

Local Government Policies and Community Programs

Stimulating Market Demand for Retrofits

Community organizations and local governments have successfully stimulated demand by effective marketing, utilizing trusted community partners, and streamlining the retrofit process.

Community Initiative Partnerships

GreenHomeNYC (New York, NY)

Uses peer-learning to educate residents about their homes' energy and environmental performance. Volunteers host a free public “Monthly Forum” with green building professionals, on topics such as “Overcoming Barriers to Energy Efficiency in Existing Buildings” and “Do It Yourself—Take Your Building's Energy Pulse.” Volunteers also go on “House Calls” to co-ops and condos, giving free presentations about green building options (ranging from solar panels to motion sensor hallway lights). The GreenHomeNYC website provides energy efficiency tips for NYC tenants, and an “Ask an Expert” section.

California Energy Efficiency Education Program (San Diego, CA)

All K-12 schools within San Diego County feature a comprehensive home energy efficiency education program. Teachers receive professional development, materials, online support, and a curriculum aligned with the California Science Content Standards. Hands-on lessons for students include topics such as carbon footprints, the effect of color and shade on building temperature, and video game energy use.

Community Energy Project (Portland, OR)

Provides over 50 free weatherization workshops each weatherization season (September to March) to over 800 Portland homeowners and renters. Each participant receives a follow-up call or mail survey in the Spring. Income-qualified participants receive free weatherization materials valued at \$150. CEP's model has been adopted elsewhere, and CEP provide trainings for energy educators looking to implement similar small-measure weatherization programs.

Duquesne Light Consumer Education (Pittsburgh, PA)

Duquesne Light Consumer Education has three key features: 1). Duquesne Light's “Service Line” Newsletter, inserted with residential bills, includes wise-use education tips specific to each month. Duquesne Light also does wise-use outreach at the Pittsburgh Home and Garden Show, media outlets, and a traveling Speakers Team that partners with local community-based organizations and civic groups to target marginalized groups, like senior citizens. 2). A “Watt do you know?” School Program, targeted at grades 4-6 in over 50 area schools, students learn about energy efficiency through a virtual game show set, and are challenged to complete energy audits of their homes and report back to Duquesne Light. 3). An online Home Energy Center allows customers to check their

daily usage over time, and provides an energy calculator to provide customers with a baseline to compare potential energy-saving measures.

Duquesne Light's Smart Comfort Program

The Program is operated by Energy Managers who give each low-income customer one-on-one support, conducting free energy audits (lasting one to two hours), reviewing recent bills, educating the customer about energy-saving practices, tracking the customer's energy use over time, replacing inefficient appliances for free, and scheduling retrofits. To follow up after installation, customers call the Energy Managers monthly and the Managers calls the customer quarterly. Enrollment in the Smart Comfort Program is aided by partnerships with local gas utilities, weatherization programs, social service agencies to identify potential participants, as well as direct marketing efforts including bill stuffers, door-to-door canvassing, and direct mailing to targeted neighborhoods.

Western Massachusetts Electric's Spectrum Neighborhood Program (Western MA)

The Spectrum Neighborhood Program provides free, cost-effective electricity direct-installation conservation services to residential customers of Northeast Utilities' Western Massachusetts Electric Company (WMECO), with a special focus on low income customers. Marketed aggressively to targeted neighborhoods, customers receive a promotional mailer and hand delivered brochures, and then a canvasser travels door-to-door to make appointments with residents who hadn't responded by phone. Neighborhood and community groups also display brochures and translate information. In a single visit lasting 45-minutes, technicians install energy efficiency lighting, insulate water heaters and pipes, water saving measures, as well as clean residents' refrigerator coils, replace air conditioning filters, and lower hot water thermostats. In its first year, the program attracted over 4500 participants, saving about 2580 MWh. The program achieved up to 50% participation per neighborhood and 45 retrofits per day. Organizers found an effective talking point was avoiding the cost of a new power plant. Followup visits showed a low removal rate of installed efficiency measures, and nearly 50% of survey participants reported an intention to purchase further efficiency measures.

Pacific Gas & Electric's Home Energy Efficiency Surveys (CA)

Pacific Gas & Electric sent surveys to residents via mail, online, and in-home visits. The surveys are available in several different languages, and are used to provide customers with customized energy efficiency advice (energy products, services, and rebates) based on their energy use, income, and climate. Surveys are free (mail-in surveys come with a prepaid return envelope), and response rates have been around 20%. The surveys are an educational infrastructure to assist PG&E's goal of completing 50,000 residential audits.

