

REVitalize CBO Survey Study

Final Report

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1 Introduction

1.1 Program Description

To achieve the goals of the Reforming the Energy Vision (REV) strategy, it will be important for the State of New York to increase access to clean energy options for low- and moderate-income (LMI) communities¹ and Environmental Justice (EJ)² Areas. To address this need, New York State Energy Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA) has developed the REVitalize initiative to overcome barriers to adoption of community-scale clean energy projects.

Community-scale clean energy projects are those and employ distributed generation, energy efficiency, or other clean energy projects that serve more than a single home or business facility. They could include community solar, microgrids, district geothermal or biomass heating, or aggregated energy efficiency and weatherization.

Working with community-based organizations (CBOs), the initiative provides technical support, develops and makes available tools and resources, and identifies replicable models to finance and allow for community ownership of clean energy resources. Through these resources, the initiative seeks to encourage a greater number of CBOs working in LMI and EJ communities to develop community-scale clean energy projects and reduce the time required to develop and implement projects.

In the initial phase of the REVitalize initiative, NYSERDA issued a Request for Proposals (RFP) to select a small group of CBOs; the RFP requested the CBOs apply for funding for technical assistance to develop a community planning model and to implement a community-scale clean energy project. Drawing on the experience of these initial CBOs, NYSERDA will develop and refine toolkits of resources that other communities will be able to use to implement similar community-scale clean energy projects.

1.2 Purpose of This Research

To support the REVitalize Initiative, this research identifies CBO baseline interest in, and experience developing, community-scale clean energy projects in LMI or EJ communities. It also

¹ NYSERDA defines low-income households as those with annual incomes at or below 60% of the state median income, and moderate-income households as those with incomes between 60% and 80% of the state median income, or area median income, whichever is greater.

² Environmental justice areas are areas that bear disproportionately high costs of environmental damage.

seeks to glean insights from CBOs that have experience developing community-scale clean energy projects or other large, community-scale infrastructure projects, so that NYSERDA can develop resources of most value to CBOs interested in these projects.

NYSERDA and the evaluation team identified six specific evaluation questions that fall within three broader research objectives for this research, as shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Research Objectives and Associated Evaluation Researchable Issues

Objective	Researchable Issues
Five communities undertake community planning activities and test toolkits provided by NYSERDA	Number of LMI and EJ communities undertaking clean energy planning efforts
	Community planning activities undertaken by type
	Use of tools by LMI and EJ communities in community energy planning
The time necessary to plan and implement a community-scale clean energy project is reduced in LMI and EJ communities	Cycle time for CBOs to plan and implement a community-scale clean energy project in LMI and EJ communities by process step
	CBOs identify challenges in implementing community-scale clean energy projects in LMI and EJ communities
LMI and EJ customers benefit from community-scale clean energy projects	Number of LMI/EJ customers benefitting from community-scale clean energy projects

The questions listed in Table 1 are a subset of a larger list of research objectives and evaluation questions that NYSERDA will gather information on and address over the course of the initiative. Appendix A presents a complete list of REVitalize research objectives and researchable issues.

1.3 Methodology

To address the research questions listed above, Research Into Action conducted a phone survey of CBOs active in LMI and EJ communities. NYSERDA staff provided lists of CBOs engaged in EJ issues, registrants for the webinar NYSERDA held to discuss the REVitalize RFP, and REVitalize webinar attendees. Combining these lists, counting individual chapters of larger organizations as unique organizations, and removing duplicate organizations yielded 370 unique organizations. In addition, 61 non-CBOs, such as private organizations, governments, and universities, that had been invited to or attended the webinar were removed.

With input from NYSERDA, the research team prioritized the CBOs into three groups according to their likely level of interest or experience in community-scale clean projects, as shown in Table 2. The strategy was to interview all CBOs in the Priority 1 group, which was made up of CBOs

that likely had the highest interest or experience. The research team conducted the remainder of the interviews with Priority 2 CBOs that had at least some interest in such projects. Priority 3 CBOs were eliminated from consideration since, based on their names and initial internet searches, they appeared unlikely to pursue community-scale clean energy projects.³ The sample size of 54 CBOs meets a 90% confidence level with +/- 10% margin of error among the identified population of CBOs potentially interested in community-scale clean energy projects.

Table 2: Survey Sampling by Priority Group

Priority Group	Number of Organizations	Description	Sampling Approach	Sampling Target	Complete Surveys
1	8	CBOs identified by NYSERDA staff as good candidates for survey	Achieve Census	8	7
2	228	CBOs on EJ list and/or webinar registrants or attendees that appear to have some interest in community-scale clean energy projects	Fill in to reach 54 completes	46	49
3	73	CBOs on EJ list and/or webinar registrants or attendees appearing to have limited interest in community-scale clean energy projects	Do not survey	0	0
Total	309			54	56

The total of 56 completed surveys represents a 23% response rate across all potential CBOs in the Priority 1 and 2 groups. Table 3 summarizes the disposition of survey contact attempts. Most of the contacts that did not pass the survey screening (18 of 22) reported their organizations were not involved in clean energy. Three of the remaining organizations that did not pass screening were not CBOs, while the fourth focused on advocacy, not infrastructure, projects.

³ In some cases, these organizations, like the League of Women Voters, were well known for their advocacy work, but unlikely to take on local infrastructure projects. Other organizations, like the Civic United for Railroad Environmental Solutions, focused on very specific environmental issues, not directly related to community-scale clean energy.

Table 3: Disposition of Survey Responses

Disposition	Number of Contacts	Percent of Contacts
Complete Surveys	56	23%
Contact not reached	127	54%
Bad or wrong number	32	14%
Did not pass screening	20	8%
Refused	3	1%
Total	236	100%

Approximately two-thirds of the survey respondents (68%) held senior management positions within their CBO organizations. Most of the rest (23%) had roles related to program administration, with 9% spread across a variety of other roles.

