



GARFIELD COUNTY ENERGY ACTION PLAN

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Our Vision and Goals

Garfield Clean Energy Collaborative (GCE) will be a national leader in using energy efficiency, renewable energy, and alternative fuels to build a strong, resilient, and diverse economy.

Collaborating with local governments, utilities, non-profit organizations, and businesses, GCE's overarching goals will be to achieve a 20 percent increase in energy efficiency over the 2015 Garfield County baseline by 2030 and to obtain between 35 and 50 percent of energy from renewable sources by 2030.

How Will We Get There?

To make progress toward these goals, GCE will address six focus areas. The rationale behind the focus areas was built on the basis of priorities identified by the planning team, existing programs and initiatives that are working well in the region, identified opportunity gaps, and a view for what might be possible. The following is a summary of each focus area and associated, or specific actions, that GCE and its partners plan to take to achieve the goals and targets stated in this plan.

Focus Area 1: Commercial / Industrial / Agricultural

In 2015, customers in this focus area accounted for approximately 62 percent of total electricity use in the county and 33 percent of natural gas use. Work in this area will build on the success of the available commercial programs in the county and the efforts of more than 300 businesses that by 2015 have undertaken energy efficiency improvements with a target to engage critical businesses that have not participated in efficiency efforts historically. These critical businesses, such as oil and gas producers, can improve their bottom line while helping the county reach its energy efficiency goals. Moreover, a robust program that helps all commercial, industrial, and agricultural users in the county will stimulate local economic development. Given the varied nature of commercial entities in the county, several strategies were designed to increase small business participation, engage large industrial businesses for the long term, and provide resources for the evolving agricultural sector (e.g., marijuana producers).

Strategy 1: Increase Energy Efficiency in Businesses throughout the County

Strategy 2: Catalyze Energy Savings by Industrial Users

Strategy 3: Create Targeted Programs for Agricultural Energy Users (Outdoor and Indoor)

Strategy 4: Promote Use of C-PACE and Other Financing Tools

Focus Area 2: Residential

Residential energy use accounted for 34 percent of electricity use and 64 percent of natural gas use county-wide in 2015. This focus area builds on the successes to date for low-income households to maximize efficiency. In Garfield County, helping households cut energy expenses is especially important in a region that faces affordable housing challenges, giving families more disposable income for other important priorities. Ongoing collaboration among county utilities and GCE will make it easier for all households to participate in efficiency improvements, use innovative financing and incentive programs, and support a sustained effort to reach the efficiency goals county-wide.

Strategy 5: Boost Efficiency in Residential Sector

Focus Area 3: Public Institutions

Maximizing energy savings and tapping energy innovations in municipal and government facilities demonstrates efficient use of tax-payer funds, ensures local governments are leading by example on resource efficiency, and is an important part of regional economic resilience. While this focus area only accounts for about 3 percent of total electricity and natural gas use in the county, efforts at this level are important in demonstrating to the broader county community that energy efficiency and renewable energy make good economic sense. In addition, there is a strong framework that already exists within the public-school sector that has the potential to be refreshed and expanded.

Strategy 6: Lead by Example at Municipal and Government Facilities

Strategy 7: Engage Schools and Educational Institutions

Focus Area 4: Renewable Energy

As the county continues to grow in population and demand for energy matches that growth, it becomes more important to look toward generating renewable energy in order to have a more robust and resilient community and economy. Advancing renewable energy requires an understanding of need, capacity, innovation, and policy that removes barriers and encourages investment and participation throughout the county. Residents, businesses, and utilities have a role in accelerating the adoption of solar and other viable renewable energy options over the coming years.

Strategy 8: Accelerate Residential and Commercial Solar Adoption

Strategy 9: Advance Utility-scale, Regionally-produced Renewable Energy

Focus Area 5: Innovative Design and Construction

Along with improvements to existing buildings and facilities, the region is expecting growth in new homes and commercial buildings over the coming decades. By ensuring that new buildings and facilities are built to the highest energy efficiency standards, those facilities will use less energy per square foot. In addition, when housing is built to meet energy efficiency standards, housing stays more affordable over time.

Strategy 10: Build in Efficiency and On-site Renewables from the Start

Focus Area 6: Policy and Institutional Frameworks

State and local leadership and policies have played an essential role in energy efficiency and renewable energy gains in Garfield County to date. This plan identifies short-term goals and actions that will enable the county to make continuous progress, to share successes, and to engage more of its population in energy efficiency and renewable energy alternatives. It also offers a forum and framework for looking beyond the short term, to be visionary, to influence local, regional, state, and even national conversations and efforts, and to increase investment, innovation, and policy for wise energy use.

Strategy 11: Strengthen State, Regional, and Local Policies and Funding Sources to Accelerate Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy