



**SUSTAINABLE  
STATES network**

Shared Vision. Local Impact.

**2021-22 Annual Report**

Sustainable  
Pennsylvania

Florida Green  
Building  
Commission

Sustainable  
Jersey

Indiana Clean  
Community  
Challenge

Georgia  
Green  
Communities  
Program

NY Clean  
Energy  
Communities

Green Cities  
California

Massachusetts  
Green  
Communities

Resilient  
Iowa  
Communities

Sustainable  
Maryland

NY Climate  
Smart  
Communities

Nebraska  
Greenstep

Michigan  
Green  
Communities

Sustainable  
CT

Minnesota  
GreenStep  
Cities

## Mission and Vision

**Our Mission:** To connect and align state-wide sustainability programs, enable its members to share resources and best practices, foster the success of local sustainability initiatives, and collaborate on projects that advance our shared goals.

**Our Vision:** To build a future where sustainability is the norm for every community.

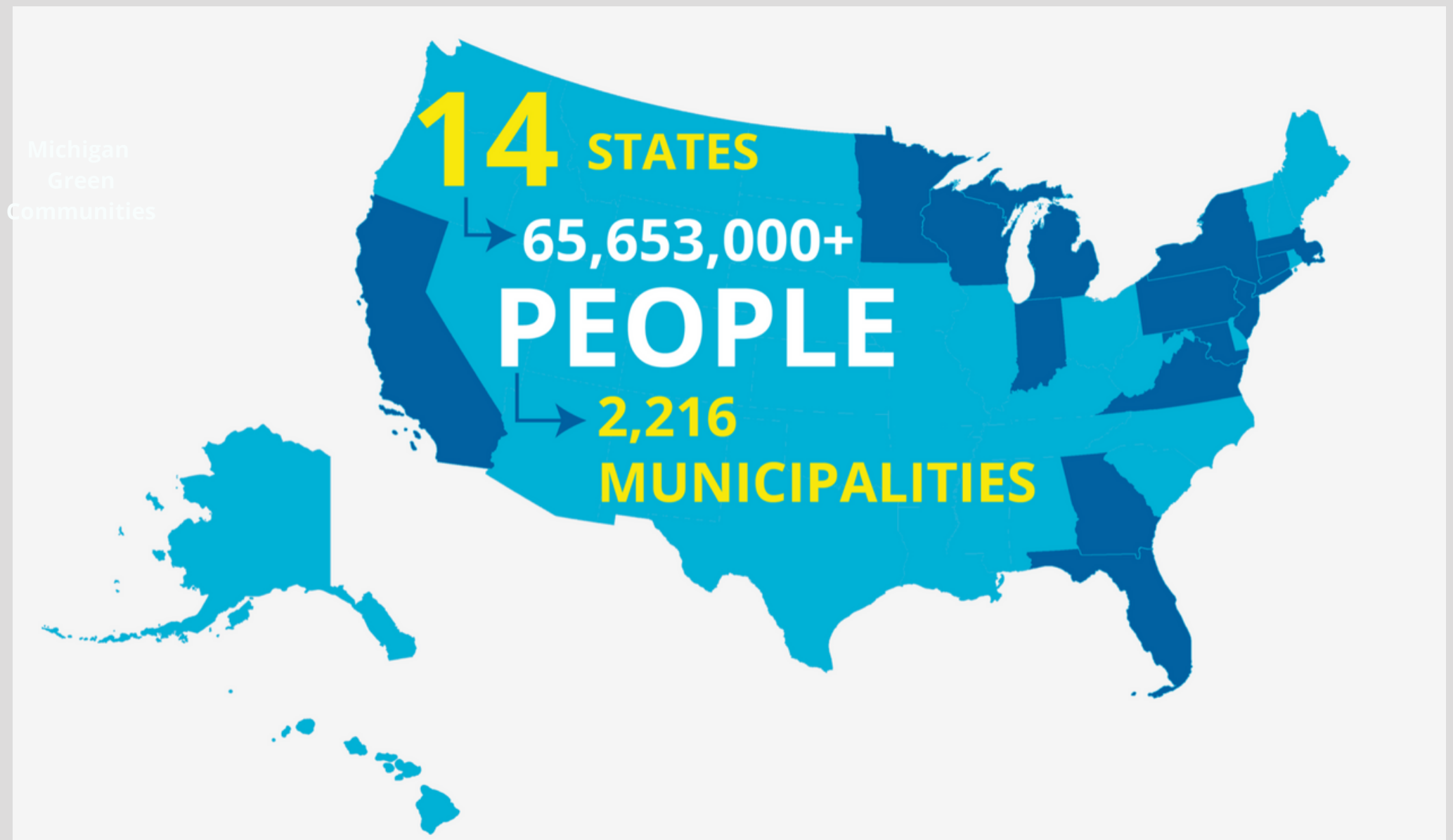
## Roles and Priorities

**The Network plays the role of building:**

- Connections
- Capacity
- Collaborations

**Priorities in 2021-22 were:**

- Program Excellence
- Equity
- Climate and energy
- Expanding state-local programs
- Capture emerging opportunities



# Connecting Members to Ensure Program Excellence

## *How do we connect people?*

**Member connections are the heart of any network. SSN facilitated opportunities for members to share their successes, get support on their challenges and create shared strategic priorities.**

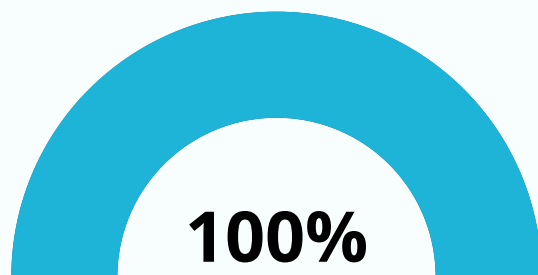
