



PE1 Action: CSC Task Force

20 Points



BRONZE MANDATORY



SILVER MANDATORY

A. Why is this action important?

Success at the local level relies on a team of local officials, professionals, and stakeholders that are knowledgeable about the local decision-making process, and can promote and support the plans, policies, and programs that are part of the Climate Smart Communities (CSC) Certification program.

B. How to implement this action

The CSC task force serves as a central body of leadership that promotes and supports climate mitigation and adaptation in the community. The CSC task force often acts as an advisory board or steering committee that advises and collaborates with the local government to accomplish plans, programs, and activities that are part of the CSC Certification program. The task force should consist of, at minimum, community members and municipal representatives (staff and/or elected officials). Some communities may want to invite representatives from relevant local boards, organizations, and businesses to join the task force. In addition to the overarching community task force, local governments can consider forming subcommittees to focus on specific plans or programs.

Questions regarding requirements under the Open Meetings Law may be referred to the New York State [Department of State Committee on Open Government](#).

C. Time frame, project costs, and resources needs

Establishing a task force should take no more than a couple of months. Any project costs are related to staff time. 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 as part of its mission. The local CSC coordinator (as per the “CSC Coordinator” action under PE1) is typically responsible for convening and managing the task force. 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 climate action strategies; e.g., a small business owner that sits on the task force can 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?

This action is applicable to all types of local governments. The chief elected official or legislative body can appoint key individuals from the local government to serve on the task force, as well as any other individuals or representatives from local organizations that are well suited to provide the technical expertise to help promote, develop, and implement CSC actions.

E. How to obtain points for this action

To receive points for this action, local governments must demonstrate that the task force includes representatives from the local government (staff and/or elected officials) and community members, and that it has met at least twice during the year prior to the certification application date.

F. What to submit

Local governments should submit the following: 1) A copy of the resolution, executive memorandum, or executive order establishing the CSC task force, 2) A list of the task force members and the organizations they represent, and 3) Meeting minutes, including sign-in sheets or other records of attendance, from two 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, executive memorandum, or executive order indicating this responsibility.

All 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

- [DEC How to Set Up a Climate Smart Community Coordinator or Task Force](#)
- [Sustainable Maryland, Growing Your Green Team Guidebook](#): This in-depth guide is from Sustainable Maryland, a certification program for municipalities in the state of Maryland. It provides guidance on both forming a local team and making it more effective over time. While there are some differences in municipal structures between Maryland and New York, and between the two programs, much of this handbook's content is relevant for CSC task forces.

H. Recertification requirements

The recertification requirements are the same as the initial certification requirements, with the exception that applicants are not required to issue a new resolution, executive memorandum, or executive order, or amend the existing directive.



PE1 Action: CSC Coordinator

10 Points



BRONZE MANDATORY



SILVER MANDATORY

A. Why is this action important?

To support steady progress on local climate mitigation and adaptation, it is helpful to have a coordinator to serve as a point of contact for the Climate Smart Communities (CSC) program and facilitate project implementation.

B. How to implement this action

Select and appoint an individual to be responsible for coordinating the activities of the CSC task force and associated climate mitigation and adaptation activities. The CSC coordinator can be a local government representative (staff or elected official), a contractor hired by the local government, or a volunteer from the community. The coordinator would generally be the chair (or, at minimum, be a member) of the CSC task force, and serve as a liaison between the CSC task force and the chief executive officer and other officials.

C. Time frame, project costs, and resources needs

Determine the individual best suited to serve as the CSC coordinator by considering 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 position or assign the responsibilities to an existing staff member, contractor, or volunteer. Consider the person's availability for additional responsibilities, knowledge of climate and sustainability topics, experience with project management and coordination, and experience with 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?

This action is applicable to all types of local governments. The chief executive officer typically has the responsibility of assigning someone to this role, although the governing body may take on this responsibility.

E. How to obtain points for this action

In order to earn points, a local government must define the responsibilities of the CSC coordinator and appoint a staff member, contractor, or volunteer to act in this role. The coordinator may be appointed by the governing body or by the chief executive officer (or by the chief executive's designee).

F. What to submit

Local governments should submit documentation demonstrating that a staff member, contractor, or volunteer has been appointed to serve as the local government's CSC coordinator and is actively functioning in this role. At minimum, documentation should include an executive memorandum or resolution appointing the coordinator and describing his or her responsibilities. Submitted documents should be dated and name the specific individual assigned as CSC coordinator. The position must be currently filled to earn points for this action.

