

Abstract #: 206

Author Name: Lisa Heidell

Author Company: SERA- Skumatz Economic Research Ass

Second Author's Name:

Abstract Title: A Behavioral Program in New York: Changing Recycling and Energy Behaviors

Abstract Text:

ACEEE reports that 25% additional energy savings may be available from behavioral strategies. Research shows that outreach/education/behavior change involving door-to-door and personal contact can be more cost-effective than other less labor-intensive energy-efficiency programs. The authors worked with a major Utility and a County in New York State to design, deliver, and evaluate a social marketing program aimed at increasing recycling and energy efficiency behaviors in two neighborhoods (using an additional neighborhood as the "control"). The project started with focus groups to identify motivating messaging, and barriers that were the basis of the two rounds of paper-based outreach. One neighborhood also received on-site / door-to-door outreach. The outreach was rounded off with contests and feedback / benchmarking messages. The evaluation measured costs of each delivery method to identify whether costs are higher with one method vs. another on a per kWh of energy saved and a per ton of recycled material achieved or similar available metric. The different neighborhoods were also monitored and evaluated using pre-post surveys, surveys on energy behavior, solid waste recycling metrics for households (including tonnage and material-based metrics), and program delivery cost analysis to support a high quality evaluation of the program. The project provides lessons for other communities, counties, and utilities on costs, outreach methods, cost-effectiveness. The project has committed to following on in recycling measurement and surveys to monitor retention of behavior changes for at least 3 years.