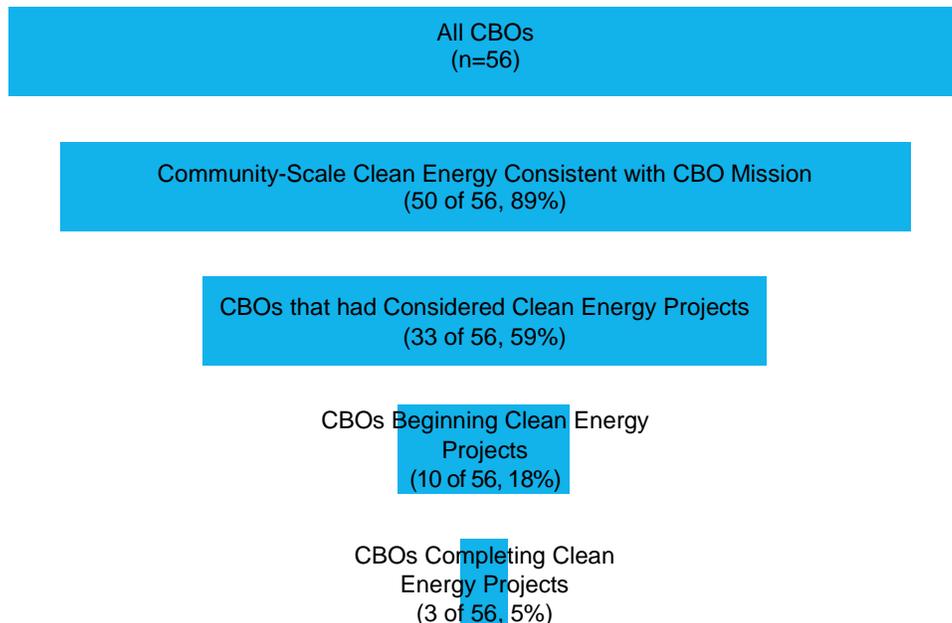
2 Findings

This section presents findings from the survey of CBOs. It begins with a review of CBO interest in and experience with community-scale clean energy projects, followed by a review of the tools they used to implement community-scale clean energy and other large infrastructure projects. Finally, this section reviews the barriers that CBOs reported that prevent them from developing community-scale clean energy projects.

2.1 CBO Interest and Experience with Community-Scale Clean Energy Projects

Survey findings indicate that community-scale clean energy projects appeal to the CBOs in the population surveyed.⁴ A large majority of CBOs reported community-scale clean energy projects are consistent with their organizational missions, and a majority of those reported they had considered undertaking community-scale clean energy projects (Figure 1). Of those organizations that had considered such projects, fewer had begun a project, and even fewer had completed projects.

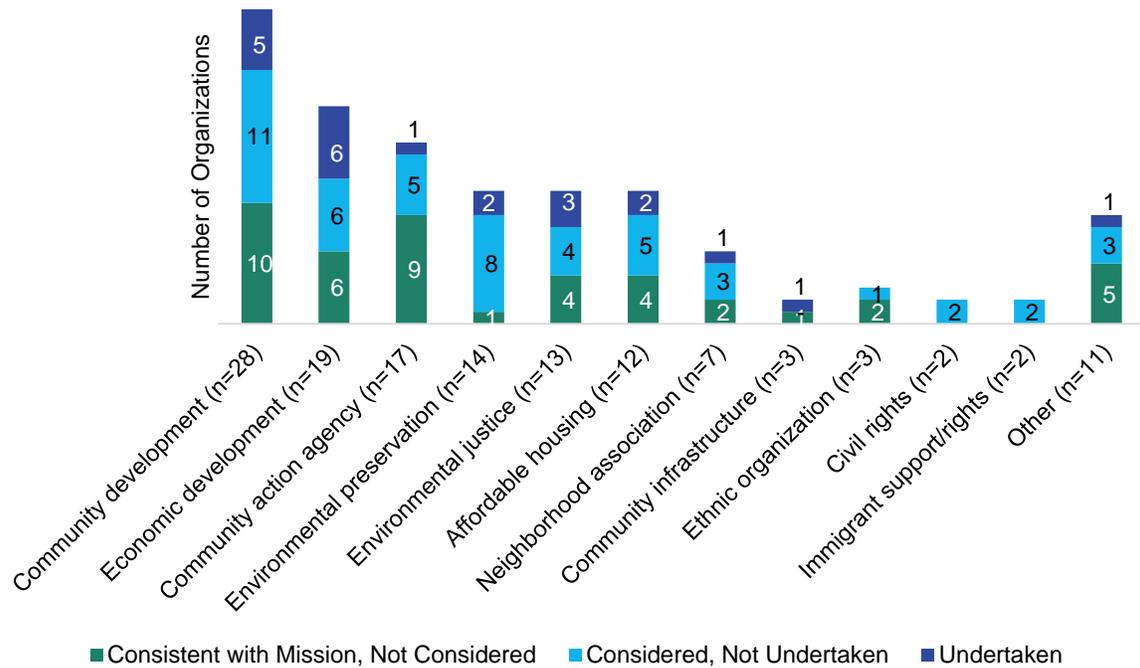
Figure 1: Uptake of Community-Scale Clean Energy Projects



⁴ Please note that the final sample frame only included CBOs which NYSERDA and Research Into Action determined would have some likelihood of being interested in clean energy projects.

Figure 2 shows CBO experience with clean energy projects by the areas of service they focus on. Notably, many CBOs described themselves as having more than one focus. Overall, they most often described themselves as being focused on community development, economic development, and community action. Quite a few also focused on environmental preservation, environmental justice, and affordable housing. Many fewer identified themselves as having a neighborhood, community infrastructure, ethnic, civil rights, or immigrant support focus.

Figure 2: Experience with Community-Scale Clean Energy Projects by Organization Type (Multiple responses allowed)



Among the ten CBOs that had undertaken community-scale clean energy projects, several had taken on multiple projects, with community solar projects being the most common. Seven organizations reported they had begun a total of 13 community solar projects, with three reporting they had each completed one project. Five CBOs reported they had begun a total of six microgrid projects, but none were complete. One CBO was undertaking a combined heat and power project but did not specify what fuel the system would use.

Of the ten CBOs that had begun or completed a project, only three were able to provide an estimate of the number of low- or moderate-income households likely to benefit. Their estimates ranged from 20 to 150, and taken together these three organizations anticipated these projects would benefit 202 low- or moderate-income households.