- **Monthly networking calls** featured member generated opportunities and challenges
- **All-Member equity trainings** engaged 20-30 people each
- **Work Groups** focused on equity, climate action, recruiting new members and sharing the program model, and communications
- **Virtual annual meeting** drew participation from over 80 member partners and allies, doubling the participation of previous in-person meetings.

*Collectively, Sustainable States Network Programs serve **2524 registered communities**, of which **1747 are certified***

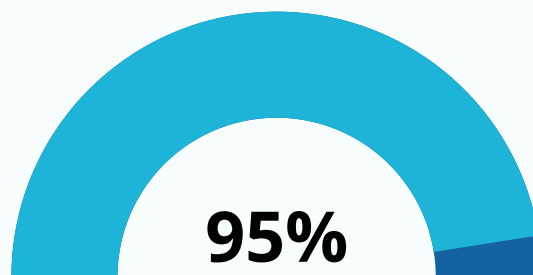
*We aim to connect more programs through expanding membership. In 2021-22, two new members joined the Network: **Indiana and Georgia.***

## *Through our 2021 annual survey, we found that:*

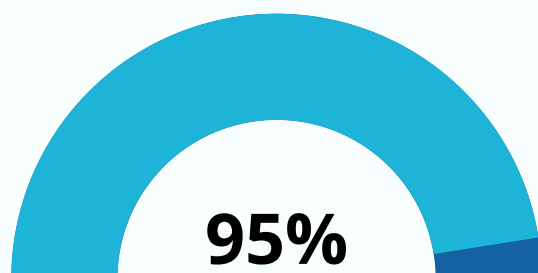
100% of members agree that their organization can have a greater impact because of the relationships with other network programs.



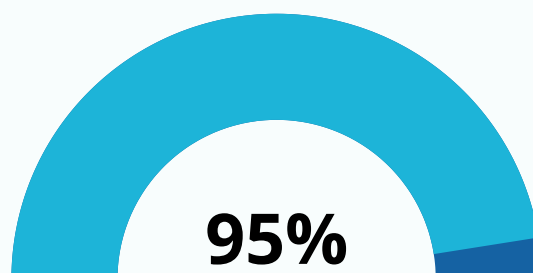
95% of members agree that their participation in the network benefits them personally or professionally.



95% of members agree that they have gained new skills or knowledge by participating in the network.



95% of members agree that their participation in the network helps them do their job better.



