

## **Next Steps**

### ***Advice for Successful Energy Committees***

#### ***Stay Focused***

Choose fewer projects to work on at a time and focus your energy on seeing them through. Plan ahead so you always have projects in the queue ready to go.

#### ***Keep Records of your Strategic Discussions / Decisions***

Whether you use the Toolkit templates or not, document your strategic conversations so you can reference them later. Refer back when it's time to start a new project, report out to the community, or welcome new members.

#### ***Share Your Plan with Your Community***

Your town leaders and neighbors will take you more seriously if you can demonstrate why you chose the projects you are focused on and lay out a plan for seeing those projects through. Share your strategy with the community by sending a memo to your Selectboard, submitting a letter to the editor to your local paper, posting a notice in your town hall, etc. You can even host a public forum to share your ideas and receive feedback.

#### ***Make Sure Your Project is Feasible***

Some of the projects you prioritize may be more complicated than others (e.g. installing a renewable energy system on municipal land). You'll want to start out by doing some research, asking for advice, and talking with local stakeholders. Try to keep town leaders and residents in the loop about any complicated projects you'd like to take on – you'll need them to encourage (and discourage) you along the way. In some cases, you'll discover you don't have all the pieces in place to make your priority project happen right now. That's perfectly OK. Make sure your community understands your choice and move on to another project.

#### ***Ask for Help, Utilize Existing Resources, and Don't Re-Invent the Wheel***

Before you jump into your project, make sure you're not reinventing the wheel. There are so many resources, case studies, guides, funding opportunities, and technical advisors available to help you tackle almost any project. Take advantage of the Toolkit's resources page, and reach out to non-profits and other energy committees in your area to make sure you get connected with the resources you need.

### ***Use Your Action Plan***

Take the time to lay out next steps and assign specific people and deadlines to specific tasks. At each meeting, report out on progress and assign new tasks.

### ***Share Progress with Your Community***

Make yourselves accountable to the public by sharing progress reports on current projects. Consider posting updates to local newsletters or finding creative ways to share your work (signs, events, etc.). This outreach in itself will help you achieve your goals by creating greater awareness about energy issues in your community.

### ***Track Results***

As you work on your project, be prepared to document your results - whether you're keeping track of kilowatt hours of electricity saved or number of attendees at a public event. Concrete results will help you gain credibility with town leaders and potential funders.

### ***Share Your Success Stories***

Once your project is completed, share your success (and lessons learned) with your community and also with other local energy groups in your region. Fill out a project profile using a template and submit it to your state's local energy network. See the Resources page for more templates and instructions.

### ***Reflect on Lessons Learned***

While the project is still fresh in your mind, reflect as a group on what went well and what didn't. You can use the *Lessons Learned* worksheet from the Toolkit as a template. Keep a record of your reflections to use for reference when designing future activities.

### ***Think Outside the Box***

If you've somehow checked off all of the strategies on the Checklist (congratulations!), or if your group is at a standstill and needs a fresh idea, consider thinking more broadly about energy usage. Energy is involved in everything we do – in the food that we eat, the products we purchase, and the landscape that surrounds us. Look for opportunities to partner with other groups working on environmental issues or supporting local economies. You might start seeing energy opportunities you never thought of before and achieve energy reductions in new and creative ways. Feel free to adapt the toolkit activities to help you identify creative new partners and projects.