While one CBO anticipated they would complete a community solar project in nine months and another reported an expected timeline of three years, most (four of six) CBOs that had undertaken community solar projects estimated it would take between one and two years to complete those projects. An organization that had completed a CHP project, and was in the process of undertaking a microgrid project, estimated a longer time frame for their projects, likely four years or more.

2.2 Resources Used to Support Projects

The survey asked CBOs that had undertaken community-scale clean energy projects about the resources needed for community-scale clean energy projects and about the value of those resources. In addition, since community-scale clean energy is a new area of focus for many CBOs, the survey also asked CBOs that had not undertaken community-scale clean energy projects about other community-scale infrastructure projects the CBOs had pursued. These questions provided further insight into the tools and resources that could support community-scale clean energy projects.

This section begins with a review of the tools and resources CBOs had used for community-scale clean energy projects, then compares those findings to the tools and resources used in other large infrastructure projects.

2.2.1 Tools and Resources Used in Community-Scale Clean Energy Projects

Eight of the ten CBOs that had undertaken such projects described the resources their organizations had used to support community-scale clean energy projects. Overall, all eight CBOs reported they valued the personalized support they received for these projects, saying they worked with outside consultants, including engineering firms, solar developers, and the Rocky Mountain Institute. Six of the eight CBOs rated their consultant support as “extremely valuable.”

Four CBOs reported they used best practices guides or templates for documents and forms. CBOs obtained these resources from the PV Trainer’s Network and Rocky Mountain Institute’s E-Lab, as well as developing these tools in-house. CBOs generally rated these guides and templates as considerably less valuable than the help of outside consultants.

2.2.2 Tools and Resources Used in Other Community-Scale Infrastructure Projects

Seven of the 23 CBOs that had not considered community-scale clean energy projects reported they had experience with other types of community-scale infrastructure projects, ranging from

streetscape projects to building retrofit and renovation projects, to bridge replacement. The tools and resources these organizations used for these projects paralleled those used for community-scale clean energy projects. Six of the seven CBOs used consulting support, and all six rated consultant support as extremely valuable.

Roughly half of the organizations that had completed large infrastructure projects reported they had used templates for documents or forms (4 of 7) and best practices guides (3 of 7). About an equal number of CBOs rated these tools extremely valuable as rated them moderately valuable.

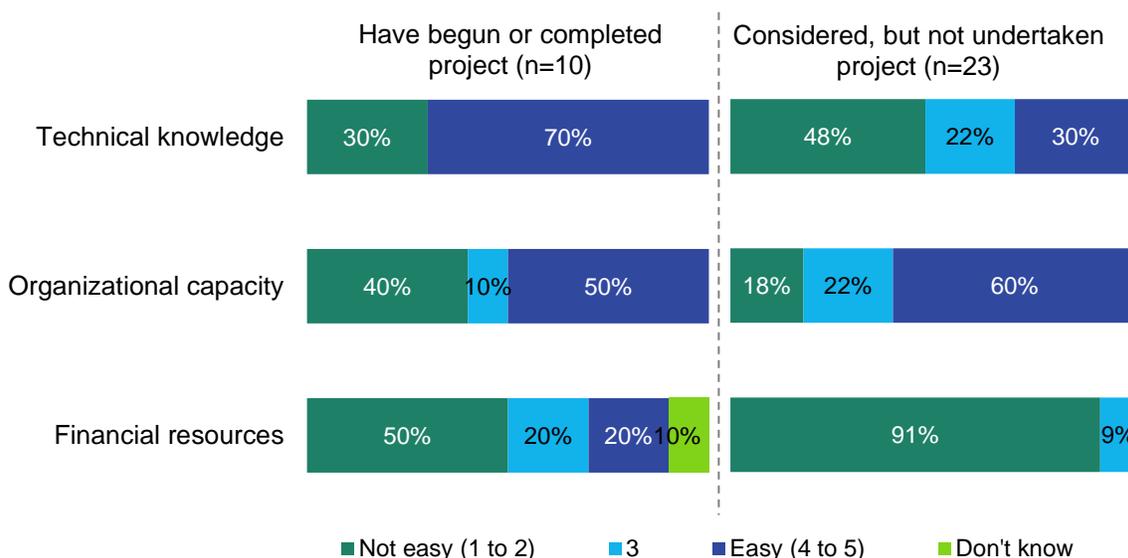
2.3 Barriers

This section first discusses the challenges CBOs face in implementing community-scale clean energy projects, and then describes the challenges CBOs have faced in completing other large infrastructure projects.

2.3.1 Barriers to Uptake of Community-Scale Clean Energy Projects

CBOs that had begun or completed community-scale clean energy projects reported their most critical challenges centered on access to financial resources and had fewer concerns about access to technical knowledge. On the other hand, CBOs that had considered, but not undertaken, projects reported even greater concerns about access to funding *and* to technical knowledge for these projects (see Figure 3). The data also suggest organizations who have not yet embarked on community-scale clean energy projects may underestimate the amount of organizational capacity community-scale clean energy projects require.

Figure 3: Ease of Access to Resources Needed for Community-Scale Clean Energy Projects



When asked to expand on the difficulties involved in accessing funding, CBOs that had begun, completed, or considered projects reported three funding steps: (1) identifying the most appropriate type of funding; (2) finding a source for that funding; and (3) winning that source’s support. While these CBOs noted that identifying funding sources is fundamental for these projects, they stated that these projects can be highly technical, and lenders may perceive the investment as risky.

When asked to elaborate about challenges related to technical knowledge, many of these CBOs reported their organizations lack the internal technical expertise needed to accomplish such projects. This finding further underscores the reliance these organizations have had, or expect to have, on outside consultants. In addition, in some cases, CBOs perceived the need to hire technical staff.

Other challenges that CBOs reported in undertaking community-scale clean energy projects primarily related to the logistical and technical details of completing the project, like siting and permitting the project and working with utilities and local governments (Table 4). CBOs also noted that community engagement and education and outreach efforts could be challenging.

