

PE7 Action: Water Conservation & Reuse

2 Points

4 Points

6 Points

A. Why is this action important?

Although New York State is expected to receive more annual precipitation on average, this additional precipitation is likely to come at times when it is needed least, e.g., late winter. In addition, the frequency of short-term summer droughts is expected to increase. Efforts to reduce water consumption and utilize water more efficiently provide an opportunity to reduce our demand on water resources, reduce our energy consumption, increase resiliency to short-term drought, and enhance innovation. Simple actions like installing affordable low-flow showerheads can help to conserve water in dry summer months. Other actions require more investment, such as the investigation and repair of leaky underground water distribution systems. Water conservation often saves money and reduces the need to find new, likely more expensive, sources of freshwater in the future. Climate-smart land-use policies can play an important role in ensuring that drinking water supplies are replenished and streams have sufficient base-flow.

B. How to implement this action

It may be helpful to conduct PE7 Action: Watershed Plan for Flooding and/or PE7 Action: Watershed Plan for Water Quality to understand your community's water sources, consumption and any threats to water quantity and/or quality, especially during past short-term droughts, prior to beginning this action. This information can be used to motivate government staff and community members to participate.

For conserving water using landscaping techniques, see PE7 Action: Water-Smart Landscaping.

To implement this Climate Smart Communities (CSC) action, local governments can undertake any of the following:

Conduct community outreach and education on water conservation and reuse tips on a regular basis. See examples below in section G. - Target outreach to all types of water users in your community, including residential, commercial, agricultural, and/or industrial. - Share information via multiple platforms (e.g., municipal website, social media, pamphlets, mailings and events).

- One option is to join [EPA's WaterSense program](#) as a promotional partner. Local governments can sign up for the WaterSense program relatively quickly, by signing the Promotional Partners Agreement. The EPA provides promotional resources and materials and there is no cost to participate in the WaterSense program; however, local governments must demonstrate promotional activities for water efficiency on an annual basis.

Create and implement a water conservation and reuse program for internal government operations. Collaborate with the local water utility, if applicable. Strategies could include the following:

- Perform regular audits of the public water system to identify changes in uses and losses.
- Set up universal metering by installing water consumption meters on all government facilities.
- Commit to purchasing only WaterSense-labeled products for municipal facilities.

Create and implement a water conservation and reuse program for the community, aimed at residential, commercial, agricultural, and/or industrial stakeholders. Collaborate with the local water utility, if applicable. Strategies could include the following:

- Perform inspections to detect and repair water leaks in municipal water lines.
- Set up universal metering by installing water consumption meters for all users.

- Provide incentives for water users to install water saving devices, like low-flow shower heads for residents and methods to capture and store water on farms.
- Create and implement a water conservation rate structure for all customers. This can include inclining block, seasonal, or other conservation rates that promote reduction in use.
- Offer individual consultations with property owners to identify and incentivize repair of underground water leaks and/or develop guidelines for efficient use of water onsite.
- Implement a rainwater harvesting and reuse program, including the distribution of rain barrels and the promotion of cisterns and other water harvesting practices. Some water harvesting practices, especially those involving reuse of gray or black water, may be regulated by state or local codes, or industry standards. Local governments are advised to consult with appropriate code officials and other water quality professionals before planning water harvesting and reuse programs. Any amendments to local building codes must be approved by the [State Fire Prevention and Building Code Council](#).

C. Timeframe, project costs, and resource needs

A local government can likely complete this action within six to nine months.

D. Which local governments implement this action? Which departments within the local government are most likely to have responsibility for this action?

This action applies to all types of local governments. The water utility is usually the most appropriate entity to undertake this action. If a local government does not have a water utility, the department or staff that lead climate and sustainability efforts may be responsible for this action. Projects can involve the planning department and/or a volunteer body, such as a Conservation Advisory Council, watershed group, or the CSC task force. Cross-department involvement is also recommended.

E. How to obtain points for this action

Points for this action are tiered based on completion of the components described below. Each tier must have been completed in the last 10 years.

	POSSIBLE POINTS
Implement community outreach and education on water conservation and reuse, and/or participate in the EPA WaterSense program as a promotional partner	2
Develop a water conservation and reuse program for government operations	2
Develop a water conservation and reuse program for the community (residents, businesses, agriculture, etc.)	2

F. What to submit

Community outreach: Submit examples of how, what and when education materials were shared with the community and/or demonstrate participation in the WaterSense program by submitting proof of partnership (e.g., your listing on EPA's WaterSense Partners Directory) and the most recent annual data submitted to the program.

Program for government facilities or the community: Submit a summary of the program with evidence of one or more water conservation strategies implemented.

All CSC action documentation is available for public viewing after an action is approved. Action submittals should not include any information or documents that are not intended to be viewed by the public.

G. Links to additional resources or examples

- [New York State \(NYS\) Department of Environmental Conservation \(DEC\), Water Use & Conservation](#)
- [US Environmental Protection Agency \(EPA\), Water Sense program](#)
- [US EPA, Water Sense products](#)
- [Suffolk County, NY, Water Authority](#)
- [New York Rural Water Association](#)
- [US EPA Water Audits And Water Loss Control for Public Water Systems](#)
- [New York, NY, Water Conservation Programs](#)
- [US EPA Water Conservation Tips for Residents](#)
- [Water Use It Wisely 100+ Ways to Conserve Water](#)
- [US EPA Saving Water in Office Buildings](#)
- [USDA Water and Agriculture Information Center's Water Conservation Resources](#)
- [US EPA Using Water Efficiently: Ideas for Industry](#)
- [American Water Works Association: Water Use Efficiency](#)
- [Trinity Water Supply Conservation Tips](#)
- [California Water Efficiency Partnership](#)
- [Broward Water Partnership, FL](#)
- [American Water Works Association Resources and Tools](#)

H. Recertification Requirements

The recertification requirements are the same as the initial certification requirements.