All 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

- [DEC's How to Set Up a Climate Smart Coordinator or Task Force](#)

H. Recertification requirements

At recertification, applicants should provide evidence that the CSC coordinator has been active in implementing CSC projects and participating in CSC task force meetings.

PE1 Action: National/Regional Climate Program

3 Points

A. Why is this action important?

In addition to participating in the Climate Smart Communities (CSC) program, local governments may choose to be involved in other climate programs that offer access to a broader network or a different set of resources. 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 task is led by the CSC coordinator.

E. How to obtain points for this action

Join another regional or national campaign with a demonstrated commitment to reduction of greenhouse gas emissions and adaptation to effects of climate change. Possible campaigns or programs include, but are not limited to, the following:

Examples of National Programs

- [Under2 Coalition MOU](#)
- [The Global Covenant of Mayors for Climate and Energy \(also called the Compact of Mayors in the U.S.\)](#)
- [ICLEI-Local Governments for Sustainability USA](#)
- [The Climate Registry](#)

Examples of Regional Programs

- [NYSERDA Clean Energy Communities](#)
- [Sustainable Westchester](#)

F. What to submit

Provide a list of campaigns or programs joined and demonstration of the local government's active engagement within the past year. Documentation may include 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 local climate efforts. Campaigns that deny consensus climate science or advocate maladaptive responses to climate change are not eligible.

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G. Links to additional resources or best practices

- Links for relevant campaigns and programs are provided above.
- [A Cities' Guide to Carbon Reduction Coalitions](#): This is a blog post from the Great Plains Institute that describes the elements of the most prominent climate change mitigation coalitions and provides guidance on determining which might be best for different types of local governments.

H. Recertification requirements

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

PE1 Action: Partnerships with Other Entities

3 Points

A. Why is this action important?

Actions to mitigate and adapt to the changing climate require local, regional, state, and national cooperation and involvement. Local governments can often achieve economies of scale and greater impact by cooperating with neighboring communities to implement complementary initiatives or collaborate on one cross-cutting issue that spans jurisdictional boundaries such as flooding.

B. How to implement this action

Collaboration with neighboring jurisdictions or partner agencies can take many forms and depends on the topic to be addressed. Local governments may elect to collaborate to jointly fund a climate and energy manager or sustainability coordinator position, develop a regional building retrofit program, deliver technical assistance or green jobs training, develop a regional adaptation plan, engage the public on topics of joint interest, or implement actions from the regional sustainability plan.

While developing a climate action plan, or as part of the implementation process, local governments should identify actions that require collaboration or support from other jurisdictions, regional agencies, or state departments.

Local governments should consider the following when determining how to collaborate with neighboring jurisdictions and partner organizations:

- Define how collaboration will help all parties achieve their objectives.
- Assess existing platforms for collaboration (e.g., regional sustainability planning consortia, CSC task forces).
- Determine the best suited person(s) within the partner organizations or jurisdictions to address the reason for collaboration.
- Identify the process by which the initiative can be executed, funding sources for implementation, etc.
- Develop a memorandum of understanding or similar document outlining the shared objectives, approach to collaboration, and specific actions for the various participants.
- Determine the best platform to celebrate the outcomes of the collaboration.

Local governments can also be eligible for points for this action if they have devoted significant resources to training or mentoring staff, volunteers, or residents of another community in climate or clean energy action.

C. Time frame, project costs, resource needs

The time frame for implementing this action depends on a range of factors, including the number of stakeholders involved and complexity of the action. Project costs may include staff time, funds to support an action or purchase, consulting services if the initiative requires analysis the stakeholders are unable to conduct, etc. Resource needs may include meeting space, information-technology equipment, and food and beverages for working meetings and the launch event (if one is held to inform and engage the public about the initiative).

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, although it depends on the nature of the collaboration. These activities are typically led by the chief elected official's office, the city manager's office, or the departments of environment or planning, with assistance from the Climate Smart Communities (CSC) task force. Cross-department involvement and support are recommended.

E. How to obtain points for this action

Local governments that demonstrate cooperation with neighboring communities and relevant agencies in a manner that is consistent with the guidelines described here are eligible for three points.

F. What to submit

Local governments must submit meeting minutes, memorandum of understanding, or a report that explains how the local government collaborated with neighboring jurisdictions or partner agencies and the outcome. The collaboration must have taken place within three years prior to the application date or be currently active. If submitting meeting minutes, local governments should submit documentation for three meetings.

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

- [NYS Association of Regional Councils](#)
- [NYS Association of Metropolitan Planning Organizations](#)
- [Sustainable Westchester](#)
- [Hudson River Watershed Alliance, Intermunicipal Watershed Agreements](#)

H. Recertification requirements

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