Table 4: Other Challenges for Community-Scale Clean Energy Projects (Multiple responses allowed)

Challenge	Percent (n=33)
Difficulties in project siting, permitting, approval, & land acquisition	24%
Establishing a relationship and working with utilities	21%
Engaging the community; public acceptance of the project	21%
Regulatory challenges; partnering with government entities	18%
Competing with larger organizations or for-profit companies	12%
Education and outreach efforts	12%
Tax Issues	9%
General unfamiliarity with type of work: need education/mentorship/case studies	6%
Other challenges	12%
No other challenges beyond funding, organizational capacity, & technical expertise	15%

Consistent with their concerns about needing to have access to financial and technical support, CBOs most often reported they needed financial support, in the form of grants (82%) or loans (33%), and consulting services (55%) to effectively undertake community-scale energy projects (Table 5). Much lower proportions of CBOs indicated the need for best practice guides, templates, mentorship and training opportunities, and other resources.

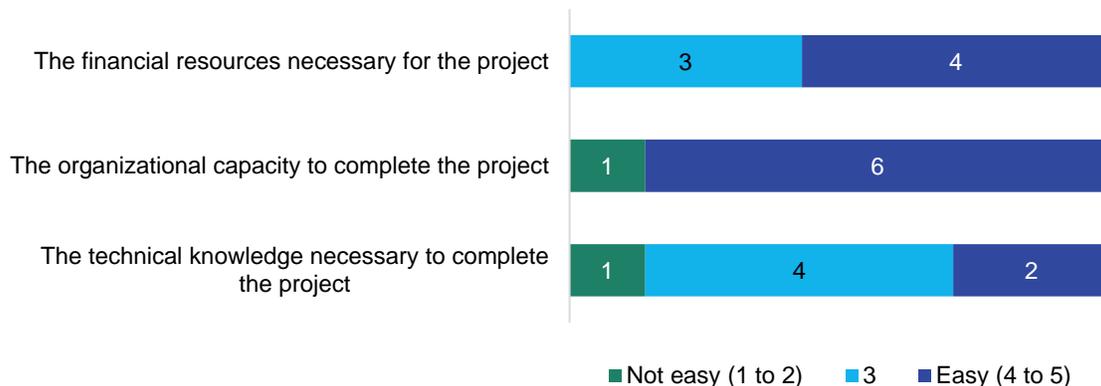
Table 5: Tools and Resources Desired to Support Community-Scale Clean Energy Projects (Multiple responses allowed)

Support	Percent (n=33)
Financial support (grants)	82%
Consulting support	55%
Financing (loans)	33%
Best practice guides	30%
Templates	21%
Mentorship and training opportunities	12%
Case studies or example organizations to serve as success stories	9%
Citizen workshops	6%
Simplified/improved NYSERDA website	6%
Support and cooperation from utility	6%
Other	21%

2.3.2 CBO Barriers to Large Infrastructure Projects Generally

CBOs that had completed other large infrastructure projects generally reported less difficulty accessing the financial resources, organizational capacity, and technical knowledge needed for these projects than organizations reported for the community-scale clean energy projects they had considered or undertaken. Only one of the seven organizations that had completed these projects reported it was difficult to access the financial resources or organizational capacity necessary, and none reported the technical knowledge was difficult to access. As with community-scale clean energy projects, the fewest organizations (two of seven) reported it was easy to access the financial resources necessary to pay for their other community-scale infrastructure projects.

Figure 4: Ease of Accessing Resources Necessary for Other Community-Scale Infrastructure Projects (n=7)



3 Conclusions

The findings from this research point to the following conclusions:

Conclusion 1: Community-scale clean energy projects appeal to CBOs with a broader interest in clean energy.

Among the CBOs that NYSERDA and the researchers identified as “best candidate” organizations for pursuing community-scale clean energy projects, most reported such projects were consistent with their missions and over half had given at least some consideration to community-scale clean energy projects.

Conclusion 2: The proportion of best candidate CBOs that have completed or begun projects is small (n = 10) but worthy of notice.

All but one community-scale clean energy project, begun or completed by 10 CBOs, is a community solar project; very few CBOs have completed projects (n=3). Tracking the course and outcomes of these projects over time would allow NYSERDA more detailed insights about CBO journeys, the resources used, the barriers met and how they were overcome, the lessons learned, the project benefits and other key information that would support future similar projects. Among other uses, this information can be used for case studies that can help interest like-minded organizations.

Conclusion 3: While CBOs are likely to benefit from templates and best practices guides, their highest priorities for support are access to funding and personalized technical support.

Community-scale clean energy projects are expensive and complex, with considerable variation from project to project. Most CBOs do not know where to find, access, or win funding, and few have the in-house technical skills needed to plan and execute such projects. Thus CBOs placed the highest value on financial and customized technical assistance resources in their pursuit of community-scale projects. While some also saw value in document templates and best practices guides, they rated the value of these resources much lower.

Appendix A. Complete REVitalize Research Objectives

The following is a complete list of the research objectives and researchable issues that NYSERDA plans to pursue with the REVitalize initiative. As noted in Section 1.2, the survey reported in this report addressed a subset of these objectives.

Objective	Researchable Issues
Communities are awarded funding through a competitive RFP for technical support to conduct planning activities for a community-scale clean energy project	Solicitation developed
	Solicitation issued
	Number of awards made by location
Toolkits to reduce the learning curve associated with community energy planning in LMI and EJ communities	Number of toolkits developed by type to reduce the learning curve associated with community energy planning in LMI and EJ communities
Five communities undertake community planning activities and test toolkits provided by NYSERDA	LMI and EJ community awareness of clean energy
	LMI and EJ community understanding of clean energy
	Number of LMI and EJ communities undertaking clean energy planning efforts
	Community planning activities undertaken by type
	CBOs report testing the toolkits
	Use of tools by LMI and EJ communities in community energy planning
Reduction in time necessary to plan and implement a community-scale clean energy project in LMI and EJ communities	Cycle time for CBOs to plan and implement community-scale clean energy projects in LMI and EJ communities by process step
	CBOs identify challenges in implementing community-scale clean energy projects in LMI and EJ communities
LMI and EJ customers benefit from community-scale clean energy projects	Number of LMI/EJ customers benefitting from community-scale clean energy projects
	LMI and EJ customers describe benefits from community-scale clean energy projects
	Energy impacts from contracted community-scale clean energy projects
Models for project planning and DER ownership and finance that are developed are replicated by LMI and EJ communities across New York State	NYSERDA models are used in non-contracted LMI and EJ communities by location and type
	NYSERDA toolkits are used in non-contracted LMI and EJ communities by location and type
	Number of Models for finance and community ownership of DER developed by type
	Value of NYSERDA models in non-contracted LMI and EJ communities by location and type
	Value of NYSERDA toolkits in non-contracted LMI and EJ communities by location and type

