

2012 BECC Conference: Poster Presenter Abstracts

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From Boston to Berkeley: USDN's Multi-City Community-Based Social Marketing Pilots focused on Household and Municipal Employee Energy Use

As agencies work toward sustainability goals, program planners are challenged with motivating individuals in their communities and organizations to adopt or modify specific behaviors. In March 2011, a group of Urban Sustainability Directors Network (USDN) members embarked on two collaborative community-based social marketing pilots targeting specific behaviors impacting energy use. The goal was to develop turnkey outreach strategies that could be scalable across a wide range of cities. Community-based social marketing is an alternative to traditional information and awareness campaigns and has demonstrated success across a broad spectrum of behavior change goals (McKenzie-Mohr, 2011). With the help of Action Research, Sustainability Directors from nine cities and counties across the United States (from Boston to Berkeley) collaborated on the development and implementation of two pilot projects. Each project targeted an important behavioral change with the potential to produce a measurable and significant reduction in energy use. The first pilot focused on computer power management activities by municipal employees. The second pilot focused on cold water washing and line drying by community residents. Each pilot included barrier and benefit research, incorporated social science tools, and used pilot testing with a control group. Because participating local governments used the same research tools and program materials, the project afforded the unique opportunity to compare outcomes across various regions. This information will help inform large scale implementation decisions by identifying what works (and what doesn't) across a variety of contexts. The presentation will focus on the collaborative project process, successes, challenges, and lessons learned.