



Implementing a Community-wide Carbon Challenge

Our Climate Is Changing

Pick up a newspaper, scan the Internet, or turn on TV and you're bound to find something on climate change. Indicators that our climate is changing are all around us: in reports of Arctic glaciers melting, rising sea levels, record heat waves and droughts, endangered species and more extreme and frequent storms. Faced with such a global problem, it's easy for individuals to feel overwhelmed and powerless to do anything.

What can households do about climate change?

Roughly half of all US greenhouse gas emissions come from households through their energy consumption for motor vehicles, home heating, and electricity. Moderate reductions in energy consumption by all of us can have a significant impact on reducing the risk of climate change and can save us money! By taking the Carbon Challenge, your community's residents will gain valuable insight into how their families use energy and will learn how simple actions they can take in their homes can reduce their energy consumption and their environmental impact.

How can the New England Carbon Challenge help?

Our New England Carbon Estimator™ (<http://necarbonchallenge.org/calculator.jsp>) will help residents understand how they use energy, assess their current household emissions (their "carbon footprint") and map out a strategy to reduce their energy consumption, costs, and environmental impact.

Plus, we can "link" households together to show the impact of residents in your community taking action. Having one household take the Challenge is terrific, but having 100 homes take the Challenge together can reduce annual emissions by a million pounds or more! Imagine if residents knew that they were responsible for keeping a million pounds of CO₂ out of the atmosphere every year... that's like taking 80 cars off the road every day of the year!

We can also put your community "on the map" as taking action to address climate change and give residents the recognition they deserve. They might even want to challenge another town to a little friendly competition!

Households that have taken the Carbon Challenge have reduced their energy consumption by an average of 16% and are saving over \$800 a year.

Why not join them?



The New England Carbon Challenge™

Helping New England Households Meet the Challenge of Our Changing Climate

Suggested Framework for Implementing a Community-Wide Carbon Challenge™

Launching a Carbon Challenge in your community

- 1. Take the Challenge YOURSELF!** If you're interested in using the New England Carbon Challenge (NECC) to help residents in your community reduce their energy costs and environmental impact, the place to begin is by taking the Carbon Challenge personally (it only takes 15 to 20 minutes). It will give you a "soup to nuts" overview of our program and what to expect and will likely answer most of your questions. Having worked with communities across New England that effectively used our program; we know that a Challenge requires the enthusiasm, dedication, and time of local residents in order to be successful. Taking the challenge personally is step one and the "leadership by example" that marks a successful outreach initiative. necarbonchallenge.org (click on "Take Action" on navigation bar)
- 2. Determine Community Carbon Challenge Leadership Team** – it will only require a few people willing to work as points of contact and connectors.
 - Suggestion:** Energy or Climate Protection Committee Members, Municipal Green Teams, Public Library Director, School Staff (start with Superintendent)
 - Note:** The NECC tools are designed to be "plug & play", requiring reasonable time commitments from you, the community organizers. Utilizing our program will save you countless hours and costs in designing a climate change/energy residential outreach program, while providing an integrated system.
- 3. Review our nominal fee structure at:** necarbonchallenge.org (click on "Community" on navigation bar)
- 4. Contact the NECC to discuss your plan, launch dates, trainings and needs.**
info@necarbonchallenge.org or 862-3128
- 5. Prioritize organizations for public launch** – think about key community hubs/influence makers in your community.
 - Suggestion:** Launch and maintain your Challenge from a hub of action like the public library. The library is open many hours, library staff can be trained by the NECC to be a resource for people to take the challenge and libraries have computers for use by individuals who don't have access to or don't know how to use computers
 - Suggestion:** Or launch, promote and maintain your Community Challenge in partnership. "The Pleasanttown Carbon Challenge is organized in partnership between the local energy committee and the public library. Please join us in showing how Pleasanttown is taking action on reducing energy costs for our citizens!"
- 6. Determine key organizations/offices in the community** which would make effective Challenge partners (organizations taking the Challenge with their constituents/employees)
 - Suggestion:** Local Energy Committee, Municipal Departments/employees, Public Library, Schools and PTAs, Faith-based Groups, Community Organizations and Clubs, Businesses, Senior Groups, Scout Troops, and Garden or Book Clubs
- 7. Determine the scope and length of your Challenge**
 - Suggestions:** Set a timeline. People tend to take action with a deadline.
 - Are there events such as Earth Day or Election Day that could be leveraged for public visibility?
 - Another option is a staged Challenge. Consider a year-long scheduled Challenge, rolling out the partners in publicized stages. I.e.
 - Example of a January – December Campaign**
 - December_–**
 - train (teleconference/web-based training) library staff in use of NECC and web-tools
 - letter from Mayor/Administers to town employees, inviting them to join this community Challenge

- Press release announcing year-long challenge

January –

- kick off the Challenge – municipal employees, public library staff and visitors
- Publicize
- Public presentation by NECC presenter(s)

February

- Publicize February's partner(s)
- Challenge kicks off through schools and/or Energy Committee

March

- Publicize March's partner(s)
- Challenge kicks off through churches, etc.