	Number of clean energy project replicated in non-contracted LMI and EJ communities
	Energy impacts from replicated projects

Appendix B. Survey Instrument

B.1. Introduction

Hi, my name is _____. I'm calling from Research Into Action, on behalf of the New York State Energy Research and Development Authority, NYSERDA. I'm calling because NYSERDA has really valued its partnerships with community-based organizations like yours in the past. Recently they have begun working with those organizations to develop community-scale clean energy projects that would benefit low-to-moderate income communities and environmental justice areas, for example, community solar projects that would bring renewable energy generation to the community and reduce utility bills. I first would like to learn a little bit about you and your organization. Then I would like to gather your thoughts about, and any experience your organization may have had with, community-scale clean energy projects. Your input will help NYSERDA understand how it can best help organizations like yours bring community-scale clean energy projects to their communities.

B.2. Organization Characteristics [ASK ALL]

[ASK ALL]

Q1. What is your role at **[Organization]**? **Would you describe yourself as...**

1. Senior Management
2. Program Administration
3. Administrative Support
96. Other, please specify: [OPEN-ENDED RESPONSE]

[ASK ALL]

Q2. Are you knowledgeable about any work your organization does, or would you be involved if your organization were to consider doing work, related to environmental justice or clean energy, including energy efficiency and renewable energy?

[SINGLE RESPONSE]

1. Yes, contact is knowledgeable
2. No, contact is not knowledgeable [*Ask to speak with someone else from the organization who is knowledgeable. If no alternate contact is available, thank and terminate.*]

3. Organization does not do, and would not consider, work related to clean energy

[Thank and terminate]

[Do not read:]

96. Other, please specify: [OPEN-ENDED RESPONSE]

[ASK ALL]

Q3. Briefly, what is the mission or primary focus of [**Organization**]?

1. [OPEN-ENDED RESPONSE]

[ASK ALL]

Q4. *[Do not read, select one or more codes that most closely matches response from Q3]*

Organization focus or mission (coded):

[MULTIPLE RESPONSE]

1. Environmental preservation: *General focus on preventing/addressing environmental damage*
2. Environmental justice: *Focus specifically on addressing/mitigating the impact of environmental damage on disadvantaged communities*
3. Neighborhood association: *Focus on a broad range of issues within a defined geographic area*
4. Faith group: *Church or other religious organization*
5. Ethnic organization: *Focus on advancing the interests and/or culture of a particular ethnic or racial group; constituents may or may not be immigrants*
6. Immigrant support/rights: *Focus on advocacy and/or support for immigrant groups, may or may not focus on a particular ethnicity*
7. Community infrastructure: *Operate or support infrastructure to benefit the community (e.g. parks, museums, libraries, etc.)*
8. Civil rights: *Focus on achieving equal rights and opportunities for disadvantaged groups*
9. Recreation: *Focus on a particular sport or recreational activity*
10. Affordable housing: *Focus on ensuring that housing is available at a cost accessible to low- and/or moderate-income households*
11. Community development: *Focus on organizing members of a particular community to solve common problems through collective action*

12. Economic development: *Focus on increasing economic opportunity and/or growth in a particular area*
13. Community Action Agency: *Frontline resource for people living in poverty, providing direct services and support for education, employment and family support services for low income families. (These agencies may implement the federal Weatherization Assistance Program)*
96. Other, please specify: [OPEN-ENDED RESPONSE]

B.3. Clean Energy Projects [ASK ALL]

As I mentioned, NYSERDA is interested in supporting community organizations in developing community-scale clean energy projects. These projects serve more than a single home. They could include:

- Community solar, which is when residents or businesses within a community come together to purchase or subscribe to a centralized, small-scale solar facility that will provide some or all of the power they use.
- District geothermal or biomass, which are systems that distribute heat to buildings and households that are connected by a network of pipes or other infrastructure. These systems use either geothermal heat or combustion of renewable, biomass fuels to generate the heat.
- Micro grids, which are small, local electric grids that typically operate while connected to the larger electric grid, but can operate independently in an emergency. They often include renewable resources like solar arrays or other distributed generators and may include energy storage.
- Aggregated energy efficiency and weatherization, which are when an organization brings together many individual energy efficiency projects, like residential weatherization upgrades or business and office building retrofits, to reduce energy demand community-wide.

[ASK ALL]

- Q5. Is developing this type of community-based project consistent with your organization's mission?

[SINGLE RESPONSE]

1. Yes

- 2. No

[Do not read:]

- 96. Other, please specify: [OPEN-ENDED RESPONSE]
- 98. Don't know

[IF Q5≠98]

Q6. Why do you say that?

- 1. [OPEN-ENDED RESPONSE]

[IF Q5=1]

Q7. Has your organization considered developing community-scale clean energy projects to benefit the communities you serve?

[SINGLE RESPONSE]

- 1. Yes
- 2. No

[Do not read:]

- 96. Other, please specify: [OPEN-ENDED RESPONSE]
- 98. Don't know

[IF Q7=1]

Q8. Have you begun, or completed, a community-scale clean energy project in your community?

[SINGLE RESPONSE]

- 1. Yes
- 2. No

[Do not read:]

- 96. Other, please specify: [OPEN-ENDED RESPONSE]
- 98. Don't know

B.4. Organizations that Have Completed Projects [ASK ALL]

[IF Q8=1]

Q9. What type of community-scale clean energy projects have you begun or completed?

1. [OPEN-ENDED RESPONSE]

[Do not read:]

96. Don't know

97. Refused

[IF Q8=1]

Q10. [Do not read; code open-ended response to Q8; enter 0 for any project types the respondent has not been involved in]

[MATRIX QUESTION]

[LOGIC] Item	Number of Projects Begun	Number of Projects Completed	96 Other, specify	98 DK
Community solar				
District geothermal or biomass				
Microgrid				
Energy efficiency aggregation				
Other, specify: _____				

[IF Q8=1]

Q11. How many low- or moderate-income households are benefitting from all of the community-scale clean energy projects that you have either begun or completed? Your best guess is fine.

