

Abstract #: 453

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Abstract Title: Updates from CT on Community Outreach in 169 Towns

Abstract Text:

Imagine 169 towns and cities committing to reducing their municipal and board of education buildings' energy consumption by 20 percent by 2018. Sound too far-fetched? It is in fact reality. Re-launched in 2012 to focus on, and include energy efficiency, Connecticut's Clean Energy Communities program is gaining tremendous momentum with 132 of the state's 169 municipalities pledging to meet 20% energy reduction levels. Eversource and United Illuminating, as Energy Efficiency Fund administrators, provide the necessary tools to assist communities in realizing energy savings. Community tools provided include: assisting communities in gathering energy usage data, benchmarking buildings utilizing the U.S. EPA's Portfolio Manager Software and creating Municipal Action Plans (MAPs) on how to reduce communities' energy consumption. Once communities identify their "energy stars" and "energy hogs", they are guided through their MAPs to identify cost-effective, energy measures to meet the 20% reductions. Additionally, communities are incentivized to increase participation in residential and business energy-saving programs. Program administrators created a carrot called "Bright Idea Grants" to incentivize communities to go deeper and broader into the programs. Every time a house, business or municipal building redeems a rebate or participates in an energy-saving program, they earn their community points. Once a community earns 100 points, a Bright Idea Grant ranging from \$5,000 to \$15,000 is granted. Grants can be used for energy-saving projects within the community. From paying for performance-grade energy audits for municipal buildings or leveraging existing incentives, communities have the flexibility to determine the grant expenditures to align with their MAPs.