

*Market Progress Evaluation Report* Executive Summary  
**Local Government Associations, No. 2**

*prepared by*

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**Final**

**1999 Evaluation and Market Progress Evaluation  
Report for Local Government Associations**

**Submitted to**

**Northwest Energy Efficiency Alliance**

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**by**

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## Executive Summary

### Background

The Local Government Association (LGA) Support Project is comprised of contracts with the associations representing local governments in each of the four states in the Northwest Energy Efficiency Alliance (NEEA or the Alliance) territory (Washington, Oregon, Idaho, and Montana). The Alliance provides funding to these organizations for the LGA representative to provide support, assistance and communication between the Alliance and the LGA and its members.

Alliance funding for this project began in July 1998 and runs through June 2000. The Alliance contracts with each of the following organizations to fulfill project requirements: the Association of Idaho Cities, the League of Montana Cities and Towns, the League of Oregon Cities, and the Association of Washington Cities.

The evaluation assesses the extent to which the goals and objectives of the LGAs overlapped with those of the Alliance, and how effective the associations were in moving the common agenda forward.

### Overview of Study Methods

The evaluation associated with this project is designed to assess the extent to which the goals and objectives of the LGAs overlapped with those of the Alliance, and how effective the associations were in moving the common agenda forward. The primary information gathering consisted of interviews with various parties involved with the LGA Support project and an e-mail/fax survey of Alliance Board members. There were a total of 36 interviews and 12 surveys completed. The groups interviewed and the number of interviews and surveys completed are shown in table below.

**Interviews/Surveys Conducted**

<b># of Interviews/ Surveys</b>	<b>Type</b>
4	LGA project implementers (5 interviews, joint @ WA)
1	Alliance LGA project coordinator
8	Alliance Board Members
4 (1/state)	Executive Directors of the LGAs
16 (4/state)	Association members
3	Alliance project contractors for projects supported by the LGA project
36	Total Completed Interviews
12	Total completed Board e-mail/fax surveys (includes 6 of the

	8 interviewed)
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## Findings

This study found that there is congruence between the Alliance's goals for the LGA Support Project and the overall goals of the local government associations. The LGAs have a number of advantages to act as a conduit for Alliance projects and communications to local governments. The LGAs are seen as the only organization that can fulfill this role effectively and cost-efficiently across all groups that were interviewed.

Generally, individuals' (e.g. Alliance Board members and LGA implementers) vision for this Project fall into one of three categories differentiated by the breadth of the scope for the Project. The most narrow view of the LGA Support vision is that the Project should only work on legislation related to energy efficiency and, where and when appropriate, energy codes, as these fit with the Alliance goals. The middle ground is held by those that view the vision as promoting Alliance projects in order to save energy in public buildings and operations, as well as legislation and energy codes. The broadest view is that the Project should support both of these earlier types of efforts as well as promoting energy savings throughout the community via the community leaders. Alliance Board members can be found in all three categories while LGA representatives are in the latter two. Lack of a totally common vision may complicate consensus building for program design, program goals, and similarities across states.

LGA members interviewed ranked various methods of communication used by their LGA representative to share information about Alliance projects. From this ranking come the following three lessons:

1. Targeted and in-person methods are important;
2. Multiple methods may be needed to reach different people at different times and to reinforce messages; and
3. The same method may not apply to all audiences.

Important indicators of success for the LGA project found in this study include:

- 100 percent (13 of 13) LGA members answered that the Alliance projects are valuable to LGA members
- 77%, 10 of 13, LGA members respond that they are presently getting the information they need
- 13 out of 14 participating LGA members know (without prompting) that the Alliance sponsored the projects for which they received LGA assistance
- Of those Board members responding to the e-mail/fax survey 8 of 9 indicate the LGA project is moving towards its vision<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> 7.5 out of 9 report the project as excellent or very well moving to its vision. One respondent completed more than two answers and, therefore, their answer was split in half resulting in the 7.5 score.

- 3/4s, 9 out of 12, Board members report being satisfied with the amount of information they receive from their LGA implementer

## Recommendations

A number of recommendations were considered as part of the working meeting (April 27, 1999) on the preliminary results of the 1999 evaluation. These were discussed by the LGA implementers, Alliance staff, the evaluation consultant, and attending Board members, and a result of this early discussion was prioritization of the recommendations. These recommendations have been divided into those that affect project operations and communications, and those that relate to outreach and promotion of Alliance projects.

The recommendations<sup>2</sup> concerning project operations and communications, in priority order, are:

1. Centralize activities where the same work is being repeated by all four LGAs. (For example, some of the creation of articles for LGA newsletters could be developed once by a marketing professional and used by all four LGAs.)\*
2. Improve consistent communication to Alliance Board members, with better definition of what this needs to be and who is to receive what forms of communication.
3. Clarify what services the LGA Project needs to provide to cities within different types of service territories (cities within investor owned utilities, cities with municipal electric service, cities not within Alliance territory, cities within electric cooperatives, cities with Public Utility Districts).
4. Develop model 5-year Municipal Energy Plans by type and size of city to have available for LGA use (or obtain and make available model plans if produced by other organizations, such as the National League of Cities, the Alliance to Save Energy or others)\*

The recommendations<sup>2</sup> concerning project outreach, promotion and marketing, in priority order, are:

1. Have a marketing professional create a 1-page flyer as an introduction to the Alliance effort that is targeted to the LGA audience\*
2. Examine creating joint marketing plans between Alliance Projects and the LGAs for projects that have a local government focus or are targets of the LGA Project\*
3. LGAs create stories on participants and issues, and develop a process for getting these stories into local newspapers
4. LGAs develop and administer follow-up marketing plans to get cities to repeat participation in other energy efficiency efforts
5. Develop for the Alliance a brochure modeled after the Energy Center of Wisconsin's *A Guide To Community-Based Energy Programs*. This brochure

<sup>2</sup> These recommendations may not apply to all four states, depending upon characteristics of the state and its LGA program.

\* Voted as being one of the top three favored recommendations by a majority of meeting attendees.

could be used by the LGAs to promote development of community-based energy efficiency projects