

MIDDLEBURY HOME ENERGY CHALLENGE

Recruitment/Planning (12 hrs per week x 4 weeks) DEC/JAN

- Recruit volunteers (prior VCEM volunteers, homeowners who were visited in last VCEM round, stakeholders)
- Identify stakeholders (EVT, town officials, housing authorities, elderly services, emergency responders, Habitat for Humanity, schools, college, realtors, insurers, rotary, large employers, renewable energy providers)
- Plan training/prep/publicity/implementation
- Budget & fundraise

Training/Prep/Publicity (12 hrs per week x 4 weeks) JAN/FEB

- Prepare & assemble kits/handouts
- Train volunteers (via Button Up or Weatherization Skillshop events)
- Enlist stakeholders (via lunch time visits)
- Launch challenge (local media, events)

Implementation (14 hrs per week x 8 weeks) MAR/APR

- Target & contact homeowners who took some action already (those visited in last VCEM round, those who requested solar site visits and did or didn't qualify, maybe those who applied for free weatherization and didn't qualify or are waiting, etc) and mobilize them to take next step
- Enlist new homeowners to get an audit (sign up & info displays at public places like town meeting, school events, town celebrations, energy fairs, home visits, phone a thons, workshops, energy parties, etc)
- Manage inventory (distribution & collection of kits, handouts)
- Schedule & conduct events & visits.
- Manage communication among volunteers, stakeholders, media, new homeowners who were visited to keep them mobilized (email)

Reporting/Closure (12 hrs per week x 2 weeks) MAY

- Compile results
- Report results (to media, stakeholders)
- Celebrate results (publicly reward volunteers)

HOME VISIT KITS: Window wraps, electric plug covers, pipe wrap, emergency supplies, caulk, handouts (less is more, don't overwhelm with info).

CORE HANDOUTS: EVT Energy Smart Home booklet, EVT Guide to Electric, How Efficient is your home worksheet, PACE flowchart info sheet, reference sheet (local energy auditors, other weatherization support), EVT free home energy kit coupon.

2010 VCEM Media Communication (Sample Letter to Editor, Middlebury)

Towns across the state, like Middlebury, applied last fall to participate in the Vermont Community Energy Mobilization Project (VCEM) sponsored by Efficiency Vermont. The project propelled homeowners to improve the efficiency of their lighting, appliances, heating systems, and building envelopes—to tackle those avoided spaces above our heads in attics where heat rises fastest and below our feet in basements where cold air is conducted through stone, cement blocks, and along sill joists.

If selected, towns were asked to recruit volunteers who were given four hours of intensive training in how to help homeowners detect heat loss and weatherize. They were also given energy saving materials to install free, such as CFL bulbs, low-flow showerheads, and water pipe and tank insulation wraps. Participants got \$150 off a professional energy audit on top of a \$250 rebate available to anyone who followed through with an energy retrofit project, which also qualified for state rebates that were explained in home visits. Indeed, many volunteers walked their talk by proceeding with major insulating and air sealing projects on their own homes.

In the end, over a dozen volunteers were trained and conducted 120 free home energy visits between February and April this year in the Middlebury area. Towns who sent volunteers to be trained in Middlebury could participate under its supervision. The same will be true next fall when Middlebury hopes to repeat the project, if it is continued with the support of our elected officials and Efficiency Vermont.

Huge thanks to the amazing volunteers who canvassed throughout neighborhoods and at events to let people of all sectors and income levels know about the home energy visits. Thanks to energy coordinator and committee members from Ripton, Lincoln, and Cornwall for help in organizing inventory into sets for each volunteer and coaching based on their participation in the project the prior year. Thanks to Middlebury Bagel, Greg's, Middlebury Natural Foods Co-op, and Vermont Coffee for breakfast provisions for the training and the Button Up Vermont workshop that followed, which was open to homeowners who wanted to learn how to weatherize as well as volunteers to refresh their knowledge. Thanks to Vermont Firefighters Association for donating batteries for smoke and carbon monoxide detectors and Middlebury Assistant Fire Chief David Shaw for advising on fire safety checks related to buttoning up homes.