[SINGLE RESPONSE]

1. Number of households: [FORCE NUMERIC RESPONSE]

[Do not read:]

96. Other, please specify: [OPEN-ENDED RESPONSE]

98. Don't know

[IF Q8=1]

Q12. How long did it take to plan and implement the community scale clean energy project(s) you have either begun or completed?

1. [OPEN-ENDED RESPONSE]

[Do not read: summarize open-ended response into number of years and months]

1. Number of Years: [FORCE NUMERIC RESPONSE]

2. Number of Months: [FORCE NUMERIC RESPONSE]

[IF Q8=1]

Q13. One way NYSERDA can support community organizations in developing community scale clean energy projects is by providing tools and resources that would make it easier for community organizations to implement those projects. What types of tools and resources did you use in planning and implementing the clean energy projects you have either begun or completed? Did you use...

[MULTIPLE RESPONSE]

1. Best practice guides, *[If yes, ask:]* which ones? [OPEN-ENDED RESPONSE]
2. Templates for documents or forms, *[If yes, ask:]* what kind? [OPEN-ENDED RESPONSE]
3. Consultants, *[If yes, ask:]* who did you work with and what were their roles? [OPEN-ENDED RESPONSE]
96. Any other tools or resources: [OPEN-ENDED RESPONSE]

[Do not read:]

97. Did not use resources
98. Don't know

[IF Q8=1 AND Q13≠97 OR 98]

Q14. I'd like to know how valuable the resource(s) you used were in your organization's ability to complete a community-scale clean energy project. On a scale from one to five,

with one meaning not at all valuable and five meaning extremely valuable, how valuable were the...

Interviewer: do not read 97-99

[MATRIX QUESTION: SCALE]

[DISPLAY ONLY ITEMS SELECTED IN Q13] Item	1: Not at all valuable	2	3	4	5: Extremely valuable	98 DK
Best practice guides						
Templates for documents or forms						
Consultants						
[Text from Q13_96 open-ended response]						

B.5. Barriers [ASK ALL]

[IF Q7=1]

Q15. *[If respondent has completed a clean energy project, read:]* In your experience developing a community-scale clean energy projects, how easy was it for your organization to access each of the following elements:

[If respondent has not completed a clean energy project, read:] As you think about undertaking a community-scale clean energy project, how easy do you anticipate it would be for your organization to access each of the following elements:

Please answer on a scale from one to five, where one is not at all easy and five is very easy. How easy was it to access:

Interviewer: do not read 97-99

[MATRIX QUESTION: SCALE]

Item	1: Not at all easy	2	3	4	5: Very easy	98 DK
The technical knowledge necessary to complete the project						
The organizational capacity to complete the project						
The financial resources necessary for the project						

[IF ANY ITEM IN Q15≤3]

Q16. What was/would be difficult for your organization about accessing:

[Interviewer: If more than one item is displayed, ask about the first item selected and follow with “and what would be difficult about accessing [second item],” etc.]

[MATRIX QUESTION]

[DISPLAY ONLY ITEMS RATED ≤3 in Q15] Item	[OPEN ENDED RESPONSE]
The technical knowledge necessary to complete the project?	
The organizational capacity to complete the project?	
The financial resources necessary for the project?	

[IF Q7=1]

Q17. What other elements of developing a community-scale clean energy project, if any, would be challenging for your organization?

1. [OPEN-ENDED RESPONSE]

[IF Q7=1]

Q18. What tools, support, or resources would make it easier for your organization to plan or implement community-scale clean energy projects? *[Do not read responses, probe to code]*

[MULTIPLE RESPONSE]

1. Best practice guides
2. Templates
3. Consulting support
4. Financial support (grants)
5. Financing (loans)
96. Other, please specify: [OPEN-ENDED RESPONSE]
98. Don't know

B.6. Other Relevant Experience [IF Q7≠1]

[IF Q7≠1]

Q19. Has your organization completed any projects that required you to bring together community members in support of a large infrastructure development?

[SINGLE RESPONSE]

- 1. Yes
- 2. No

[Do not read:]

- 96. Other, please specify: [OPEN-ENDED RESPONSE]
- 98. Don't know

[IF Q19=1]

Q20. What types of projects did you complete?

- 1. [OPEN-ENDED RESPONSE]

[IF Q19=1]

Q21. In your experience completing that/those project(s) how easy was it for your organization to access each of the following elements?

Please answer on a scale from one to five, where one is not at all easy and five is very easy. How easy was it to access:

Interviewer: do not read 97-99

[MATRIX QUESTION: SCALE]

Item	1: Not at all easy	2	3	4	5: Very easy	98 DK
The technical knowledge necessary to complete the project						
The organizational capacity to complete the project						
The financial resources necessary for the project						

[IF Q19=1]

Q22. What types of tools and resources did you use in planning and implementing the large infrastructure projects you completed? Did you use...

[MULTIPLE RESPONSE]

1. Best practice guides
2. Templates for documents or forms
3. Consultants
96. Any other tools or resources: [OPEN-ENDED RESPONSE]

[Do not read:]

97. Did not use resources
98. Don't know

[IF Q19=1 AND Q22≠97 OR 98]

Q23. I'd like to know how valuable the resource(s) you used were in your organization's ability to complete your project(s). On a scale from one to five, with one meaning not at all valuable and five meaning extremely valuable, how valuable were the...

