



Ulster County 2021 Climate Smart Communities Recertification Documentation

PE9 Action: Local Climate Action Website

Background: Ulster County Department of the Environment maintains a “Community Climate Action” webpage. The webpage describes the County Government’s goals and projects related to climate change mitigation and adaptation. Information and links to the County’s CSC webpage (which also lists local CSC engagement and task forces, etc.) is provided, as is a summary of climate actions and available resources for both residents and businesses.

Documentation:

- Ulster County Community Climate Action webpage: <https://ulstercountyny.gov/environment/climate-action>
- Webpage content (February 2021 screenshots included):

ULSTER COUNTY GOVERNMENT

- The County is participating in the New York State [Climate Smart Communities \(CSC\) Program](#), demonstrating its leadership by achieving Silver-level certification in 2016. The County also supports local community engagement with the CSC Program - **check the webpage see if your community is participating in the CSC Program and link to your community's climate smart task force, conservation advisory committee, or other relevant advisory body.
- The [Government Operations Climate Action Plan](#) (2019) sets a clear path forward to meeting the directives of the County Executive and County Legislature to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions associated with operations by 25% by 2025, purchasing 100% renewable energy for government operations, and operating a carbon neutral government operation.
- The [Ulster County Government Sustainability Initiatives Guide](#) (2019) documents the County’s progress and achievements. Ulster County has been recognized for its innovative approach to environmental action. This guide provides information and documentation on both how we have gone about this significant body of work and what has been accomplished.
- The County’s [Green Fleet Initiative](#) supports greening the County’s fleet and deployment of public charging stations county-wide.

RESIDENTS

Energy Efficiency & Clean Energy

- Energy Efficiency Upgrades: Home energy efficiency and clean energy projects- including weatherization and upgrading to energy efficient and electric appliances- can save you money on your utility bills and reduce your home energy usage.
 - NYSERDA's [Home Energy Efficiency Programs](#) webpage lists available programs and incentives.
 - There are many [Residential Incentives](#) available for Central Hudson customers, including:
 - refrigerator & freezer recycling - \$100 per unit, with pickup (if eligible)
 - electric heat pump water heaters



- ground and air-source heat pumps
- natural gas heating equipment
- [switching to natural gas](#)
- Solar
 - Onsite Solar System: A roof or ground mounted solar system has many benefits including generating renewable energy onsite and reducing the electricity you get from the grid. More information is available on NYSERDA's [How to Go Solar](#) webpage.
 - Community Solar: If an onsite solar installation is not right for you, you can still support local solar development and save on your electric bills by subscribing to a community solar project in your community. Search NYSERDA's [Community Solar](#) webpage to find project community solar providers offering subscriptions near you. Additionally, NYSERDA's [Solar For All](#) Program offers discounted community solar subscriptions to income-eligible New Yorkers.
- Community Choice Aggregation
 - [Community Choice Aggregation](#) (CCA) is a municipal energy procurement model that replaces the utility as the default supplier of electricity for virtually all homes and small businesses within your jurisdiction. CCA puts control of choosing an energy supplier in local hands. By pooling demand, communities build the clout necessary to negotiate lower rates with private suppliers and are able to choose cleaner energy.
 - Several Ulster County communities are participating in the [Hudson Valley Community Power CCA](#) (these include the Town/Village of New Paltz and Marbletown) and several others are in various stages of considering participating in a CCA.

Electric Vehicles (EVs) & EV Charging

- Purchasing an EV can be the single most impactful action that most households may take to reduce their greenhouse gas emissions. There are many other advantages to EVs as well, including very little routine maintenance (no more oil changes!), lower operational costs, and both state & federal rebates and tax incentives.
- EV Models: See the [Drive Change Drive Electric](#) webpage.
- Incentives
 - State: NY's [Drive Clean Rebate](#) is a point-of-sale rebate of up to \$2,000 off the purchase or lease of a new electric car.
 - Federal [Tax Credit](#): Up To \$7,500. All-electric and plug-in hybrid cars purchased new in or after 2010 may be eligible for a federal income tax credit of up to \$7,500. Check [FuelEconomy.gov](#) to find the federal rebate availability by EV make and model.
- EV Charging: There is now a robust network of local and regional public EV charging stations, including the 20+ charging stations hosted by Ulster County. See the PlugShare [map](#) & the County's [EV Charging Stations](#) webpage for more information.

