

ENERGY & CLIMATE

2018 Grassroots Trend Report



New England
Grassroots
Environment Fund

Working Draft

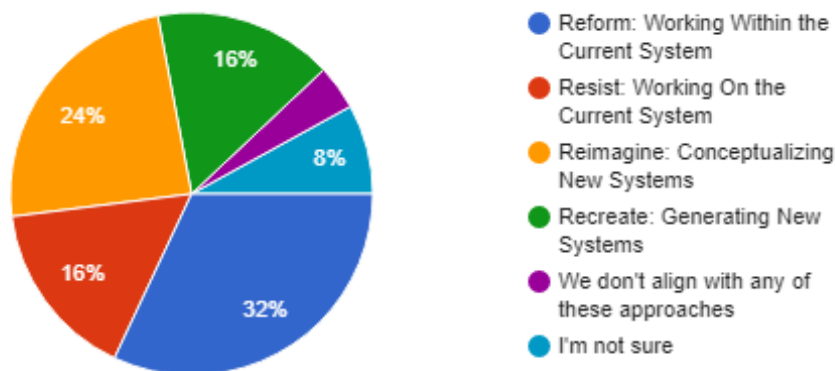
Background Of Respondents:

- Sources: 58 2017 and 25 2018 Energy & Climate survey responses, 14 New Hampshire Municipal Solar survey responses, 3 in-depth conversations with grassroots groups, numerous reports and webinars from Energy & Climate organizations
- Organization Size: Majority 30 or fewer members
- Top Services Provided: Education, Advocacy, Networking, Direct action, Organizing
- Low response from Rhode Island, Maine, and Connecticut

Just Transition: shifting from an extractive to an equitable economy

| What we're seeing:

- Theory of Change: (2018 survey responses)



- Organizational: Groups multitask with several projects at once
- Popular Projects: Education, 100% Renewable energy goals, Political engagement and policy, Climate activism including resisting fossil fuels
- Driving Factors: Cost effective, Equitable, Climate impactful, Likely to succeed

| Barriers:

- Lack of incentives for low income and rental household renewable and energy efficiency projects, Low net metering caps

| Gaps:

- Theory of Change: Resist- and Recreate-aligned work
- Groups Would Like to See More: Carbon sequestration, Electrification, Mixed agricultural and renewable energy land use, Multi-modal transportation, Non-technical climate storytelling, Vocational job training in renewable energy

Shifting Power: empowering people & creating networks that value a diversity of lived experiences

| What we're seeing:

- Leadership Structure: Consensus, Leadership boards
- Representation: Vast majority of groups feel it is important to represent community demographics in group membership and leadership
- Feedback: Many groups rely on open community meetings to determine whether they are meeting community needs, Nearly ½ have no method of tracking representation

| Barriers:

- Existing Governance: Lack of dynamic organizational leadership roles
- Expansion: Difficulty reaching beyond existing networks

| Gaps:

- Representation: Most groups aren't as representative of community demographics as they would like to be - especially across race, socioeconomic status, and age
- Inclusion: Some groups don't consider the full spectrum of diversity in their communities and therefore don't prioritize diverse participation

Lowering Barriers: addressing systemic challenges through community outreach

| What we're seeing:

- Outreach to Underrepresented Groups: Working with groups that have more diverse constituencies, Targeted flyers and meetings, Increased presence within traditionally underrepresented communities, Increased diversity within the group's leadership board
- Communication: Prioritizing the use of inclusive language and story-telling that broadens the public's perception of climate change and activism by encouraging hope rather than fear

| Barriers:

- To involvement: Limited financial and time capacity on individual and group levels, Communities may be addressing other issues that are seen as more pressing

| Gaps:

- Youth: Opportunities for youth involvement and leadership

Community-based Resourcing: addressing funding barriers in creative, collaborative ways

| What we're seeing:

- Collaborations: Groups working on similar issues, Groups within the same geographic area, Non-profits providing policy support
- Assistance Received: Networking and information sharing, Community organizing, Communications
- Strategies: Creating partnerships to share limited resources, Hiring interns, Obtaining visible support from trusted community entities to build credibility

| Barriers:

