

National Survey and Interviews on Transitioning to 100% Renewable Energy in U.S. Cities

ABOUT THIS SURVEY

This is a national survey for city government employees and non-governmental sustainability leaders in cities that have committed to or are in the process of committing to 100% renewable energy. This target audience thus includes, but is not limited to, elected or appointed personnel and local organizers involved in the city's clean energy initiative. Completing this survey should take around 15 minutes and the responses will be kept confidential. If you would like to be entered into a raffle for a \$100 gift card, please be sure to fill out the demographic questions at the end of the survey.

THE SURVEY'S PURPOSE

The main goal of this survey is to gather information about how each city has reacted to and progressed in their commitment toward the goal of reaching 100% renewable energy. The survey looks to determine common pathways and barriers that cities face in transition to reaching this goal.

The data from this survey will be used to inform city leaders currently making a similar commitment or hoping to make a commitment in the future about potential and practiced actions for transitioning to 100% renewable energy. The results of this survey will be published and available to participants like you to draw from as well.

CONFIDENTIALITY

We assure you that your responses are completely anonymous. Responses to anonymous surveys cannot be traced back to the respondent. No personally identifiable information is captured unless you voluntarily offer personal or contact information in any of the comment fields. Additionally, your responses are combined with those of many others and summarized in a report to further protect your anonymity.

WHO'S BEHIND THIS SURVEY

This survey is being conducted by a team of University of Michigan graduate student researchers in the School for Environment and Sustainability, with assistance from a faculty advisor and in partnership with the Institute for Local Self-Reliance. The team is conducting this survey because of interests in equitable renewable energy transitions within cities.

If you have additional questions about this study, please contact us at seas.ilsr@umich.edu, or Dr. Tony Reames at treames@umich.edu or (734) 647-3916.

THANK YOU for your participation!

NOTE: We cannot use partial responses. Please be sure to complete all questions.

Has your city made a formal commitment to 100% renewable energy, to be carbon neutral, or for carbon free energy?

- Yes, my city has made a formal commitment (e.g., passed a city council resolution, mayoral commitment) (1)
- No, my city has not yet made a formal commitment, but I am aware of an ongoing campaign to make one (2)
- No, my city has not yet made a formal commitment, and I'm not aware of an ongoing campaign to make one (3)
- I Don't Know (4)
- Other (5) _____

What kind of commitment has your city made, or how do you define this commitment?

- Municipal operations only (1)
- 100% renewable city-wide (2)
- 100% carbon free city-wide (3)
- Carbon neutral city-wide (4)
- Other (5) _____

By what year has your city committed to reaching this goal?

- Our city has already reached its commitment (1)
- 2020-2025 (2)
- 2026-2030 (3)
- 2031-2035 (4)
- 2036-2040 (5)
- 2041-2045 (6)
- 2046-2050 (7)
- I Don't Know (8)
- Other (9) _____

What is the population of your city?

- Less than 50,000 (1)
- 50,001 - 200,000 (2)
- Greater than 200,001 (3)

Which title or role do you most closely identify as? Please select the best fit and answer the remaining questions according to that perspective.

- Elected official (1)
- City staff or other government employee (2)
- Community member (3)
- Community organizer (4)
- Policy advocate, researcher, or lobbyist (nongovernmental) (5)

Which statement best summarizes the current status of your city's planning efforts related to the 100% renewable energy commitment?

- We have an established plan for meeting the 100% renewable target and have begun implementing said plan (1)
- We have an established plan for meeting the 100% renewable target but have not begun implementing the plan (2)
- We are just beginning to address the 100% renewable commitment (3)
- Other (4) _____

What has driven your city's willingness to make the commitment to 100% renewable energy? Select up to 3 reasons.

- Funding received through American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (1)
- Potential for financial savings (2)
- Potential to attract outside investment (3)
- Concern for the local environment (4)
- Concern for climate change (5)
- External pressure from public (6)
- External pressure from organizing groups (7)
- Internal pressure from municipal staff (8)
- Other: (9) _____

What are or seem to be the top priorities in this transition to 100% renewable energy? Select up to 3.

- Financial savings (1)
- Climate action (e.g., reduction of greenhouse gas emissions) (2)
- Increased resilience to extreme weather or other hazards (3)
- Local self-reliance (4)
- Energy independence (5)
- Social equity (6)
- Environmental quality (7)
- Local, renewable energy jobs or job training (8)
- Other (9) _____

How has the 100% renewable energy commitment been received by residents, in general?

- Very positively (1)
- Positively (2)
- Neutral (3)
- Negatively (4)
- Very negatively (5)

For the next few questions, please take into account the following definition of Energy Democracy: Energy democracy implies an energy system that is democratic, where decisions are made by the users of energy.

How important are energy democracy issues to your community?

- Extremely important (1)
- Very important (2)
- Moderately important (3)
- Slightly important (4)
- Not at all important (5)

Rank how significant the following barriers have been in making progress toward your city's renewable energy commitment.