“This year we rolled out our pilot program of our revised Clean Community program to six communities. We used the network to identify components of our new program structure, pulled together project ideas from various states involved in the network, and held discussions with various program managers for additional insight on program elements such as data management and advisory team development.”

**- Jennifer Collins, Indiana Clean Community Challenge**

# Capacity Building

SSN supported members to enhance and build their capacity, to design and manage their programs, add new best practices, and ensure that equity is front and center in their work. The focus is on the Network priorities of program excellence, equity, and climate and clean energy.

## Clean Energy and Climate

- Sharing of approaches to GHG accounting
- Model energy and climate planning tools
- Connections to national partners

## Program Excellence

- Shared web platform shared by several programs
- Support to developing programs in Iowa and Nebraska
- Consultations with state agencies in Colorado, Maine, and Delaware
- Basecamp

## Equity

- A new Network-wide equity statement, goals, and metrics
- Model equity best practices and actions
- Community equity resources
- Regular Network-wide equity trainings
- Equity coaching to member programs
- Equity Innovation Fund

"I am able to provide more quality technical assistance to my communities seeing certification because of the knowledge and resource sharing through the Network."

- **Kelsey Waidhas,**  
**Green Communities Program**

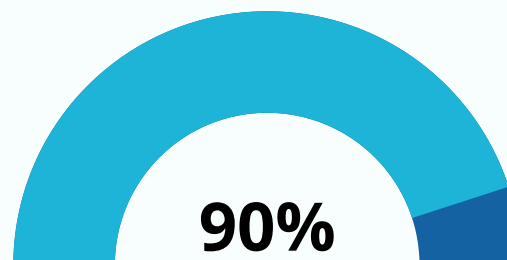
"I was inspired by other member states' activities and used their programs as a model for our revamped Regional Energy Planning Assistance grants."

- **Joanne Bissetta,**  
**Massachusetts Green Communities**

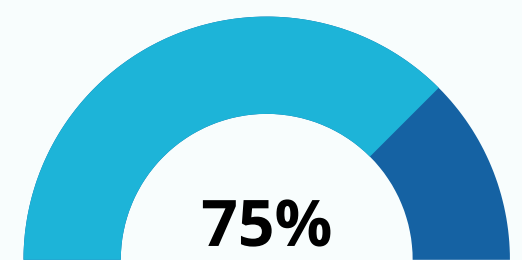
"We use the shared website and so were able to leverage other program's improved features in the 10th anniversary launch of our new website."

- **Brandy Espinola, Sustainable Maryland**

SSN directly and indirectly impacted more than 90% of programs' biggest achievement in 2021.



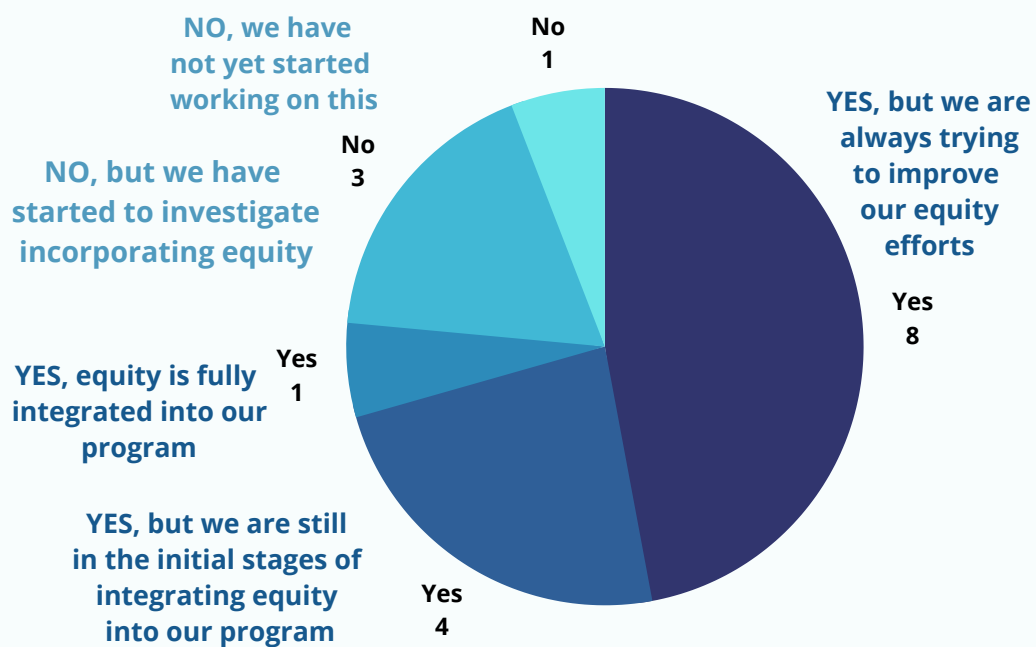
SSN directly and indirectly helped address the challenges of 75% of the programs.