Interviewer: do not read 97-99

[MATRIX QUESTION: SCALE]

[DISPLAY ONLY ITEMS SELECTED IN Q22] Item	1: Not at all valuable	2	3	4	5: Extremely valuable	98 DK
Best practice guides						
Templates for documents or forms						
Consultants						
[Text from Q22_96 open-ended response]						

[IF Q19=1]

Q24. What tools, support, or resources would have made it easier for your organization to plan or implement your large infrastructure project(s)? [Do not read responses, probe to code]

[MULTIPLE RESPONSE]

1. Best practice guides
2. Templates

3. Consulting support
4. Financial support (grants)
5. Financing (loans)
96. Other, please specify: [OPEN-ENDED RESPONSE]
97. Don't know

B.7. Population Served [ASK ALL]

[ASK ALL]

Q25. *[If necessary, rephrase this question based on the response to Q3, or do not read the question and select the appropriate option if the previous response makes the answer clear (e.g. in the case of a neighborhood association)]* Which of these best describes **[Organization]**'s focus:

[SINGLE RESPONSE]

1. Advocacy or action around a specific issue or set of issues to benefit the population generally
2. Advocacy or action around a specific issue to benefit a defined group of people that share some characteristic
3. Wide-ranging support to benefit a group of people that share some characteristic, not limited to a specific issue or set of issues

[Do not read:]

96. Other, please specify: [OPEN-ENDED RESPONSE]
98. Don't know

[IF Q25≠1 OR 98]

Q26. Is the population **[Organization]** serves primarily defined by geography, that is, living in a particular place, or are they primarily defined by some other characteristic that they share?

[SINGLE RESPONSE]

1. Defined by geography
2. Shares characteristics, but not defined by geography *[Interviewer: Select this option if organization's constituency is primarily defined by characteristics or interests, even if there are geographic limitations (e.g. bee keepers in Buffalo)]*
96. Other, please specify: [OPEN-ENDED RESPONSE]

98. Don't know

[IF Q26=1 OR 2]

Q27. About how many households are in the communities your organization serves?

1. [OPEN-ENDED RESPONSE]

[Do not read:]

98. Don't know

99. Refused

[IF Q26=1 OR 2]

Q28. I'd like to know more about the characteristics of the households in the community you serve. Please tell me if none or hardly any households – less than 10%; some households – 10-50%; more than half of your households (50-90%), or all or nearly all of your households – more than 90% - have that characteristic. How many of your households...

Interviewer: do not read 97-99

[MATRIX QUESTION: SCALE]

[LOGIC] Item	None or hardly any (<10%)	Less than half (10-49%)	More than half (50-90%)	All or almost all (>90%)	98 DK
Are Low-to-Moderate Income, meaning they earn less than 80% of the area median income?					
Own their homes?					
Live in single-family homes?					
Are members of racial or ethnic minority groups?					
Are native English speakers?					
Are 65 years old or older?					
Live in areas that have been identified as Potential Environmental Justice Areas?					
Live in rural areas?					

[IF Q26=1 OR 2]

Q29. What are the most important environmental justice issues, if any, facing the communities you serve? *[If necessary, clarify: Environmental justice issues occur when a particular community bears a disproportionate share of the cost of environmental damage.]*

1. [OPEN-ENDED RESPONSE]

[IF Q5=1]

Q30. Those are all the questions I have prepared. Is there anything else you think I should know about the challenges your organization might face in undertaking a clean energy project in your community, or the resources you might need to do so?

1. [OPEN-ENDED RESPONSE]

Appendix C. Survey Frequencies

This appendix lists frequencies of closed-ended responses to the REVitalize CBO survey. Verbatim open-ended responses are included in the data Research Into Action will transfer to NYSERDA at the conclusion of the project.

[ASK ALL]

Q1. What is your role at [Organization]? Would you describe yourself as...

Response Option	Percent (n=56)
Senior Management	68%
Program Administration	23%
Administrative Support	2%
Other	7%

[ASK ALL]

Q2. Are you knowledgeable about any work your organization does, or would you be involved if your organization were to consider doing work, related to environmental justice or clean energy, including energy efficiency and renewable energy?

Response Option	Percent (n=56)
Yes, contact is knowledgeable	100%
No, contact is not knowledgeable	0%
Organization does not do, and would not consider, work related to clean energy	0%
Other	0%

[ASK ALL]

Q4. Organization focus or mission (coded):

Response Option	Percent (n=56)
Community development	50%
Economic development	34%
Community action agency	30%
Environmental preservation	25%
Environmental justice	23%
Affordable housing	21%

Response Option	Percent (n=56)
Neighborhood association	13%
Community infrastructure	5%
Ethnic organization	5%
Civil rights	4%
Immigrant support/rights	4%
Faith group	0%
Recreation	0%
Other	20%

C.1. Clean Energy Projects [ASK ALL]

Q5. Is developing this type of community-based project consistent with your organization’s mission?

Response Option	Percent (n=56)
Yes	89%
No	5%
Other	5%
Don’t know	0%

[IF Q5=1]

Q7. Has your organization considered developing community-scale clean energy projects to benefit the communities you serve?

Response Option	Percent (n=50)
Yes	66%
No	12%
Other	22%
Don’t know	0%

[IF Q7=1]

Q8. Have you begun, or completed, a community-scale clean energy project in your community?

Response Option	Percent (n=33)
Yes	30%
No	70%

C.2. Organizations that Have Completed Projects [ASK ALL]

[IF Q8=1]

Q10. What type of community-scale clean energy projects have you begun or completed?

Community Solar

Number of Projects Completed	Count (n=10)
1	3
0	7

Number of Projects Begun	Count (n=10)
5	1
3	1
1	5
0	3

District geothermal or biomass

Number of Projects Completed	Count (n=10)
0	10

Number of Projects Begun	Count (n=10)
0	10

Microgrid

Number of Projects Completed	Count (n=10)
0	12

Number of Projects Begun	Count (n=10)
2	1
1	3
0	6

Energy efficiency aggregation

Number of Projects Completed	Count (n=10)
0	12

Number of Projects Begun	Count (n=10)
0	12

[IF Q8=1]

Q11. How many low- or moderate-income households are benefitting from all of the community-scale clean energy projects that you have either begun or completed? Your best guess is fine.

Open-ended Responses	Count (n=10)
150	1
32	1
20	1
Don't know	7

[IF Q8=1]

Q12. How long did it take to plan and implement the community scale clean energy project(s) you have either begun or completed?

Number of Years	Count (n=10)
<1	1
1-3	5
4 or more	1
N/A	3

[IF Q8=1]

Q13. One way NYSERDA can support community organizations in developing community scale clean energy projects is by providing tools and resources that would make it easier for community organizations to implement those projects. What types of tools and

resources did you use in planning and implementing the clean energy projects you have either begun or completed? Did you use...

