



## Innovation: New Innovative Actions

3 – 18  
Points

### A. Why is this action important?

Climate change mitigation and adaptation are evolving fields with new technologies, policy solutions, and programmatic solutions being developed around the country and around the world. Local governments are encouraged to implement innovative solutions that achieve the same goals as the Climate Smart Communities (CSC) program but are not included in the list of CSC certification actions. Innovative projects are not only beneficial for the immediate community, but for local governments across the state, as local leaders are encouraged to share best practices and learn from each other. This action is also important because it adds flexibility to the CSC Certification program and helps it expand and improve over time. Submittals under this action may become the basis for new actions that are added to the CSC program in the future.

### B. How to implement this action

This action offers points for innovative projects that are substantially different from any of the actions that are part of the existing list of CSC certification actions. Applicants for this action should closely examine the full list of CSC certification actions to confirm that their innovative project is not related to an existing action. (If a project is related to an existing CSC action and it represents an innovative *approach* to implementing that action, local governments should apply under [PE11 Action: Innovative Approaches to Existing CSC Actions](#))

To be eligible for points, the innovative project must have a significant impact on at least one of these three CSC goals: reduction of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, enhancing community resiliency to climate change, and building a local green economy at the local level. As much as possible, applicants under this action should measure the impact of the innovative project and provide information on its benefits community. For example, where applicable, the submittal should include descriptions of the associated GHG reductions, climate resiliency benefits (such as the number of people or the value of assets that are better protected from extreme weather because of the project), and jobs created.

Projects that are very narrowly focused or have minimal benefits to the broader community are not likely to be deemed eligible for points under this CSC action. Projects that are focused on planning are less likely to qualify for points than other types of projects. Measuring the benefits of a planning process or a planning document is often less straightforward than measuring the benefits of a new infrastructure project or the impact of implementing a new local law or policy, for example.

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

The time frame, costs, and resource needs depend on the type of action. However, an innovative action does not necessarily must have a high level of effort to implement. Many innovative solutions involve partnerships or other forms of collaboration that seek to minimize the costs and level of effort for a community to implement.

### 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 with responsibility for the action depends on the type of action.

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

Points are available under this action through implementing an innovative project that is consistent with the guidelines described above. Points are tiered based on the benefits under the three following categories.

	POSSIBLE POINTS
Reduces GHG emissions	3
Enhances community resilience to climate change	3
Helps build a green economy at the local level	3

Local governments may submit information for up to two projects under this action in the same application, if each project is unique and unrelated. As a result, the maximum number of possible points is 18, assuming both innovative projects have benefits across all three of the categories above and each is therefore eligible for nine points.

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

Submit documentation demonstrating that the project has been completed, and an explanation of how the project is innovative and provides a significant benefit to the community, as described above. The action must have been implemented within ten years prior to the application date to be eligible for points.

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**

Resources on best practices can be found throughout the list of CSC certification actions. Reviewing the resources under each CSC pledge element may inspire new innovative solutions.

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

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



## Innovation: Innovative Approaches to Existing CSC Actions

5 Points

10 Points

### A. Why is this action important?

Climate change mitigation and adaptation are evolving fields with new technologies, policy solutions, and programmatic solutions being developed around the country and around the world. The Climate Smart Communities (CSC) Certification program aims to provide useful and up-to-date guidance, but creative local leaders occasionally develop innovative approaches that are not covered in the current CSC guidance for a given certification action. Local governments are encouraged to develop innovative ways to implement actions that are part of the CSC Certification program. This innovation helps the CSC program identify new strategies that should be added to existing actions to make the guidance more effective and aligned with how local governments approach the challenge of climate change. This action also adds flexibility to the CSC program and enables local governments to tailor strategies to their local unique circumstances.

### B. How to implement this action

This action is focused on the use of novel approaches to implementing one of the existing actions in the CSC Certification program. An innovative approach could be a new financing strategy, partnership, policy mechanism, or other new means of implementing one of the existing CSC certification actions. The innovative approach should be closely aligned with one of the existing CSC actions under one of the 10 CSC Pledge Elements. For example, the innovative approach should achieve very similar goals and be focused on the same sector as the existing CSC action. (If the innovative approach or project is *not* related to an existing CSC action and it represents a wholly new and innovative action, local governments should apply under [PE11 Action: New Innovative Actions](#))

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

The time frame, costs, and resource needs depend on the type of action. However, an innovative action or approach does not necessarily need to have a high level of effort to implement. Many innovative solutions involve partnerships or other forms of collaboration that seek to minimize the costs and level of effort for a community to implement.

### 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 with responsibility for the action depends on the type of action.

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

Five points are available for applicants that develop and implement an innovative approach to an existing CSC certification action in a manner that is consistent with the guidelines above. Local governments may submit information for up to two innovative approaches under this action in the same application, if each approach is unique and unrelated. As a result, the maximum number of possible points is 10. The points for this action are awarded in addition to the points the local government can earn for the existing CSC action itself (i.e., the action that is under one of the 10 CSC Pledge Elements).

### F. What to submit

Specify the name of the CSC certification action to which the innovative approach has been applied. Submit documentation demonstrating that the innovative approach has been implemented and has generated benefits that are

aligned with the goals of the CSC pledge element associated with the existing CSC action. The innovative approach must have been implemented within ten years of the application date to be eligible for points.

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**

Resources on best practices can be found throughout the list of CSC certification actions. Reviewing the resources under each CSC pledge element may inspire innovative approaches.

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

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