# The Network's Equity Initiative

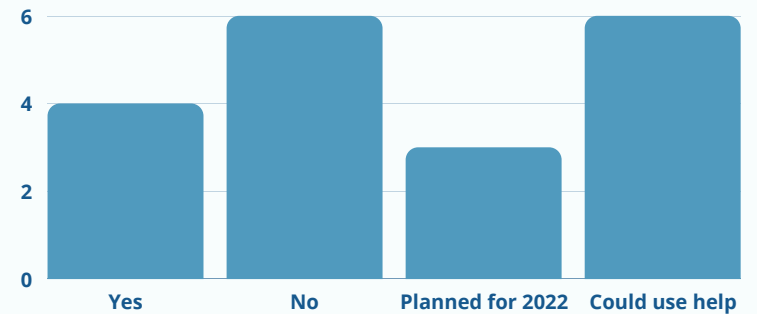
The Network has prioritized equity since it's inception in 2015. In 2021, Network members expanded that commitment by developing a shared equity statement, goals, and metrics. Metrics are tracked via an annual survey of members.

## A majority of programs are working to integrate racial and/or social equity into their program:

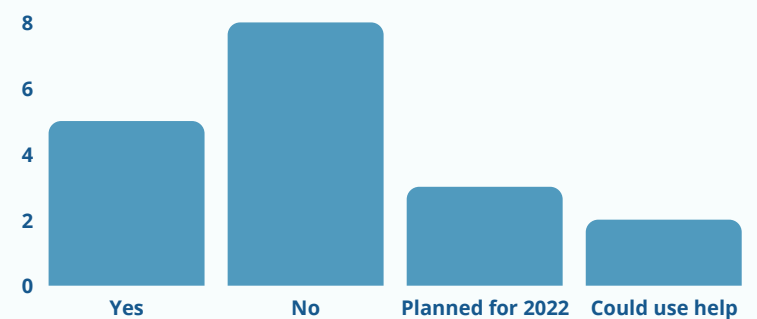


## In the last two years,

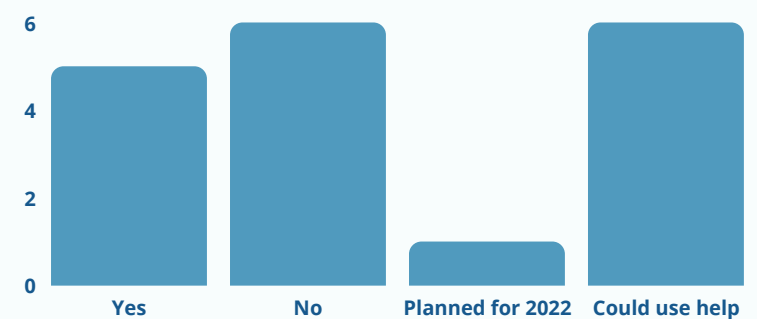
How many programs include actions with the primary purpose of advancing equity?



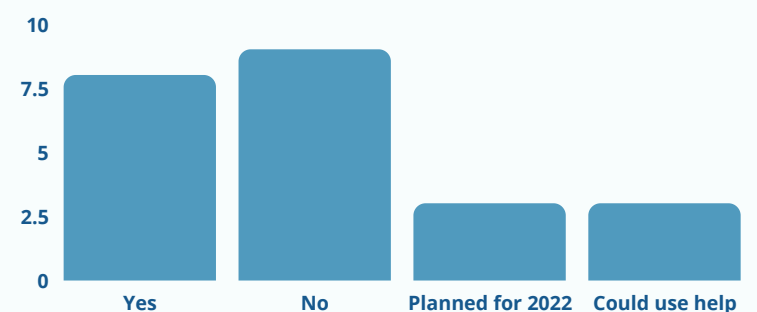
How many programs have adopted an equity statement?