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Block-by-Block Weatherization Program (Portland, OR)

The Block-by-Block Weatherization Program is administered by the City of Portland, Oregon's Energy Office, and this program provides free basic weatherization and energy-use education to low-income households in the city's neighborhoods, and weatherizes about 150 homes a year. Participants are recruited through door to door canvassing from local nonprofit organizations (also encouraging residents to get involved in neighborhood groups) and Portland's fall energy fairs. Income -qualified customers receive free ceiling and wall insulation and have air leaks sealed. The program also provides participants an in-home education in energy-efficient practices, such as lowering water heater and refrigerator thermostats, changing furnace filters, and drying clothes in the sun. The program helps residents develop their own energy action plans. A University of Oregon study found

that the two year-old program supported 14 jobs and \$1.35 million in economic activity. Over 70% of participating households reduced their energy by 15% or more, saving as much as \$100 a year.

City of Austin Utility Department's Energy Star Program (Austin, TX)

Founded with a mandate by the Austin City Council, the Austin Energy Star Program uses a point-based home energy rating system to compare home efficiency on a 1-5 scale. Builders are mailed decals and Energy Guide Labels to display. Over 90% of new and remodeled homes have been rated, with about 40% of ratings verified by field inspections. Promotion was achieved through frequent newspaper advertising featuring lists of participating builders and architects, as well as the Home Energy Guide label placed near the main fuse box. Austin's Energy Star program also has other energy efficiency features: partnerships with local providers to supply energy efficient light coupons, mail fact sheets on Energy Star fixtures and ceiling fans, community outreach at cultural events, sponsorship of a "National Night Out" event and appliance rebates.

Osage Municipal Utilities Demand-Side-Management Program (Osage, Iowa)

Osage Municipal Utilities (OMU) Demand-Side-Management Program promotes energy efficiency and achieved nearly universal participation among OMU customers. To simulate market demand for energy efficiency, the program used giveaways, product rebates, and free energy audits. Products and services included free installation of water heater blankets, load management devices on air conditioners, free electric test meters to identify inefficient appliances, and efficiency training to local K-12 schools. To target participation, the OMU general manager took aerial infrared photos of neighborhoods in the town, and canvassed neighborhoods with high heat loss. This method was highly effective in stimulating an initial demand for retrofits. Since, OMU offers infrared scans of all homes and businesses. Osage saves more than \$1.2 million dollars a year, with the average homeowner saving almost \$200 a year.

Seattle City Light – Residential Conservation Services (Seattle, WA)

Seattle City Light, an initiative of the City of Seattle, offers educational programs and services to homeowners and renters. The programs offer rebates for multifamily lighting and appliances, guides to help residents perform their own energy audits or reduced-cost professional audits, financial incentives to turn in old refrigerators, reduced-price ductless heat pumps and online energy saving tips. Also, Seattle City Light offers the online Home Energy Resource Profile, a free online application which helps customers track energy usage, compare to resource usage averages in Seattle, and offers customized recommendations for improving energy efficiency.

Ames Energy Department Smart Energy Program (Ames, IA)

The City of Ames offers efficient appliance rebates, high efficiency lighting rebates, and free residential energy audits. Ames' Electric Department also features the Power Watch Program, which provides continuously updated information on electricity demand, allowing consumers to conserve energy conservation action steps. The four levels of electricity load are color coded and prominently featured on the City's website, as well newsletter, TV station, and radio station. Consumer can also sign up for alert emails and download desktop widgets. Conservation action steps include planting shade trees, insulating, caulking, free residential energy audits, cleaning furnace filters, and weather-stripping.

For More Information

http://www.whitehouse.gov/assets/documents/Recovery_Through_Retrofit_Final_Report.pdf

<http://greenhomenyc.org/about-us>

http://www.k12e3.org/kids_home.php
<http://www.communityenergyproject.org/index.html>
http://www.puc.state.pa.us/electric/pdf/PriceMitigation/EDC_Plan-Duquesne.pdf
<http://www.iiec.org/IRT/123.pdf>
http://www.bpa.gov/energy/n/Reports/Results_Center/ProfileInfo.cfm?ID=22
http://www.californiaenergyefficiency.com/calenergy_old/pge/2010.pdf
<http://www.smartcommunities.ncat.org/success/block.shtml>
http://www.bpa.gov/energy/n/Reports/Results_Center/ProfileInfo.cfm?ID=11
http://www.energystar.gov/ia/partners/presentations/Roger_Duncan.pdf
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