- Restrictions: Need unrestricted funds for paid staff time
- To Collaborations: Time, Opportunities for mutual benefit, Many small

organizations without any overarching coordination

| Gaps:

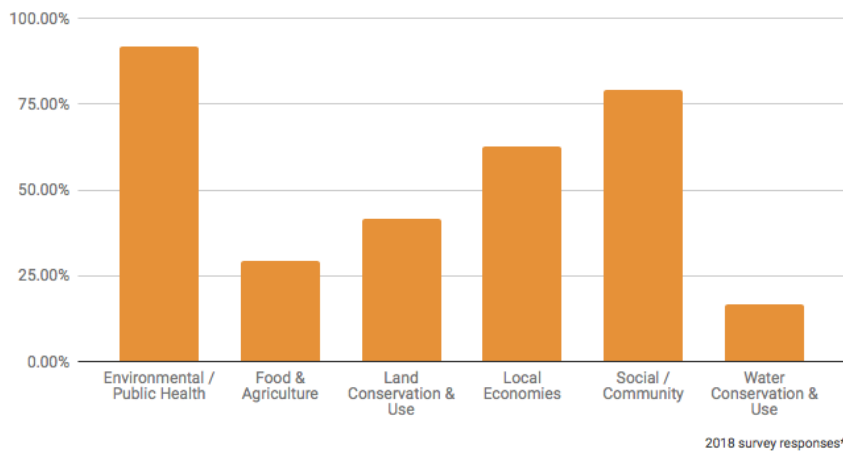
- Paid Staff: Positions for facilitating collaborations and fundraising

Risk Taking & Innovation: implementing creative practices based on community context

| What we're seeing:

- Opportunities: Community clean energy and energy efficiency “builds”, Community resiliency projects such as energy independence and disaster preparedness campaigns, Voter literacy campaigns, Youth involvement
- Community: Facilitating participation from underrepresented populations by collaborating with groups with more diverse constituencies, Flyering

→ Co-benefits: Nearly all groups seek co-benefits



| Barriers:

- Resources: Time, Funding for experimental projects, Expertise

| Gaps:

- Water Co-benefits: Projects with Energy & Climate and Water Conservation & Use co-benefits, for example home audits that focus on energy and water conservation
- Inclusion: Organizational structures that encourage full community participation through (financial and intellectual) ownership

Change vs. Charity: addressing root causes & co-creating solutions

| What we're seeing:

- Environmental Justice: Plays some role in most groups' decision making
- Identified Root Causes: Corporate control of energy and politics, Systemic socioeconomic and racial inequality, Resistance to changing current lifestyle

| Barriers:

- To Reaching Underrepresented Groups: Time, Funding, Difficulty prioritizing non-immediate issues
- "Scarcity": Perception of scarce resources creates competition rather than collaboration
- Funding: Not offering compensation for volunteer time and effort

| Gaps:

- Education: Widespread environmental justice education
- Root Cause Analyses: Addressing root causes rather than symptoms and making connections to between different issues

Process Is The Product: implementing adaptable practices that prioritize learning

| What we're seeing:

- Listening: Holding public opportunities to listen to community needs and ideas for solutions first, then sharing your group's ideas and vision
- Democracy: Establishing democratic, equitable leadership and ownership models along with new energy technologies

| Barriers:

- Time: Groups often feel they do not have the time or capacity to focus on process and incorporating the Guiding Values into their work
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Recommendations:

| For organizers:

- **Create Accessible Solutions:** Ensure that the tenets of Appropriate Technology serve as guidelines for all technical solutions. Read more at: appropedia.org/Appropriate_technology

| For policymakers:

- **Support:** Carbon pricing, Raising net metering caps, Green Banks, 100% Renewable goals, Solar Loan programs, Raising Renewable Portfolio Standards, Complete Streets policies, Property Assessed Clean Energy systems, Energy efficiency and weatherization rebate programs
- **Reject:** Bureaucratic governance structures

| Check out these groups:

- **Co-op Power Boston Metro East:** cooppower.coop/boston-metro-east
 - **Global Awareness Local Action:** galacommunity.org
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Partners:



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