Electric Lawn & Garden Equipment

- Electric equipment is quieter and, like EVs, doesn't require gas or oil changes! There are now many cordless options available for mowers, chain saws, blowers, trimmers, and other tools, and many brands offer interchangeable battery platforms. This Popular Mechanics [article](#) reviews several companies' offerings, and you can check out what products are available at your local hardware store.

Waste Reduction



- The [EPA](#) estimates that food scraps and yard waste together currently make up more than 30% of our household garbage. If you have the outdoor space for a compost pile or bin onsite, you can keep these materials out of landfills by composting at home!
- Visit the Ulster County Resource Recovery Agency's [Home Composting](#) webpage for more information. Additionally, some local communities including [New Paltz](#) and [Saugerties](#) offer compost drop off programs at their transfer stations for residents.

BUSINESSES

Energy Efficiency & Clean Energy

- Onsite Solar System: More information is available on NYSERDA's [Solar for Your Business](#) webpage
- [Central Hudson Business Incentives](#): There are various incentives available for non-residential customers for:
 - Improving efficiency by one-for-one replacement of existing lighting fixtures and/or refrigeration motors and controls
 - Energy efficient improvements and the flexibility for lighting, HVAC, refrigeration and plug loads
 - Replacement of old kitchen equipment
 - Custom projects: implementation of energy efficiency projects beyond prescribed incentives
- EPA [Energy Star Portfolio Manager](#) is a free online tool you can use to measure and track building energy and water consumption, as well as greenhouse gas emissions. Use it to benchmark the performance of one building or a whole portfolio of buildings ([register here](#)). You can use Portfolio Manager to manage the energy and water use of any building, all you need are your energy bills and some basic information about your building to get started.
- [Open C-PACE](#) Financing: Ulster County is a member of the Energy Improvement Corporation (EIC). EIC's member municipalities offer PACE financing to commercial and non-profit building owners to help pay for improved energy efficiency and renewable energy systems. PACE financing is a public benefit, authorized through state and local law, with repayment secured through a special assessment lien on the benefited property.
 - [Open C-PACE Application](#)

EVs & EV Charging

- In addition to the NY [Drive Clean Rebate](#) (for purchase or lease of new electric vehicles), [Charge Ready NY](#) offers public and private organizations that install Level 2 EV charging stations at public parking facilities, workplaces, and multifamily apartment buildings rebates of \$4,000 per charging port they install, a significant savings of 30 percent to 80 percent, depending on station and installation costs.

Waste Reduction

- The County's [Waste Reduction](#) webpage outlines several County laws which serve to reduce waste county-wide, including Skip the Straw; the Food Service Waste Reduction Act banning polystyrene foam food and beverage food service ware; and the Food Waste Prevention and Recovery Act regulating large food scraps generators.
- Food Waste: There are many benefits to reducing food waste. Visit the [Food Waste Prevention & Recovery Act](#) and the Ulster County Resource Recovery Agency's [Food Waste](#) webpages for more information and resources.

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Department of the Environment

Home > Department of the Environment

Department of the Environment

- Climate Mitigation: Government Operations
- **Community Climate Action**
- Climate Smart Communities Program
- Natural Resources
- Stormwater & Green Infrastructure
- Flood Hazard Mitigation
- Waste Reduction
- Resources & Laws
- Contact Us

Community Climate Action

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Ulster County Environmental Management Council
Water Quality Coordinating Committee

EXECUTIVE NEWS

County Executive Ryan Announces the Final Report The Ulster County Justice and Reform Commission is Complete and Ready for Adoption

Posted on: February 2nd, 2021
The Justice and Reform Plan includes sections on ending mass incarceration, strengthening oversight and accountability, addressing systemic racial bias, and healing the relationship between th
[read more]

County Executive Ryan Declares a State of Emergency

Posted on: February 1st, 2021
[read more]



Click above to plan your outdoor adventure



directives of the County Executive and County Legislature to reduce greenhouse gas emissions associated with open...
English | Español
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GOVERNMENT

RESIDENTS

BUSINESS

VISITORS

HOW DO I?



