

July 08
Strengthening Local Energy Committees
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- 1) ***Think big, start small:*** Start with small, manageable projects that will lead to relatively near-term success, are highly visible, and will give your committee a sense of accomplishment.
- 2) ***Understand and build upon people's strengths:*** Everyone has certain skills, knowledge, and interests – and these are oftentimes complementary. Find out what people like to do and what they are good at – and then identify concrete projects that you folks can work on to apply their skills/strengths.
- 3) ***Understand what people value and what they feel is at risk:*** People are drawn to action when they feel that something that the value is at risk of being lost or diminished. You can tap into that motivation by understanding what folks care about.
- 4) ***Undertake broad educational events to raise awareness and identify potential folks to serve on your committee:*** There are people in your community who are interested in doing something to address energy/climate action – they just need an opportunity to come together. You can hold public informational forums, show environmental-related movies, or invite a speaker on an energy/climate change related topic. Then, publicize it broadly throughout the community. Folks who are interested in the topic will attend. Make sure you have a sign-up sheet for your committee, and announce the date and time of your next meeting. Be sure to make follow-up calls to participants.
- 5) ***Solicit support of town elected officials at the outset:*** Selectboard/city council members hold the keys to many local actions – whether it is approving a budget item, getting an item on the town warning, and adopting a town resolution or ordinance, among others. Solicit the support of elected officials at a very early stage to inform them of your efforts and solicit their ideas on what your priorities should be.
- 6) ***Build coalitions and collaborative efforts:*** You don't have to do it all by yourself! Contact other organizations/institutions within your communities and find out how they might like to get involved in energy/climate action, identify where your interests converge, and undertake joint activities. Whether it is schools/students, local civic/community groups, elected officials, or local retailers– the opportunities are there.
- 7) ***Focus on municipal energy use:*** A great to get your elected officials' attention to help them reduce municipal energy use/costs. Oftentimes, local governments don't even know what their annual energy bill is. You can start by compiling energy bills from building energy use, town vehicles, and lighting bills – and show how these costs have risen over the last 5-10 years. Then, start to tackle one municipal energy use at a time –whether it is having an audit done on town buildings or inventorying municipal street lights.