

Indiana's Comprehensive Local Environmental Action Network (CLEAN) Community Challenge Quality of Life Plan Goal Development



Introduction

A very important part of the creation of the CLEAN Quality of Life Plan is the selection of five environmental goals and the development of action plans, which detail how the goals will be achieved. Because it is such an important step, IDEM has created this information sheet to help communities develop action plans that will serve as effective tools in implementing CLEAN initiatives. Please use this information in conjunction with the template "Attachment C – Environmental Initiatives" document. Examples of completed action plans can be found on the CLEAN Community Challenge website at: www.in.gov/idem/prevention/2410.htm.

Goal Selection

Before communities begin the task of selecting environmental goals, it is important to first go through the process of identifying and prioritizing environmental aspects and impacts of the community's operations. The CLEAN program manager will facilitate this process and help each community determine which environmental aspects are the most significant for their particular situation. Once the most significant environmental aspects have been identified, the following steps should be taken. The CLEAN program manager is available to assist with each step.

- ❑ Look at the list of most significant environmental aspects and impacts for your community and discuss each one in terms of:
 - Is this issue particularly widespread in the community or is it of special interest to the public or elected officials?
 - Are there grants or loans available to help tackle this particular aspect?
 - Are there any other existing plans or efforts within the community or region that address this issue? If so, are there opportunities to partner with other entities to address the issue?
 - Is there new technology available that could have a large impact in addressing the issue?
 - How difficult or expensive would it be to address the issue?
- ❑ Based on the considerations listed above, select five environmental aspects to address. Work with the CLEAN program manager to obtain preliminary approval from IDEM of the five environmental aspects that you have selected. These aspects will be taken into consideration when creating your 5 environmental goals.
- ❑ For the five environmental goals, think about what you want to achieve and write an objective and target for each. The target must be specific and measurable and must specify when the goal will be achieved.
- ❑ For each goal, fill in the legal requirements and reason(s) for selecting the goal. Legal requirements relating to that particular goal can be state, federal, or local. Insert NA if there are no legal requirements for that goal.

Action Plan Development

Work together with your stakeholder committee to create a step-by-step plan for how to achieve your goal.

- ❑ The first step in each action plan should be development of a baseline. The baseline represents the situation before action has been taken to address the issue. The baseline can be based on data, e.g., gallons of fuel used or tons of materials recycled, or it can be based on a narrative of the situation, e.g., "No tree planting program currently exists for city property." Baseline information can be collected from existing data prior to the start of the CLEAN action plan, or if data has not previously been collected, the baseline can be determined within the first 6 to 12 months of beginning the action plan.
- ❑ Break each goal down into easily manageable steps. The tasks on the action plan must be activities that have not already been completed. List a month and year in the "Timeline" column for each step. Fill in the "Person Responsible," "Partnering Departments," and "Performance Measures" columns. The performance measure should indicate how you will know when that particular step has been completed.
- ❑ End each action plan with "Review action plan quarterly to determine if meeting target."

Tips

- ❖ The process of goal development should be a team activity. Please work with your CLEAN stakeholder committee to collaboratively select your goals and create each action plan. Collaboration will lead to more buy-in from the various departments of your government and thus will lead to smoother implementation of the action plans.
- ❖ If upper management or elected officials are not part of the group selecting the goals and creating action plans, please be sure to obtain any necessary approvals/support early in the process.
- ❖ It is not required that all five of your environmental goals be selected from your most significant aspects and impacts as long as you document the reason for your selection in the action plan of that particular goal.
- ❖ When selecting goals that have a community-wide focus, vs. a focus on your government's operations, be sure that the success of your goal is within your government's control. For example, a community-wide goal to increase recycling participation rates among residents can be considered within a city's control if the city can provide incentives for recycling, launch an education campaign about recycling, provide increased opportunities to recycle, etc. In contrast, a community-wide goal that relies exclusively on the actions and control of another entity or organization would not be appropriate. While partnerships are encouraged, action plans must be balanced with activities that can be undertaken by the CLEAN participant.
- ❖ In determining what time period will be used for your baseline, consider whether or not there are seasonal fluctuations in the data. For example, collecting data on electricity used may fluctuate based on season, particularly if your buildings have gas heat in the winter and electric air conditioning in the summer. If there are seasonal fluctuations, it may be best to collect baseline information over a 12-month period instead of a shorter time period.
- ❖ Be very specific about how the success of each goal will be measured.
- ❖ Participants are not required to know in advance which steps or options will be best for achieving particular goals. In situations where multiple options or alternatives are available for achieving a goal, it is recommended that you add a step in your action plan to brainstorm or research available options, evaluate options based on costs and benefits, and select the best alternative to move forward.
- ❖ Education of the public and/or training of employees are often important steps in each plan.
- ❖ For ongoing tasks such as data reporting or education efforts in the "Timeline" column, please list the start date and add "and ongoing." For example: "January 2014 and ongoing."
- ❖ Action plans for your environmental initiatives should be considered living documents that can be revised as progress is made and plans change. Please evaluate the action plans periodically and update any items as necessary. Be sure to forward your revised action plan to the CLEAN program manager to maintain accurate records with IDEM.
- ❖ For communities designated as or within a Multiple Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) that are applying for the CLEAN Community Challenge Program, the MS4 measurable goals may not be utilized as the CLEAN Community Challenge goals since the MS4 measurable goals are required under 327 IAC 15-13-12 through 17.