April

- Publicize April's partner(s)
- Integrate challenge with Earth Day events
- Challenge kicks off through businesses and rotary clubs

Etc.

8. Set up a meeting with key community officials to request their endorsement of and participation in your Community Challenge

Suggestion: The Mayor, Town Administrator/Manager, Councilmen, Select Board, etc

- Ask these key officials to send a letter to employees, the town newsletter or the press
- Ask that the Challenge be announced on the town webpage
- Add key figures to your leadership team as appropriate

9. List and contact key partners and welcome them to a brainstorming meeting to design YOUR Challenge.

Suggestion: Reach out to local businesses and encourage their participation. Could they donate a raffle prize for the Challenge? Would they ask patrons to join the Challenge?

Note: The efficacy of your Challenge will have everything to do with the partners you enlist. The most creative ideas will come from these partners.

10. Determine your publicity plan.

Suggestion: Utilize the NECC community resources, including: “ The Community Implementation Guide” and “10 strategies for Publicizing a Carbon Challenge”

- Draft a press release using one of our sample releases

-Suggestion: Utilize community newsletters, websites, posting boards, school newsletters, church bulletins to get the word out.

11. Set up training through NECC electronic resources or teleconference calls for Challenge leaders - such as public library or school staff.

12. Determine your launch date, publicize and watch your Challenge take form!

13. Give us feedback. We look forward to hearing about your successes, creative strategies and lessons learned. You may even find yourselves the monthly face of our NECC Climate Heroes!

Benefits of staged approach

- **Encourages increasing numbers participants** (therefore networks to residents)
- **Creates a buzz**, excitement, community spirit
- **Allows for fabulous publicity** and competition opportunities
- **Constantly stays fresh in the public eye.** The Challenge will be tracked by the NECC and Community Challenge stats (CO2 reduced and household energy dollars saved) will be shared for your publicity.
- **Encourages greater energy consciousness in residents' workplaces** and community facilities. Leading to cost savings across sectors.

Opportunities for effective community-wide outreach

- **Implementation of a School-wide Challenge**, in partnership with the PTA, which essentially encourages teachers to use the Carbon Challenge as homework assignments
- **Use of laptops and trained volunteers at community events to sign residents up for the challenge** – each session is a mini workshop in energy savings!
- **Keep reminders of taking the Challenge online** and the community-wide CO₂ and dollar savings in regular community communications and websites
- **Utilize a public figure's own Challenge stats** as a sign of leading by example (with his/her permission, of course!)
- **Encourage businesses in the community to offer discounts** with proof of having taken the challenge (we send everyone a printable report on their personal challenge when they sign up online)
- **Incentivize your Challenge** - use rewards, recognition, business donations as prizes to encourage people to join the Challenge
- **Leverage competition!** Challenge another neighboring town or city to reduce household emissions. We'll help you track the Challenges.
- **Encourage neighborhood groups to form neighborhood challenges** with potlucks and discussions around Challenge tips.
- **Your ideas?**

What the NECC will provide*

- Teleconference/web-based training for key organizers: library staff, school staff, etc. includes:
 - Overview of climate science and regional impacts
 - Effective communication about climate change and energy conservation/efficiency
 - Best practices for implementing your Challenge
- Ongoing technical support via phone/email. We suggest a regular telecon for ongoing Community-wide Challenges
- Use of our web-based tools
- Periodic progress reports to leadership team
- Access to handouts and resources for tabling and events

*The NECC reserves the right to limit scheduling of above services, subject to staff availability.

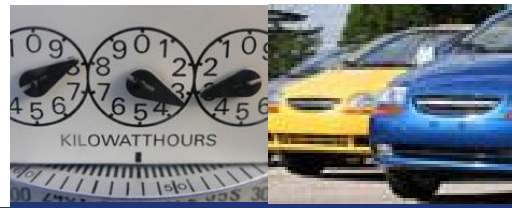
For further background on the NECC visit our site at necarbonchallenge.org or check out these key resources:

- What other communities are doing with the Challenge - <http://necarbonchallenge.org/communities.jsp> - including [10 Great Reasons Your Organization Should Take the Carbon Challenge](#)
- Employee Carbon Challenge™ for employee engagement - <http://necarbonchallenge.org/businesses.jsp>
- **And of course, Take the Challenge - necarbonchallenge.org**

Rev. 9/09

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