. Depending on the responsibilities for the position, determine if it is most appropriate to create a new full-time position or assign the responsibilities to an existing staff member. Consider the staff member's availability for additional responsibilities, knowledge of climate and sustainability topics, experience with project management and coordination, and experience with leading and facilitating task forces and working groups. Neighboring small local governments may consider collectively hiring one dedicated coordinator to share.

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

Applicable to all types of local governments. The office of the highest elected official typically has the responsibility of assigning someone to this role.

E. How to obtain points for this action

Local governments should appoint a staff member to act in the role of CSC coordinator.

F. What to submit

Local governments should submit documentation demonstrating that a staff member or volunteer has been appointed to serve as the local government's CSC coordinator and is actively functioning in this role. Documentation could include an executive memorandum, resolution, meeting minutes, job description, or an organizational chart. The position must be currently filled to earn points for this action.

G. Links to additional resources or best practices

- DEC's How to Set Up a Climate Smart Coordinator or Task Force: <http://www.dec.ny.gov/energy/65489.html>
- ICLEI Climate and Sustainability Coordinator Job Descriptions: <http://www.icleiusa.org/action-center/financing-staffing/sample-job-descriptions>

H. Recertification requirements

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

1.4 CREATE AN INTERNAL GREEN TEAM FOCUSED ON CLIMATE MITIGATION AND ADAPTATION

Action pathway phase: Build capacity

Eligibility timeline: Currently active

Total possible points: 8

Priority action

A. Why is this action important?

To drive activity, engagement must occur at many levels in all departments. Local governments should create an internal green team and involve staff members from all relevant departments in the climate action planning and implementation process, for developing both a government operations and community climate action plan. Some members of the green team can also be members of the CSC task force (Action 1.2). This overlap will create a platform through which staff can exchange ideas and coordinate efforts, ultimately creating a clearer path forward and saving time and money.

B. How to implement this action

The chief elected official should direct relevant department directors to assign at least one staff person from each department to serve on the green team, explaining the creation of this internal group and its purpose. Green team members should be involved in implementing energy efficiency, climate action, or sustainability strategies for their department. The chief elected official should also assign a green team chair. The green team chair may be the CSC coordinator if that coordinator is a municipal employee.

C. Time frame, project costs, and resource needs

Creating a green team should take roughly one to two months between the initial executive direction to the department directors and the first meeting. Costs and resources needed to create a green team are nominal and are generally related only to staff time.

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 local governments. The green team is led by a person appointed by the chief executive officer and could be the CSC coordinator (if a local government employee) or the head of one of the participating departments. The chief elected official should convene the green team initially and provide its charge. The green team is typically composed of representatives from departments such as transportation, public works, environment, sanitation, planning, economic development, and others.

E. How to obtain points for this action

Local governments should form a green team with a group of representatives from various local government departments, and actively convene this group to support the development and implementation of climate action strategies. Green team meetings may be part of other recurring meetings, such as department head meetings but should be held on a regular basis.

F. What to submit

Local governments should submit a list of green team members, agendas, and meeting minutes, demonstrating the active involvement of the green team in the development and/or implementation of climate action strategies within the past year. The green team must have met at least three times within the year prior to the submittal date to receive points for this action and submit the required documentation for those three meetings.

G. Links to additional resources or best practices

- DEC's How to Set Up a Climate Smart Coordinator or Task Force: <http://www.dec.ny.gov/energy/65489.html>
- ICLEI, Creating a Climate Action Plan Task Force: <http://www.icleiusa.org/action-center/planning/climate-action-planning/creating-a-climate-action-plan-task-force>
- Sustainable New Jersey Green Team Resources: <http://www.sustainablejersey.com/grants-resources/green-team-resources-and-presentations/>
- Sustainable Maryland, Growing Your Green Team Guidebook: http://www.sustainablejersey.com/fileadmin/media/Grants_and_Resources/Green_Team_Resources/Getting_Your_Green_Team_Started/SMC_Green_Team_Handbook_Sept2011.pdf

H. Recertification requirements

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

1.5 JOIN A NATIONAL OR REGIONAL CLIMATE CAMPAIGN OR PROGRAM

Action pathway phase: Build capacity

Eligibility timeline: Currently active

Total possible points: 3

A. Why is this action important?

Joining a national or regional campaign allows a local government to further demonstrate its commitment to climate action, share best practices, learn from others, and receive direct technical assistance, as applicable.

B. How to implement this action

Research regional, state, and national energy and climate campaigns that provide a platform for the local government to obtain resources to help further its energy and climate goals. Resources can include peer-to-peer support, tools, sample policies, guidance documents, etc.

C. Time frame, project costs, and resource needs

Local government staff should spend no more than a few hours researching campaigns, obtaining approval to join them from their manager (if necessary), and subscribing to the campaigns. Costs and resource needs are dependent on the program; some require membership fees and detailed reporting. Staff time will also depend on the program.

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 local governments. Typically, this is led by the CSC Coordinator or the green team.

E. How to obtain points for this action

Make a commitment to or join another regional or national campaign with a demonstrated commitment to reduction of greenhouse gas emissions and adaptation to effects of climate change. In addition to participating in the Climate Smart Communities program, local governments are encouraged to be actively involved in at least one additional climate campaign or program. Possible campaigns or programs include, but are not limited to, the following:

- ICLEI-Local Governments for Sustainability USA: <http://www.icleiusa.org/>
- The Climate Registry: <http://www.theclimateregistry.org/>
- Northern Westchester Energy Action Coalition: <http://www.nweac.org/>
- Southern Westchester Energy Action Consortium: <http://www.sweac.org/>
- Urban Sustainability Directors Network: <http://usdn.org/home.html?returnUrl=%2findex.html>
- STAR Communities: <http://www.starcommunities.org/>
- Carbon Disclosure Project Cities Program: <https://www.cdproject.net/en-US/Programmes/Pages/cdp-cities.aspx>

- ICLEI Climate Resilient Communities:
http://www.icleiusa.org/climate_and_energy/Climate_Adaptation_Guidance/climate-resilient-communities-program

F. What to submit

Provide a list of campaigns or programs joined with the date joined and demonstration of the local government's active engagement within the past year such as membership invoices, summary of services obtained, report on progress of actions related to campaign, presentations or materials used or delivered to and from the campaign. If the campaign or program is not included in the above list, provide a description of how the campaign supports climate efforts. Campaigns that deny consensus climate science or advocate maladaptive responses to climate change are not eligible.

G. Links to additional resources or best practices

Links for relevant campaigns and programs are provided above.

H. Recertification requirements

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