

CSC Bronze Certification: What Comes Next?

Congratulations!

You have achieved Bronze Certification through the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation's Climate Smart Communities (CSC) Program! This is an impressive feat — you have spent many months gathering information and working on your municipality's application. Now, you may be wondering...what comes next?

Before we jump into the potential paths you can take, **here are a few important things to note:**

- 1) Your CSC Certification lasts for **five** years.
- 2) Individual actions have their own expiration dates, so the number of points you have will decrease over time. Your Certification, however, lasts the full **five** years, even as action submissions expire.

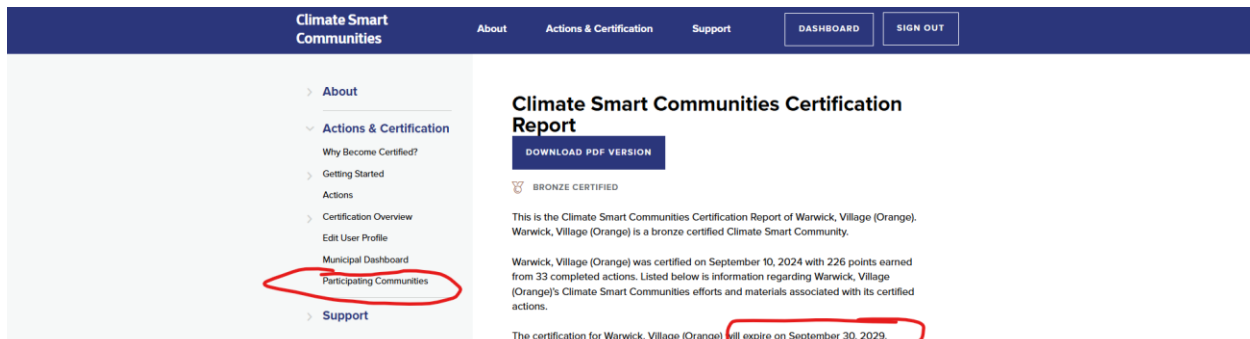
Next Steps After Bronze: You have a few options!

1. Take a Five-Year Break!

Your Bronze Certification lasts for five years. After those five years, your municipality's participation on the CSC website will be listed as Registered and you will need to reapply to earn Bronze (or Silver!) status.

Note: It may be helpful to track who you got information from, where data can be found, and to ask departments to continue tracking useful data. This will make things easier for those working on future submissions. Having systems in place for tracking data will save time in the long run.

Example of where to find your certification's expiration date (find your community [here](#)):



The screenshot shows the Climate Smart Communities website interface. The top navigation bar includes 'About', 'Actions & Certification', 'Support', 'DASHBOARD', and 'SIGN OUT'. The left sidebar has a menu with 'Participating Communities' circled in red. The main content area displays the 'Climate Smart Communities Certification Report' for Warwick, Village (Orange), with a 'DOWNLOAD PDF VERSION' button. The report text states: 'Warwick, Village (Orange) was certified on September 10, 2024 with 226 points earned from 33 completed actions. Listed below is information regarding Warwick, Village (Orange)'s Climate Smart Communities efforts and materials associated with its certified actions.' The expiration date 'will expire on September 30, 2029.' is circled in red.



2. Focus on Applying for Grants

Now that you have achieved Bronze, there's momentum in your community to continue pursuing clean energy and climate related projects. Your certification makes your community more competitive for some grants. You can also focus on applying for CSC grants that can help you pursue more actions for future CSC submissions.

Grant Opportunities that consider CSC Certification or Registration

Grant program	Benefit of CSC Registration or Certification
DEC Climate Smart Communities Grant Program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 6 extra points for CSC Silver Certification • 4 extra points for CSC Bronze Certification • 2 extra points for CSC Registered
DOS Smart Growth Community Planning and Zoning Grant Program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 extra points if CSC Certified at any level
DEC Water Quality Improvement Project (WQIP) Program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 5 points if CSC certified at any level • 2 points if CSC registered and has completed one or more of the following actions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ PE3 Energy Benchmarking ○ PE7 Climate Vulnerability Assessment ○ PE7 Watershed-Based Flood Mitigation Plan ○ PE10 Greenhouse Gas Tracking System
DEC Hudson Estuary Trees for Tribs	No extra points, but encouraged to submit documents or links that provide a broader context about the site or the project, including related completed CSC actions.

Grants to Help Pursue Clean Energy & Climate Projects

NYSDEC Climate Smart Grants: <https://dec.ny.gov/environmental-protection/climate-change/resources-for-local-governments/grants-for-climate-action>

- Opening in May each year, the DEC has CSC grants that can assist in pursuing CSC actions, as well as GHG Mitigation and Climate Adaptation projects.