- _____ Lack of funding (1)
- _____ Lack of staff capacity or expertise in renewable energy (2)
- _____ Lack of information or data (e.g. case studies or example benchmarks) (3)
- _____ Lack of support from utility owner (4)
- _____ Lack of support from the community (5)
- _____ Lack of political will among elected officials (6)
- _____ Other: (7)

Does your government publish and share information on the city's progress toward reaching its stated commitment?

- Yes (1)
- No (2)
- I Don't Know (3)

Has your city/organization implemented education and awareness campaigns to promote energy conservation and efficiency?

- Yes (1)
- No (2)
- I Don't Know (3)

Has your city passed mandates, carve-outs, or policies related to any of the following? Select all that apply.

- Rooftop solar (1)
- Utility-scale renewable energy (2)
- Green building codes (residential or commercial buildings) (3)
- Building energy benchmarking (4)
- Energy use disclosure requirements for time of sale or rental (5)
- Franchise fees (6)
- Energy efficiency programs (7)
- Electric vehicles (e.g. municipal fleets, public transit, charging infrastructure) (8)

Does your organization advocate for renewable energy policies regularly?

- Yes, through lobbying for legislation (1)
- Yes, by engaging in regulatory proceedings and other administrative actions (2)
- Yes, by negotiating directly with utilities (3)
- Yes, by (4) _____
- No (5)
- I Don't Know (6)

What does your local government consider as the top energy equity issue is in their city?

Has your city assessed energy equity issues as a whole (e.g. number of residents who struggle to pay for their energy bills, racial disparities in energy cost burden or proximity to pollution sources)?

- Yes (1)
- No (2)
- I Don't Know (3)

How has your city facilitated community engagement with energy policy making? Select all that apply.

- Vision building, planning, and design charrettes or workshops with residents (1)
- Resident surveys (mail or online) (2)
- Elected or appointed boards and commissions (3)
- Meetings with representatives from community groups, NGOs, utility industry, universities, etc. (4)
- Ballot initiatives (5)
- Public hearings at City Hall or in City Council or Planning Board/Commission (6)
- Social Media (7)

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

- Yes (1)
- No (2)
- I Don't Know (3)

Is the city government ensuring that efficiency upgrades and access to any other technological methods used to meet the commitment will be accessible to low-income communities and communities of color?

- Yes (1)
- No (2)

- I Don't Know (3)

What is the city government doing to ensure that the shift to 100% renewable energy reduces burdens on low-income communities? Select all that apply.

- Require participation rates in energy programs (e.g. solar carve-outs) (1)
- Provide financial incentives (2)
- Provide community education and workshops (3)
- Partner with representatives and community-based groups from low-income communities (4)
- Ensure participation from low-income communities with renewable energy transition planning and program design (5)
- My city government is not doing anything (6)
- Other: (7) _____

Is your city government adequately addressing the disproportionate burden of the transition to 100% renewable energy on low-income communities and communities of color?

- Yes (1)
- No (2)
- I Don't Know (3)

What more would your organization like to see them do?

How many people does your city have working directly on energy topics (e.g. sustainability officer, energy efficiency program officer, Clean Energy Task Force, etc.)?

- 1-5 (1)
- 6-10 (2)
- 10-15 (3)
- Greater than 15 (4)
- No Staff (5)
- I Don't Know (6)

How closely does the city work with the following stakeholders to develop and/or implement programs supporting the 100% renewable energy transition?

	Close Partnership / Regular Involvement	Limited Involvement as Appropriate	No Involvement	I Don't Know
Neighboring municipalities (1)				
Regional agencies (e.g. transit authorities, councils on government, etc.) (2)				
State or federal agencies (3)				
Community-based organizations (4)				
Colleges/universities/academic communities (5)				
Business community (6)				
Public (e.g. town meetings, focus groups, etc.) (7)				

During which of the following has your city government consulted or interacted with other city governments to share best practices related to advancing 100% renewable energy? Select all that apply.

- Before a formal commitment was adopted at the city (e.g. during a Ready for 100 campaign) (1)
- While developing a city-wide renewable energy, energy system, or climate action plan (2)
- During project implementation (e.g. installation of rooftop solar on a municipal building) (3)
- None of the above (4)
- I Don't Know (5)
- Other: (6) _____

What type of support would be most helpful to your city government as it transitions to 100% renewable energy? Please rate each type of support on a scale from 1-5, with 5 being the most helpful and N/A for support that cannot apply.

	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
Funding for planning and implementation (1)						
Funding for stakeholder engagement (2)						
Partnerships with cities transitioning to 100% renewable energy (3)						
Technical and/or legal assistance (4)						
Other: (5)						

Where does your city/organization procure the funding necessary to implement programs and technological developments used to reach your city's commitment? Select all that apply.

- Federal funding (1)
- State funding (2)
- Local taxes or fees (3)
- Private sector (4)
- Local organizations (5)
- National organizations (6)
- Fundraising/donations (7)
- Other: (8) _____

Please rank how sectors are being prioritized for the transition to 100% renewable energy.

