

Local Government Sustainability Polices and Programs, 2010

The survey was developed with the input of ICMA’s Center for Sustainable Communities, the Center for Urban Innovation, Arizona State University’s Global Institute of Sustainability (ASU GIOS), the Alliance for Innovation, and others. Survey distribution was conducted through a collaboration of ICMA, ASU GIOS and the Sustainable Cities Network, a multi-jurisdictional partnership. The survey was provided in a print format because the local government response rate is both higher and more scientifically representative than for an electronic survey.

The survey was sent to 8,569 local governments. The survey response rate is 25.4%, with 2,176 local governments responding. The summary below shows the percentage reporting to each item. The highest percentages are in **bold**. There are interesting variations in the percentages reporting when the data are arrayed by population size and geographic division. It is clear that geography and population size are factors in the extent of activity. To purchase the survey results in a downloadable Excel spreadsheet, click [here](#).

Policy Action

1. To what extent are the following a priority in your jurisdiction?

Policy issues	Not a priority (% reporting)	Somewhat a priority (% reporting)	Priority (% reporting)	High priority (% reporting)
a. The environment	5.2	33.2	40.7	21.0
b. The economy	1.2	4.6	25.9	68.3
c. Social justice	20.2	41.7	29.4	9.2
d. Climate change	46.3	34.6	14.1	5.0
e. Green jobs	28.9	41.8	22.8	6.5
f. Energy conservation	2.9	27.5	45.7	23.9
g. Housing for all income groups	15.4	36.9	33.6	14.0
h. Public transit	31.8	33.9	25.4	8.9

2. Please indicate which of the following actions your locality has taken related to sustainability, energy conservation, resilience, climate change, emissions reductions, or similar concerns in your community. (Check all applicable.)

Action	Local government has taken action (% reporting)
a. Adoption by the governing body of a resolution stating policy goals.	28.7
b. Adoption by the governing body a plan with specific targets or benchmarks.	18.5
c. Establishment of a sustainability policy and/or plan by the chief executive.	18.1
d. Appointment of a citizens committee, commission, or task force.	26.7
e. Provided a budget specifically for the sustainability effort	15.6
f. Dedicated staff to the sustainability effort	26.8

3. If your local government has dedicated staff to the sustainability effort, how many FTEs are dedicated? 1.9

4. Please indicate which of the following your local government has **established** related to the environment. (Check all applicable.)

Action	Local government has established (% reporting)
a. Baseline greenhouse gas emissions of the local government	14.4
b. Baseline greenhouse gas emissions of the community	8.9
c. Greenhouse gas reduction targets for local government operations	11.4
d. Greenhouse gas reduction targets for businesses	2.7
e. Greenhouse gas reduction targets for multi-family residences	1.7
f. Greenhouse gas reduction targets for single-family residences	1.9
g. Locally initiated air pollution measures to reduce dust and particulate matter	8.7
h. Plan for tree preservation and planting	44.7

Recognition Programs

5. Please indicate whether your community been recognized, credentialed, or won an award for any sustainability-related initiatives undertaken by your local government or through a public-private partnership. (Check all applicable.)

Recognition programs	Local government received recognition (% reporting)
a. Tree City USA designation	41.5
b. EPA Smart Growth Achievement Award	1.3
c. Phoenix Award for Brownfields Redevelopment	1.0
d. Historic Preservation Merit Awards	11.4
e. Other (Please describe)	8.2

Water

6. Is your local government responsible for water services? Yes **66.7%** No 34.3%

6A. Which of the following actions has your government taken to improve and protect water?