How many programs have compiled demographics of participating programs to assess impact?



How many programs have offered equity programming or trainings?



"Sustainable Jersey adopted a Commitment to Equity and Anti-racism that was inspired and informed by collaboration with SSN Equity Working Group peers."

- **Melanie McDermott, Sustainable Jersey**

"SSN's advice was invaluable as we developed our program. From structuring the program to considering equity, SSN gave us the opportunity to learn from other successful programs."

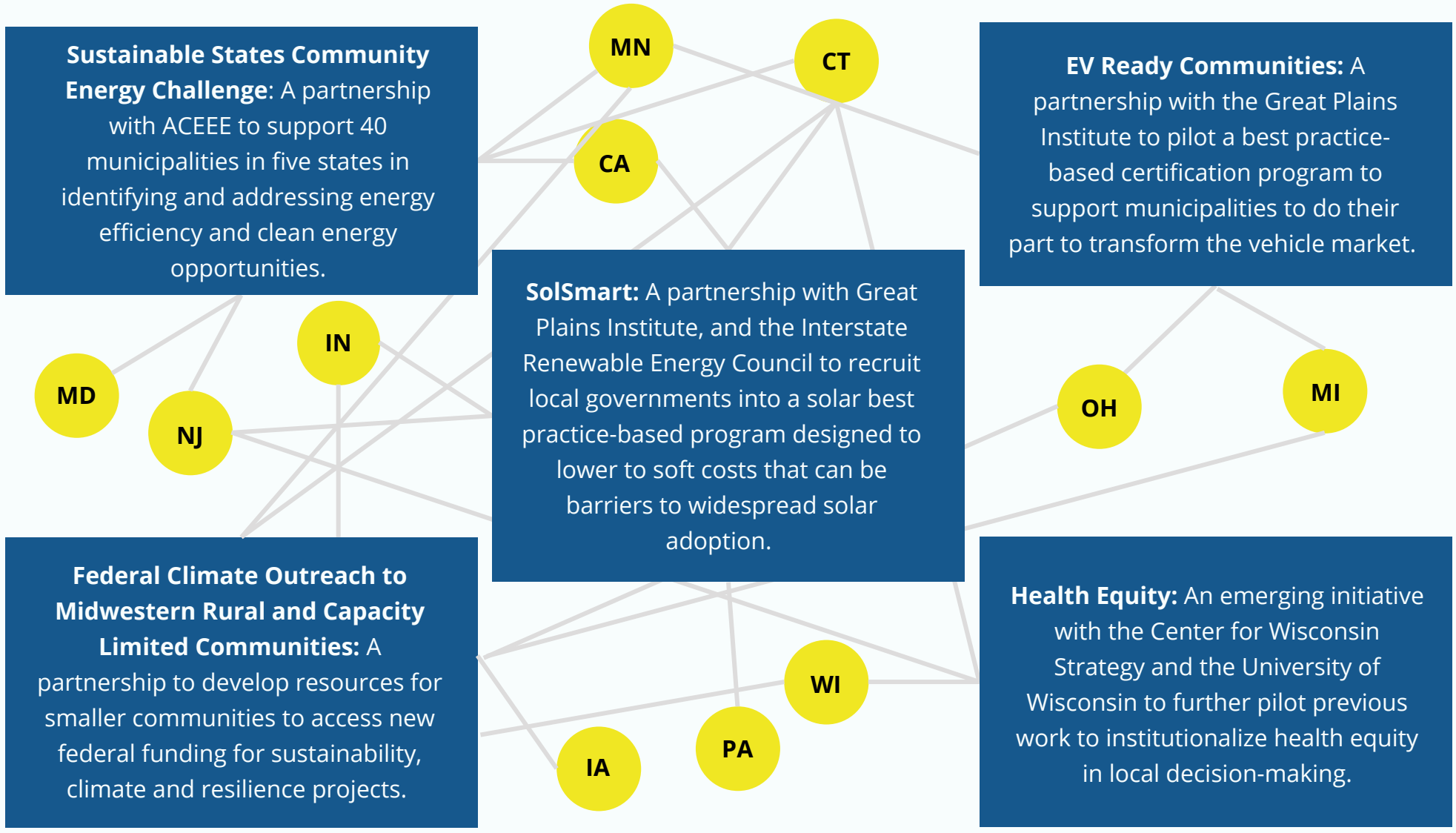
- **Cassandra Sonne, Resilient Iowa Communities**