- _____ Transportation (1)
- _____ Buildings (2)
- _____ Power generation (3)
- _____ Waste management (4)
- _____ Other: (5)

Does your city/organization conduct a greenhouse gas inventory?

- Yes, my city has a baseline inventory (1)
- Yes, my city has a baseline inventory and tracks emissions by conducting one annually (2)
- No, my city does not (3)
- I Don't Know (4)
- Other: (5) _____

Is this greenhouse gas inventory data publicly accessible?

- Yes (1)
- No (2)
- I Don't Know (3)

Does your city have a plan to create or expand the use of public transportation?

- Yes (1)
- No (2)
- I Don't Know (3)

Does your city or organization track energy usage for any of the following buildings? Select all that apply.

- Municipal buildings (1)
- Residential buildings (2)
- Commercial buildings (3)
- Industrial buildings (4)
- I Don't Know (5)
- Other (7) _____

Is this building energy usage data publicly accessible?

- Yes (1)
- No (2)
- I Don't Know (3)

Please indicate if your city has assessed or implemented any of the following at or within municipal or public buildings. Select all that apply.

- LED lighting (1)
- Building recommissioning (2)
- On-site renewables (e.g. rooftop solar) (3)
- Off-site renewables (e.g. solar farm) (4)
- Renewable Energy Credit (REC) purchases (5)
- Energy management systems (EMS) (6)
- Microgrid installation (7)
- Battery storage and back-up installations (8)
- EV charging stations (public) (9)
- EV charging stations (municipal fleet only) (10)
- Green building certification for new buildings or renovations (e.g. LEED, Energy Star) (11)
- Other efficiency or renewable technology: (12) _____

Does your city offer any of the following energy conservation/efficiency programs? Select all that apply.

- Energy Audit (1)
- Weatherization (2)
- Heating/air conditioning upgrades (3)
- Purchase of energy efficient appliances or equipment (e.g., light bulbs) (4)
- Installation of solar equipment (5)
- Utility bill payment assistance (6)

- Other (7) _____

Does your city/organization do anything to assess building efficiency?

- Yes (1)
- No (2)
- I Don't Know (3)

What kind of utility or utilities provide energy services in your city? Select all that apply.

- Municipal (1)
- Co-op (2)
- Investor-owned (3)

To what extent does the energy utility or utilities support or oppose the 100% renewable energy commitment made by the city?

- Strongly oppose (1)
- Moderately oppose (2)
- Neutral (3)
- Moderately support (4)
- Strongly support (5)

If you have an investor-owned utility and/or co-op(s), how do you foresee incentivizing a 100% renewable energy commitment?

Does your city have any plans to change the utilities that provide energy services to its residents?

- Yes (1)
- No (2)
- No, but interested (3)
- I Don't Know (4)

Please explain.

For which of the following resources has renewable energy potential been assessed locally, such as on rooftops or municipally owned land? Select all that apply.

- Wind (1)
- Utility-scale solar (large scale solar generation) (2)
- Rooftop or distributed solar (solar energy produced near the point where it is consumed) (3)
- Biomass (4)
- Hydropower (5)
- Geothermal (6)
- Battery storage (7)
- None (8)
- Other (9) _____
- I Don't Know (10)

Which of the following performance-related tools does your city produce to evaluate progress toward your 100% renewable energy goal? Select all that apply.

- Publicly available progress report (1)
- Metrics to regularly measure impacts and effectiveness of specific initiatives (2)
- Tracking of financial savings attributable to 100% renewable goals (3)
- Tracking of jobs created associated with 100% renewable goals (4)

- None (5)
- Other (6) _____

Select up to five of the top places or resources your city currently uses to access information to help guide the planning and implementation necessary to reach the 100% renewable energy goal.

- Recommendations from city-facilitated task forces (1)
- Neighboring cities, towns or counties (2)
- Other cities, towns, counties that have made similar commitments (3)
- State resources (4)
- Federal resources (e.g. EPA, HUD, DOT, DOE, USDA) (5)
- National nonprofits (6)
- Community based organizations (7)
- Colleges/ universities (8)
- Private sector / business community (9)
- Other (10) _____

Thinking about the resources you currently do not have, please indicate how useful the following resources would be in assisting your city's efforts to reach the 100% renewable goal?

	Extremely useful	Very useful	Moderately useful	Slightly useful	Not at all useful	I Don't Know
Best practices / case studies (1)						
Peer network of municipal sustainability staff (2)						
A national or regional conference (3)						
Metrics to evaluate renewable energy initiatives (4)						
Webinar series (5)						
E-newsletters (6)						
Online database of city renewable energy practices (7)						
Other (8)						

Do you have any additional questions or comments?

The following questions are about demographics of survey respondents. These questions are not required but helpful in our analysis. We will only use this information for entrance into the drawing, to share study results with you, or for any for follow-up questions we may have. We will not use this information for reporting individual results without explicit permission.

- Yes, I would like to receive study results (1)
- Yes, I would like to be entered in the drawing (2)

Name

Affiliation / Organization

Email

City, State, Zipcode