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3 Points

A. Why is this action important?

Maintaining a website about the local government's climate initiatives is a convenient and low-cost way to deliver information to community members. Such a website is a place where the local government can describe its participation in the Climate Smart Communities (CSC) program and other state programs that support clean energy and sustainability. Residents, businesses and other stakeholders can learn about their local government's climate action efforts, review progress reports, learn who is involved in the planning process, understand their role in achieving the local government's climate action goals, and learn about upcoming educational events and meetings.

B. How to implement this action

Local governments should first consider their staff capacity to build and maintain the website; some may choose to hire a consultant who has the technical expertise to build the site. It is critical, however, that local government staff have the capacity to update the website with ease to keep it relevant and maintain its quality over time. The development of training materials, user guides, and web policies is recommended. For points under this CSC action, local governments must have updated their climate-related webpage(s) within the past year prior.

To implement this action, local governments must demonstrate that they have at least one webpage dedicated to local government and community efforts to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and adapt to climate change. At minimum, the webpage(s) must include the following components:

- A description of the local government's goals and projects related to local climate change mitigation and adaptation: This can include links to local reports and plans, such as GHG inventory reports, climate action plans, vulnerability assessments, and reports on progress made toward achieving GHG targets and other goals.
- Ways that residents and businesses in the community can participate in efforts led by the local government to reduce GHG emissions and build community resiliency to climate change
- A summary of actions that residents and businesses in the community can take to reduce their GHG emissions: This can include links to external resources that provide more information and describe the support available for actions related to, for example, energy efficiency, renewable energy, healthy vegetarian diets, and clean transportation options, such as electric vehicles.

Optional information or features to incorporate into the website include the following:

- Maps and information that describes local risk factors and areas vulnerable to climate hazards (and any related tracking of indicators)
- Descriptions of sponsors and partners involved in local climate action
- Calendar of events related to climate change (hosted by the local government or its partners)
- Webpage or form for people to enter feedback and ideas
- Tools to help users find resources and contacts, such as tool kits, indices, and/or search functions
- Local, state, national, and international resources and links related to climate change

C. Time frame, project costs, and resource needs

Implementing this action may take a couple months to a year depending on whether the local government seeks to create an entirely new website with a new design, or webpages as part of the government's existing website. The number of pages and functionality of the site will also dictate the cost and time frame for building the site. Project costs may include staff time, consultants' time, and hosting the website. Local governments should assign a staff member to regularly monitor the site and update the site's content.

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. Other potentially responsible departments could include the chief elected official's office, environmental educators or public affairs specialists, or the departments of environment or planning.

E. How to obtain points for this action

Three points are available for applicants who create a website that meets the minimum requirements described above.

F. What to submit

Submit a link to at least one webpage that contains the three minimum components: 1) a description of the local government's efforts related to local climate change mitigation and adaptation, 2) how local residents and businesses can participate in those efforts led by the local government, and 3) a summary of actions that residents and businesses in the community can take to reduce their GHG emissions. These components can be on separate webpages.

In addition, provide a description of new content that was posted to the website within the past year. If available, also submit any staff training materials, user guides, and/or web policies.

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

- [Ulster County, NY, Department of the Environment, Sustainability & Energy Webpage](#)
- [Town of Lake George, NY, Green Initiatives](#)
- [Albany, NY, Mayor's Office of Energy and Sustainability](#)
- [New Rochelle, NY, Sustainability Webpage](#)
- [New York Climate Change Science Clearinghouse](#)

H. Recertification requirements

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