Response Options	Percent (n=10)
Best Practice Guides	30%
Templates for documents or forms	30%
Consultants	80%
Any other tools or resources	40%
Did not use resources	0%
Don't know	20%

[IF Q8=1 AND Q13≠97 OR 98]

Q14. I'd like to know how valuable the resource(s) you used were in your organization's ability to complete a community-scale clean energy project. On a scale from one to five, with one meaning not at all valuable and five meaning extremely valuable, how valuable were the...

Resources	1: Not at all valuable	2	3	4	5: Extremely valuable	98 DK
Best practice guides (n=3)	0%	67%	0%	0%	33%	0%
Templates for documents or forms (n=3)	0%	33%	33%	0%	0%	33%
Consultants (n=8)	0%	0%	13%	13%	75%	0%
Other resources (n=3)	0%	0%	0%	33%	67%	0%

C.3. Barriers [ASK ALL]

[IF Q7=1]

Q15. In your experience developing a community-scale clean energy projects, how easy was it for your organization to access each of the following elements:

Please answer on a scale from one to five, where one is not at all easy and five is very easy. How easy was it to access:

Item (n=33)	1: Not at all easy	2	3	4	5: Very easy	98 DK
The technical knowledge necessary to complete the project	18%	24%	15%	33%	9%	0%
The organizational capacity to complete the project	9%	15%	18%	30%	27%	0%

Item (n=33)	1: Not at all easy	2	3	4	5: Very easy	98 DK
The financial resources necessary for the project	36%	42%	12%	3%	3%	3%

[IF Q7=1]

Q18. What tools, support, or resources would make it easier for your organization to plan or implement community-scale clean energy projects?

Response Options	Percent (n=33)
Best Practice Guides	30%
Templates for documents or forms	21%
Consultants	55%
Financial support (grants)	82%
Financing (loans)	33%
Other	73%
Don't know	0%

C.4. Other Relevant Experience [IF Q7≠1]

[IF Q7≠1]

Q19. Has your organization completed any projects that required you to bring together community members in support of a large infrastructure development?

Response Options	Percent (n=23)
Yes	30%
No	65%
Other	4%

[IF Q19=1]

Q21. In your experience completing that/those project(s) how easy was it for your organization to access each of the following elements?

Please answer on a scale from one to five, where one is not at all easy and five is very easy. How easy was it to access:

Item (n=7)	1: Not at all easy	2	3	4	5: Very easy	98 DK
The technical knowledge necessary to complete the project	0%	0%	43%	43%	14%	0%
The organizational capacity to complete the project	0%	14%	0%	43%	43%	0%
The financial resources necessary for the project	14%	0%	57%	14%	14%	0%

[IF Q19=1]

Q22. What types of tools and resources did you use in planning and implementing the large infrastructure projects you completed? Did you use...

Response Options	Percent (n=7)
Best Practice Guides	43%
Templates for documents or forms	57%
Consultants	86%
Any other tools or resources	71%
Did not use resources	0%
Don't know	0%

[IF Q19=1 AND Q22≠97 OR 98]

Q23. I'd like to know how valuable the resource(s) you used were in your organization's ability to complete your project(s). On a scale from one to five, with one meaning not at all valuable and five meaning extremely valuable, how valuable were the...

Item	1: Not at all valuable	2	3	4	5: Extremely valuable	98 DK
Best practice guides (n=3)	0%	0%	33%	0%	67%	0%
Templates for documents or forms (n=4)	0%	0%	50%	25%	25%	0%
Consultants (n=6)	0%	0%	0%	33%	67%	0%
Other resources (n=5)	0%	0%	20%	40%	20%	20%

[IF Q19=1]

Q24. What tools, support, or resources would have made it easier for your organization to plan or implement your large infrastructure project(s)?

Response Options	Percent (n=7)
Best Practice Guides	0%
Templates	0%
Consulting support	0%
Financial support (grants)	71%
Financing (loans)	29%
Other	71%
Don't know	14%

C.5. Population Served [ASK ALL]

[ASK ALL]

Q25. Which of these best describes [Organization]'s focus:

Response Options	Percent (n=55)
Advocacy or action around a specific issue or set of issues to benefit the population generally	18%
Advocacy or action around a specific issue to benefit a defined group of people that share some characteristic	18%
Wide-ranging support to benefit a group of people that share some characteristic, not limited to a specific issue or set of issues	46%
Other	18%
Don't know	0%

[IF Q25≠1 OR 98]

Q26. Is the population [Organization] serves primarily defined by geography, that is, living in a particular place, or are they primarily defined by some other characteristic that they share?

Response Options	Percent (n=45)
Defined by geography	76%
Shares characteristics, but not defined by geography	9%
Other	16%
Don't know	0%

[IF Q26=1 OR 2]

Q27. About how many households are in the communities your organization serves?

Binned Responses	Percent (n=38)
Less than 5,000	5%
5,000 – 14,999	16%
15,000 – 49,999	5%
50,000 – 99,999	8%
100,000 or more	8%
Don't know	58%

[IF Q26=1 OR 2]

Q28. I'd like to know more about the characteristics of the households in the community you serve. Please tell me if none or hardly any households – less than 10%; some households – 10-50%; more than half of your households (50-90%), or all or nearly all of your households – more than 90% - have that characteristic. How many of your households...

Item	None or hardly any (<10%)	Less than half (10-49%)	More than half (50-90%)	All or almost all (>90%)	98 DK
Are Low-to-Moderate Income (n=34)	6%	21%	44%	15%	15%
Own their homes? (n=34)	3%	50%	24%	3%	21%
Live in single-family homes? (n=34)	9%	24%	32%	9%	27%
Are members of racial or ethnic minority groups? (n=34)	9%	18%	47%	15%	12%
Are native English speakers? (n=32)	0%	13%	53%	22%	13%
Are 65 years old or older? (n=34)	6%	68%	9%	0%	18%
Live in areas that have been identified as Potential Environmental Justice Areas? (n=34)	6%	12%	27%	24%	32%
Live in rural areas? (n=35)	57%	20%	6%	9%	9%