

Strategic Energy Action Toolkit

For Energy Committees and other Local Energy Groups

Introduction to “Strategic Energy Action” – It’s all about making an IMPACT

Local energy groups are usually run by volunteers, so making the most of your time and resources is essential. The Strategic Energy Action Toolkit is designed to help local energy groups get more done by stepping back and making a plan before jumping into that next project. As you will discover, a little bit of planning goes a long way toward making a real impact in your community.



The formula for impact is simple, but you need to have both strategy *and* action. Strategy without action is just a plan. Action without strategy will exhaust you and your resources before you’ve really made a difference.

The Strategic Energy Action Toolkit was developed by a team of non-profits from across New England who work with local energy groups of all kinds. We’ve seen many groups try to tackle a strategic plan only to get bogged down in the process and create documents that gather dust on a shelf. The planning process doesn’t have to be like that. Planning can be ongoing and focused on helping you get more done, not less. The Strategic Energy Action Toolkit can help.

The Toolkit is made up of tools and exercises your local energy group can work into any of your upcoming meetings. Each section has step-by-step instructions and a template for documenting your work for sharing and referring back to.

Every energy group is different, so we encourage you to use whatever pieces of the Toolkit are most helpful and adapt them as you see fit. We’ve even provided some suggestions on when to use each tool and how you might adapt them.

Outcomes – What you’ll gain by using the Strategic Energy Action Toolkit

- A list of projects (including a few you’re ready to run with NOW) that align with your vision, capitalize on your strengths, and maximize your potential for community impact.
- A record of your process and your rationale for prioritizing one project over another. This can be used to bring new members up to speed, gain support from local leaders, strengthen proposals for outside funding, engage the broader community and support planning efforts of all kinds.
- A way to connect with other local energy committees from across New England who are also using this toolkit.

The Strategic Energy Action Toolkit is brought to you by Vital Communities and the New England Grassroots Environment Fund, in collaboration with partners across New England.

Strategic Energy Planning Toolkit Outline

1. **Looking Back – Tools to help you discover and document what you likely already know.**
 - A) Goals and Vision – What is the change you want to see?
 - B) Assets Map – What resources and allies are available to you?
 - C) Challenges & Opportunities – What do you know about your community’s energy needs?
 - D) Lessons Learned – What have you learned from your group’s past projects?
2. **Strategies Checklist – A list of all the strategies you might take on as a local energy group.**
3. **Looking Ahead – Tools to help you determine which projects to take on and when.**
 - E) Status Report – Compare what you’ve already done against the Strategies Checklist
 - F) Project Scorecard – Score and compare possible projects
 - G) Timeline – Determine when you’ll be ready to get started on your top priorities
 - H) Action Plan – Hit the ground running and stay on task with a detailed to-do list
4. **Next Steps and Resources – Tips and links to resources that will help you take action.**

Vocabulary

- **“Goal”** – The big picture; your group’s mission statement; the impact you and your fellow energy committee members want to have in your community.
- **“Strategy”** – An approach you could use to achieve part of your overall goal. There are many possible strategies for making an impact in your community.
- **“Project”** – What you actually do. There are many possible projects you could take on within each strategy.
- **“Action”** – Each project is made up of many individual actions that lead to impact in your community. Your list of actions is your energy committee’s to-do list.

