

Better Buildings Residential Program Solution Center

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The Better Buildings Residential Program Solution Center is a repository of examples, lessons, and resources for residential energy efficiency programs. It is intended to help program administrators and their partners plan, operate, and evaluate their programs.

Access Program Component Handbooks



Explore Program Design Phase Resources



Discover the NEW DOE Better Buildings Residential Program Solution Center

Danielle Sass Byrnett


U.S. Department of Energy

Research Investment by DOE

>\$508M

What works (and what doesn't)

Don't start from scratch.



Getting Started

Spotlight on Seattle, Washington:
Community Partnerships Work to Extend Program Reach

Key Takeaways

- Engage potential partners early to identify opportunities to expand your program's impact
- Tap into other city programs

Seattle Moves the Needle With the Help of Its Partners

Seattle's Community Power Works (CPW) program has engaged a vast network of partners to build on existing capacity and knowledge, extending the reach of its program in a short period of time. By evaluating potential partnerships and identifying strategic opportunities to augment and enhance local ideas and programs, CPW is able to leverage its Better Buildings seed funding to serve all building sectors within a diverse area in the city of Seattle. Simultaneously, CPW is set to achieve significant energy, climate, and economic development goals with its 40 partners—setting the city up for program sustainability.

In Their Own Words: Empower Contractors by Building Sales and Business Skills




Dana Fischer
Efficiency Maine



It's Academic: BetterBuildings for Michigan Partners With University to Reach Employees

BetterBuildings for Michigan has conducted numerous neighborhood "sweeps" to promote efficiency upgrades to homeowners as part of its partnership with the U.S. Energy Department's Better Buildings Neighborhood Program. To expand its reach in the Grand Rapids, Michigan, area and maximize its marketing resources, the program initiated a semester-long, employer-assisted partnership with Grand Valley State University (GVSU). Following is an abridged transcript of an interview about that successful partnership with two BetterBuildings for Michigan leaders: Templeton, Program Manager, and Selma Tucker, Grand Rapids Regional Coordinator.

Q. How did you come up with the idea to start an employee outreach partnership with



CLEAN ENERGY PROGRAM POLICY BRIEF

March 22, 2011

Austin's Home Performance with Energy Star Program: Making a Compelling Offer to a Financial Institution Partner

Launched in 2006, over 8,700 residential energy upgrades have been completed through Austin Energy's Home Performance with Energy Star (HPwES) program.¹ The program's lending partner, Velocity Credit Union (VCU) has originated almost 1,800 loans, totaling approximately \$12.5 million. Residential energy efficiency loans are typically small, and expensive to originate and service relative to larger financing products. National lenders have been hesitant to deliver attractive loan products to this small, but growing, residential market. In response, energy efficiency programs have found ways to partner with local and regional banks, credit unions, community development finance institutions (CDFIs) and co-ops to deliver energy efficiency financing to homeowners. VCU's experience with the Austin Energy HPwES program highlights the potential benefits of energy efficiency programs to a lending partner.

<http://eetd.lbl.gov>

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Marketing & Outreach

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Key Takeaways

- Understand who is trusted most in your community before determining the best voice for your program
- Leverage relationships within your community and across the state to identify resources and spread the word widely
- Adjust tactics quickly in response to stakeholder feedback



The Better Buildings Neighborhood Program is part of the national Better Buildings Initiative led by the U.S. Department of Energy.

To learn how the Better Buildings Neighborhood Program is making homes more comfortable and businesses more lucrative and to read more from the Spotlight series, visit betterbuildings.energy.gov/neighborhoods.

Neighbors Excel in Spreading the Value of Energy Efficiency in Rutland, Vermont

Building on their understanding of homeowners in Rutland County, Vermont, NeighborWorks of Western Vermont (NWWVT) has enlisted well-respected local citizens and organizations to spread the word about home energy efficiency upgrade opportunities, an effort that has driven demand for nearly 200 home upgrades in just six months. With its DOE Better Buildings funding, NWWVT created the "Home Efficiency Assistance Team," or the H.E.A.T. Squad, which works with local organizations across the 26 towns in the county to conduct phone-a-thons, direct outreach, and personalized home visits to develop public interest in energy efficiency. Team members are available through a local hotline to educate homeowners about energy efficiency and to sign them up for an evaluation. After completing the evaluation, staff members offer to meet in person for a "kitchen table" discussion to review the evaluation results, contractor recommendations, and financing options. It's a neighbor-to-neighbor approach that taps into the strengths of both the organization and the communities where they are working.

Leverage Existing Relationships and Strong Community Ties to Deliver Real Benefits

Capitalizing on its experience operating affordable housing programs in Rutland County for many years, NWWVT is bringing existing offers from Vermont's third-party energy efficiency utility, Efficiency Vermont, to its communities. NWWVT program leaders recognized that citizens of Rutland County were not taking advantage of Efficiency Vermont's valuable programs and that the organization's own experience finding trusted messengers in the community could be a significant asset for increasing participation. NWWVT decided to use its existing strong community relationships to bring energy efficiency to hundreds of low- to middle-income homeowners in the county. As a result, in only six months, NWWVT facilitated 196 energy efficiency upgrades and interest continues to grow.

Finding the Right Messenger Builds Trust and Buy-In

NWWVT knows that Rutland County residents have strong relationships in their communities and that the most trusted messengers are neighbors, rather than the government or utilities. To put these insights into action, Executive Director Lucy Biddle tapped into her own hometown of Shrewsbury to launch the first phase of the program.

1 NWWVT results as of March 15, 2015.

April 2011 Version 2

betterbuildings.energy.gov/neighborhoods

► Partner with organizations or individuals that customers already trust

Many programs found it useful to partner with a range of trusted organizations or individuals to market program offerings to their constituencies or followers. Better Buildings Neighborhood Program participants enhanced their marketing and outreach efforts by partnering with trusted local groups including:

- Community groups and nonprofit organizations
- Large employers, such as local universities
- Respected members of the community (e.g., local elected officials, company executives, community opinion leaders)
- Utilities or fuel dealers.

Using partners' existing communications channels proved helpful for many programs. They found that marketing and outreach materials could be more effective when a potential customer received them from an organization with which they had an existing relationship.

- Housing agency NeighborWorks of Western Vermont found that residents of Rutland County, a small, rural community, consider neighbors to be the most trusted messengers, rather than the local government, federal government, or utilities. The program enlisted respected local citizens and organizations to work phone banks and spread the word about home energy upgrade opportunities. This effort helped the program connect with low- and moderate-income homeowners and complete nearly 200 home energy upgrades just six months after the program began promoting its services to the community.
- According to the Small Town Energy Program for University Park (STEP-UP) in Maryland, "low-cost social marketing using trusted, established neighborhood channels was the comparative advantage of the small town model" to catalyze a social marketing approach included:
 - Newsletter
 - Town events
 - Direct mailing
 - STEP house parties
 - Yard signs
 - Neighbor-to-neighbor outreach

Social Marketing



- Low cost social marketing using trusted, established neighborhood channels is the comparative advantage of the small town model:
 - Newsletter
 - Town events
 - Direct mailing
 - STEP house parties
 - Yard signs
 - neighbors
- Marketing as a percentage of budget for a typical efficiency program is >30%. For STEP it is 3%.

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