Action	Local government has taken action (% reporting)
a. Actions to conserve the quantity of water from aquifers	33.5
b. Use of grey-water and/or reclaimed-water use systems	16.3
c. Sets limits on impervious surfaces on private property	30.3
d. Use water price structure to encourage conservation	33.0
e. Other incentives for water conservation behaviors by city, residents, and businesses	27.6

Recycling

7. Which of the following actions has your government taken to promote recycling?

Action	Local government has taken action (% reporting)
a. Internal program that recycles paper and plastic and glass in your local government	72.0
b. Community-wide recycling collection program for paper and plastic and glass for residential properties	75.7
c. Community-wide recycling collection program for paper and plastic and glass for commercial properties	44.9
d. Recycling of household hazardous waste	54.9
e. Recycling of household electronic equipment (e-waste)	52.0
f. Pay-As-You-Throw (PAYT) program with charges based on the amount of waste discarded	10.5
g. Community-wide collection of organic material for composting	32.5
h. Require minimum of 30% post-consumer recycled content for everyday office paper use	9.2

Energy

8. Which of the following actions has your government taken to decrease its use of energy?

Action	Local government has taken action (% reporting)
a. Established a fuel efficiency target for the government fleet of vehicles	12.5
b. Increased the purchase of fuel efficient vehicles	44.4
c. Purchased hybrid electric vehicles	23.7
d. Purchased vehicles that operate on compressed natural gas (CNG)	8.5
e. Installed charging stations for electric vehicles	5.3
f. Conducted energy audits of government buildings	62.9
g. Installed energy management systems to control heating and cooling in buildings	46.4
h. Established policy to only purchase Energy Star equipment when available	17.4
i. Upgraded or retrofitted facilities to higher energy efficiency office lighting	55.9
j. Upgraded or retrofitted traffic signals to improve efficiency	37.1
k. Upgraded or retrofitted streetlights and/or and other exterior lighting to improve efficiency	30.5
l. Upgraded or retrofitted facilities to higher energy efficiency heating and air conditioning systems	39.3
m. Upgraded or retrofitted facilities to higher energy efficiency pumps in the water or sewer systems	23.4
n. Utilize dark sky compliant outdoor light fixtures	15.1
o. Installed solar panels on a government facility	13.1
p. Installed a geo-thermal system	6.6
q. Generated electricity through municipal operations such as refuse disposal, wastewater treatment, or landfill	7.4

9. Has your local government established any energy reduction programs targeted specifically to assist **low-income residents**?

a. Yes 8.1% **b. No 91.9%**

10. Has your local government established any energy reduction programs targeted specifically to **assist small businesses**?

a. Yes 5.8% b. No 94.2%

11. Please indicate which of the following actions your local government has taken to reduce energy consumption in the community.

Action	Direct Grant (% reporting)	Direct Loan (% reporting)	Tax Incentive (% reporting)
a. Energy Audit- Individual residences	6.4	0.9	0.3
b. Weatherization- Individual residences	11.1	2.9	0.6
c. Heating / air conditioning upgrades- Individual residences	5.5	2.3	0.6
d. Purchase of energy efficient appliances- Individual residences	4.7	0.8	0.7
e. Installation of solar equipment- Individual residences	1.4	1.0	1.3
f. Energy Audit- Businesses	4.2	0.5	0.1
g. Weatherization- Businesses	2.8	1.1	0.3
h. Heating / air conditioning upgrades- Businesses	3.4	1.1	0.3
i. Purchase of energy efficient appliances- Businesses	2.7	0.7	0.3
j. Installation of solar equipment- Businesses	1.3	1.0	0.8

Transportation

12. Please indicate whether your local government offers incentives for the local government employees to take any of the following actions:

Action	Incentive offered (% reporting)
a. Take mass transit to work	7.2
b. Carpool to work	6.5
c. Walk to work	4.3
d. Bike to work	5.8

13. If your local government offers employees parking, do you charge market rates for employee parking? a. Yes 5.0% **b. No 95.0%**

14. Is telework permitted for staff members in your local government? a. Yes 26.8% **b. No 73.2%**

15. Do you have a specific target for the percent of your government work force that will telework? a. Yes 0.6% **b. No 99.4%**