"Our participation in the Equity Working Group has been a great asset to our Equity Work."

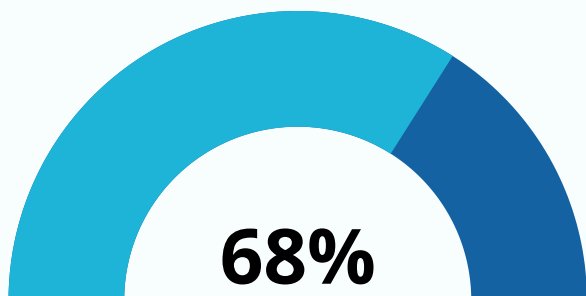
- **Barry Faske, Florida Green Building Coalition**

# Multi-State Collaborations: Advancing Shared Goals

SSN facilitates multi-state collaborations to increase regional impact, bring national expertise to the states, and ensure that communities see themselves as a part of a national movement.



**68% of partner organizations developed at least one new collaborative project with another organization.**

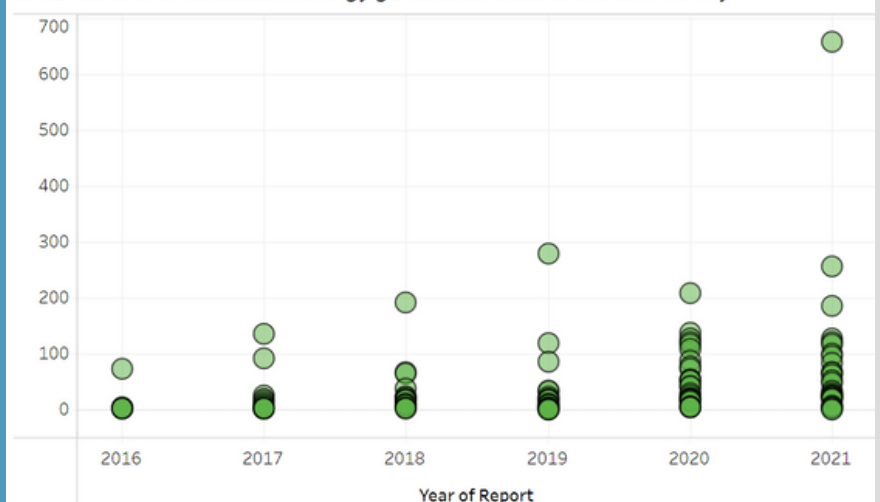


"Participating in a collaborative project helps communities to feel connected to a broader sustainability movement."

**-Lola Schoenrich  
SSN Network  
Coordinator**

*MN GreenStep Cities metrics*

**14.1** Number of renewable energy generation sites in the community





# Looking Forward to 2022-2023

**Continuing to support member connections and growing the Network** with a new affiliate membership, regular gatherings, a 2022 virtual annual meeting and a 2023 in-person gathering.

**Connecting Rural and Smaller Communities to Federal Funding** by identifying priority actions that can be implemented with federal and state infrastructure funds and build the in-state and national partnerships to ensure that lower capacity municipalities know about federal and state funding opportunities and can apply for and manage funds.

**Advancing the SSN Equity Initiative** by implementing the equity plan goals. The Network will support members to share and replicate successes including establishing equity statements, equity best practices, training staff and communities, compiling demographic analyses of participating communities, and conducting an equity program evaluation. To support this work we will continue to build the Equity Innovation Fund.

**Communicating Impact** by developing additional communication capabilities and sharing stories and metrics on Network and member program impact.