Most importantly, thanks to homeowners and renters who allowed us to visit them and accepted our challenge to become energy efficiency ambassadors to teach their neighbors and colleagues how to save energy. Like the master gardener program, VCEM intended to accelerate energy efficiency and conservation efforts rapidly in response to an uncertain energy future. It will pay back handsomely, as promised, in more ways than one.

2010 VCEM Stakeholder Communication (Sample, Middlebury)

EVT created an Efficiency Coach out of me and all volunteers it trained to complete the Vermont Community Energy Mobilization (VCEM) free home energy visits last year. In my estimation, the VCEM Home Energy Visit project was one of the most effective projects I've ever conducted. It focused holistically on energy use while tackling one of the most important areas for reduction--space heating and cooling. It was so sensible, easily understood, well packaged, and executed that it should be awarded national recognition. This project, coupled with the Button Up Vermont and Weatherization Skillshop program, elevated the status of EVT in the eyes of climate change activists like myself and homeowners who now understand how EVT works for them.

I could go on and on about what's so right about the VCEM home visit project. For instance, I attended a presentation at Middlebury College about what psychology can do to help address climate change. It referred to a study you may know about in hotels to see what motivated people to reuse towels in their rooms in support of the hotel's effort to be greener. They found people were motivated when they were compared to other guests. "Join fellow hotel guests in reusing your towel," the bath vanity sign read. This did it. "Join fellow hotel guests of this room in reusing your towel," motivated even more people. Psychologists call this norm referencing. EVT used norm referencing with it's intake form when it had us compare the household we visited with other Vermonters. Whether you intended this or not, it worked to mobilize people to take the next step and schedule an energy audit.

Homeowners enjoyed the free CFLs, especially ones of which they were not aware like the very popular 3-way bulb. It motivated them to look more deeply at what affected their electric bill and how to read it more productively. I used the *Guide the Electric Use* to have them scan for the top five biggest electric users and watched eyes pop when they landed on heating water and their excitement and deeper appreciation when we wrapped water pipes and tanks and installed water saving devices.

I shared my story of how I burned 800 gallons of oil in my 1700 square foot home before weatherizing it. Last year I only burned 500 gallons. "That's 300 gallons saved times about \$3 per gallon which means I saved nearly \$900 in the first year alone and that was before we had all these great incentives," I pitched and then rolled out your incentive piece and explained how to finance their project. I explained other financing options and resources from CVOEO, Neighborworks, our banks, and our local Acorn Energy Co-op.

The value of VCEM has been priceless and viral. You have neighbors helping neighbors. You have mobilization for reducing energy. You have a fleet of energy ambassadors spreading what they've been taught at work, school, church, and family gatherings. The results of this will not be measured easily, but they are real and plentiful.

2010 Sample VCEM Email Communication (Middlebury)

Wow! Check out these numbers for [Middlebury Area Home Energy Visits](#). Have an awesome weekend. Laura

Days left: Only 28 days left to beat our [target](#) of 80 visits with 8 going on to audits and weatherizing projects. We can do it. We ARE doing it!

Completed Visits: We've completed at least 60 visits in Middlebury Area thanks to you. I have paperwork on 55 and know more is out there to be turned in. I await your forms. Sooner the better. Mucho gracias.

Solid Requests: We have about 50 requests in various stages of scheduling. Some have been assigned to you by me. Others await this. Ripton and Lincoln are awakening with their own requests.

Active volunteers: We're lucky to have a steady number of committed volunteers. Thanks especially to Chris, Tom D, Tom N, Jono C. David W (now serving Rutland), Caitlin and Tim, David, Glenn, Craig, and Gary for doing so much. Thanks to Hannah, Aneliya, Marcella, and Kenny for covering events. Thanks to Warren and Mac for being ready to assist in Middlebury calls and serving your town and to Steve in covering Lincoln.

Awakening volunteers: We need all hands on deck in this final stretch. College students, jump on board as assistants. It helps slash our time.

Target: We are well on our way to make our target of 80 by Apr 30. At least 10 have moved on to energy audits and deeper weatherization projects, including several of our volunteers.

April 25: Come to the Earth Day Fair on the Middlebury Town Green for a public acknowledgement of your effort and group photo at 1:30p.

CONGRATULATIONS!