HREP Grant Program: <https://dec.ny.gov/nature/waterbodies/oceans-estuaries/hudson-river-estuary-program/grants-funding-opportunities>

- DEC's Hudson River Estuary Program has offered grants to municipalities and non-profits located within the Estuary Watershed Boundaries (PDF) to help communities



improve water quality, adapt to climate change, enhance environmental education, and advance stewardship of habitat and natural resources.

- Eligible projects include developing plans that can be submitted for CSC certification:
 - [PE6 Action: Natural Resources Inventory](#)
 - [PE7 Action: Source Water Protection](#)

3. Work on Updating Action Submissions Yearly

As mentioned above, individual CSC Actions have their own expiration dates. For example, the two Mandatory Actions (CSC Task Force & CSC Coordinator) expire after one year. To reiterate, your Bronze Certification lasts for a full five years, even as individual actions expire.

An approach that some municipalities take is working on reviewing and updating actions that have expired each year, as well as actions marked as “needs revision” by DEC reviewers. Reviewers leave comments to assist you with revising actions. Your CSC Coordinator at HVRC is also available to help!

Example of Identifying Expired Actions in Your Dashboard:

← RETURN TO DASHBOARD
Highlands, Town (Orange) Certification Application
Status: CERTIFIED
Reviewer Feedback: [27 comments](#)
DETAILS AND HISTORY HELP

Search Actions
Type in a word(s) to identify all actions with that word(s) in the title

Planned Completed Must Revise Not Approved Approved Expired
 Mandatory Priority

To identify actions by status, check the desired box or boxes above. The Action Totals box at right will also reflect only those actions selected. Click on the Clear Search button to return to the full action listing.

SEARCH ACTIONS CLEAR SEARCH

↑ BACK TO TOP EXPAND ALL COLLAPSE ALL

1. Build a climate-smart community.

PE1 Action: CSC Task Force
20 Points
Bronze Mandatory Silver Mandatory
• LAST UPDATED 09/30/25 • EXPIRED ON 09/30/25

PE1 Action: CSC Coordinator
10 Points
Bronze Mandatory Silver Mandatory
• LAST UPDATED 09/30/25 • EXPIRED ON 09/30/25



Beyond updating expired actions, you can also work on completing new actions each year if your municipality is making progress on new projects/initiatives. Actions that have not expired and are marked as “approved” do not need to be updated. [Submission deadlines for review are in January and May each year.](#)

4. Start Working Towards Silver Certification!

Silver Certification is achieved the same way you achieved Bronze, but it requires more points, more Priority Actions, and more Pledge Elements. While Bronze Certification requires 120 points, Silver Certification requires 300 points.

		
Mandatory	2	2
Priority	3	6
Points	120	300
Pledge Elements	4	7

Show requirements for:

 **BRONZE**  **SILVER**

One approach to achieving Silver is tackling high point value actions. These include (but are not limited to):

- [PE2: Government Operations GHG Inventory](#)
- [PE2: Community GHG Inventory](#)
 - HVRC regional Inventory is available with templates
- [PE2: Government Operations Climate Action Plan](#)



- [PE2: Community Climate Action Plan](#)
 - HVRC offers in-depth assistance on GHGs and CAPs
 - Some resources are available here:
 - <https://hudsonvalleyregionalcouncil.org/regional-initiatives/clean-energy-sustainability/mid-hudson-regional-inventory/>
 - <https://hudsonvalleyregionalcouncil.org/regional-initiatives/clean-energy-sustainability/climate-smart-communities/csc-cohort-program/gocapcohort/>

- [PE3: Government Building Energy Audits](#)

- [PE3: Clean Energy Upgrades](#)

- [PE3: Green Building Certification](#)

- [PE3: Advanced Vehicles](#)

- [PE4 Action: Heat Pumps](#)

- [PE4 Action: Municipal Bldg Demonstration - Net Zero](#)

- [PE4 Action: Clean Energy Installation Owned by Municipality](#)

- [PE4 Action: Host Clean Energy Installation on Municipal Property](#)

- [PE5 Action: Refrigerant Management Program](#)
 - HVRC webinar, May 18 2026 is a helpful resource, [linked on our Clean Energy and Sustainability Resources page](#).

- [PE6 Action: Comprehensive Plan with Sustainability Elements](#)
 - HVRC has a webinar and resources for this action here: <https://hudsonvalleyregionalcouncil.org/regional-initiatives/clean-energy-sustainability/#compplan>

- [PE6 Action: Electric Vehicle Charging Stations](#)



- [PE7 Action: Climate Vulnerability Assessment](#)
- [PE9 Action: Climate Change Education and Engagement](#)
 - HVRC has a template to assist with this action.
- [The Performance Actions](#)

