

Abstract #: 292

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**Abstract Title: Savings beyond the tracking sheet: Measuring behavioral change at a community level in AEP Ohio's Community Energy Savers Pilot**

Abstract Text:

There is growing interest in behavioral community-based program models that can drive direct savings (including behavioral savings) as well as savings through cross-program participation. In the past, community-based programs have only claimed savings achieved through existing efficiency programs, such as retrofits. As such, these programs must be rigorously evaluated to demonstrate their effectiveness for future implementation and scalability. In this presentation, we will share results from AEP Ohio's Community Energy Savers (CES) Pilot program, an award-winning residential and commercial program implemented in seven diverse pilot communities. The CES Pilot program was implemented in under-represented communities, most of which were underperforming in terms of historical participation, and used numerous behavioral strategies, including goal-setting, rewards, community-level feedback, and peer-to-peer interactions to drive behavior change and participation in energy efficiency programs. In this presentation, we will discuss a quasi-experimental evaluation design that used a matched cohort of communities to evaluate differences in impacts between communities and between sectors. We will share incremental participation and savings impacts. Unique to this evaluation, we will present results from a large-scale survey (n=600) that measured differences in awareness and behavior change among pilot communities and their matched comparison cohorts. Finally, we will describe strategies that were most effective in driving program participation. Audience members will learn methods for evaluating behavioral community-based programs, effective strategies to drive cross-program participation in energy efficiency offerings. The behavioral survey results will shed light on whether community-based programs may be able to drive some direct savings through behavior change.