15A. If yes, what is it? 11.1%

16. Does your local government use a compressed work week with offices closed one day? a. Yes 10.2% **b. No 89.8%**

17. Within the last 5 years, which of the following transportation improvements has your community implemented?

Transportation improvements	Local government has initiated (% reporting)
a. Expanded dedicated bike lanes on streets	34.2
b. Added biking and walking trails	61.4
c. Added bike parking facilities	27.8
d. Expanded bus routes	21.9
e. Requiring sidewalks in new development	54.4
f. Widened sidewalks	24.5
g. Require charging stations for electric vehicles	1.2
h. Require bike storage facilities	8.0
i. Require showers and changing facilities for employees	4.0

18. Does your community currently have a commuter rail system (subway or streetcar)? a. Yes 7.2% **b. No 92.8%**

19. Does your community have a plan to create or expand the use of subway or streetcars? a. Yes 6.3% **b. No 93.7%**

20. Has your local government established any transportation programs targeted specifically to assist **low-income residents**?

a. Yes 20.6% **b. No 79.4%**

Building and Land Use

21. Please indicate whether your land use and development policies cover any of the following:

Activity	Land use and development policies cover (% reporting)
a. Require all new government construction projects to be LEED or Energy Star certified	12.3
b. Require all retrofit government projects to be LEED or Energy Star certified	7.5
c. Permit higher density development near public transit nodes	19.5
d. Permit higher density development where infrastructure is already in place (utilities and transportation)	22.2
e. Incentives other than increased density for new commercial development (including multi-family residential) that are LEED Certified or an equivalent	5.1
f. Incentives other than increased density for new single-family residential be LEED certified or the equivalent	2.8
g. Apply LEED Neighborhood Design standards	3.6
h. Provide density incentives for "sustainable" development (such as energy efficiency, recycling of materials, land preservation, storm water enhancement, etc.)	9.8
i. Provide tax incentives for "sustainable" development (such as energy efficiency, recycling of materials, land preservation, storm water enhancement, etc.)	2.8
j. Reduce fees for environmentally friendly development	3.3
k. Fast track plan reviews and or inspections for environmentally friendly development	8.4
l. Residential zoning codes to permit solar installations, wind power, or other renewable energy production	20.8
m. Residential zoning codes to permit higher densities through ancillary dwellings units or apartments (such as basement units, garage units, or in-house suites)	13.7
n. Zoning codes encourage more mixed-use development	35.4

22. Please indicate which of the following programs your local government has.

Program	Local government has program (% reporting)
a. An active brownfields, vacant property, or other program for revitalizing abandoned or underutilized residential, commercial or industrial lands and buildings	22.4
b. A land conservation program	22.4
c. A program for the purchase or transfer of development rights to preserve open space	15.5
d. A program for the purchase or transfer of development rights to create more efficient development	5.9
e. A program for the purchase or transfer of development rights to preserve historic property	7.8

Social Inclusion

23. Please indicate which of the following programs your local government has.

Action	Local government has taken action (% reporting)
a. Provide financial support/incentives for affordable housing	32.6
b. Provide supportive housing to people with disabilities	15.3
c. Provide housing options for the elderly	27.2
d. Provide housing within your community to homeless persons	10.2
e. Provide access to information technology for persons without connection to the internet	27.1
f. Provide funding for pre-school education	12.3
g. Provide after-school programs for children	26.3
h. Report on community quality of life indicators, such as education, cultural, diversity, and social well-being	14.9

Other Actions

24. Has your local government taken action – either through restrictions or incentives – in any of the following areas? (Check all applicable.)

Action	Restriction (% reporting)	Incentive (% reporting)
a. To use locally produced material or products	8.5	1.5
b. To reduce the use of plastic bags by grocery or retail stores	2.0	0.6
c. To use locally grown produce	8.8	0.1

25. Has your local government taken action in any of the following areas? (Check all applicable.)

Action	Local government has taken action (% reporting)
a. Restriction on purchase of bottled water by the local government	10.6
b. Use of public land for community gardens	28.8
c. Support a local farmer's market	52.4
d. Education program in the local community dealing with the environment and energy conservation	28.0
e. Locate recycling containers close to refuse containers in public spaces such as streets and parks	34.0
f. Green product purchasing policy in local government	12.9