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Focus Groups
PREPARED Program

Topics and issues to be discussed in each focus group:

1. Satisfaction with the Provider's services
    a. Ease of accessing services and obtaining timely responses
    b. Usefulness of services
    c. Areas of improvement of services, including additional services to offer

2. Environmental and energy-related challenges faced in the community
    a. Historic and current challenges and solutions that work
    b. Future challenges and ways to address those challenges
    c. Technical assistance, training, and support needs to address those challenges

3. Experience with collecting and using data, forming and implementing an evaluation plan, and reporting data to a federal grant
    a. Experiences with using data sources to strengthen an application or better define an environmental problem
    b. Experiences with citizen science, participatory science, community-based research methods that elevate lived experiences, indigenous knowledge, and qualitative data collection methods to better define an environmental problem.
    c. Barriers/solutions to forming and implementing an evaluation plan
    d. Barriers/solutions to better meet the reporting requirements of a federal grant.

4. Approaches to strengthening knowledge and skills on using data and evaluation techniques
    a. Experience with training or knowledge/skills development programs – including other TA providers (e.g., state/local agencies, philanthropic organizations, etc.)
    b. Knowledge and skills needed
    c. Successful approaches to strengthen knowledge and skills
    d. Services or products the PREPARED Provider could offer/develop

5. Outreach to potential program participants (i.e., people from communities with environmental concerns who may apply to EPA grants or who have already received an EPA grant)

a. Communication mechanisms to reach potential program participants for their awareness on Provider's services
b. Ways to explain how to access eligible services
c. Types of events or activities to reach potential program participants, including input on optimal scheduling and duration
d. Accessibility approaches to fully engage everyone
e. Ways to explain the PREPARED program

6. How to effectively engage with decision-makers at all levels of government and private sector entities to inform policy development and program design and delivery
    a. Successful experience with government agencies' or private sector entities' community engagement approaches
    b. Ways to meaningfully engage with government agencies or private sector entities
    c. Knowledge and skills needed
    d. Successful approaches to strengthen knowledge and skills
    e. Services or products the Provider could offer/develop

7. How to engage community members
    a. Experiences with leading community engagement and building partnerships and coalitions
    b. Knowledge and skills needed
    c. Successful approaches to strengthen knowledge and skills
    d. Services or products the Provider could offer/develop

8. How to improve the Provider's services
    a. Satisfaction with the services/activities provided so far
    b. What to sustain (what is going well)
    c. What to improve

9. Actions taken by community after receiving training/technical assistance
    a. Data collected
    b. Use of collected data/available data sources
    c. Evaluation plans developed and/or conducted
    d. Improvement in reporting data for active grants
    e. Grants applied for/received