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Abstract Title: Using Community-Based Social Marketing to Promote Energy Conservation in Hawaii

Abstract Text:

Hawaii Energy, the ratepayer funded energy efficiency and conservation program for the counties of Honolulu, Hawaii and Maui counties, has launched a statewide community-based social marketing (CBSM) effort to reduce electricity use. The goal is to develop local capacity to implement metrics-based, outcomes-oriented, data-driven behavior change projects. Traditionally programs have tackled social change by working to promote awareness and knowledge. Although these information-intensive efforts can positively affect knowledge or attitudes, they are largely ineffective at creating lasting changes in behavior (McKenzie-Mohr, 1996; 1999; 2000; 2011; Schultz, 2002; Schultz & Tabanico, 2007). Community-based social marketing has emerged as an effective alternative to traditional education campaigns. The approach is based upon research in the social sciences that demonstrates that behavior change is often most effectively achieved through initiatives delivered at the community level that focus on removing barriers to an activity while simultaneously enhancing the activity's benefits. For this collaborative project, Hawaii Energy has leveraged the CBSM expertise of Doug McKenzie-Mohr and Action Research along with the local-level expertise of Hawaiian-based Sustly Pacific to develop and pilot two unique CBSM initiatives. The first initiative is through a local private university, Hawaii Pacific University (HPU), and is focused on engaging occupants and faculty at HPU in specific behavior modification practices that conserve energy. The project is led by two university students who serve as Energy Ambassadors. Results yielded insights as to how to engage faculty and staff in energy efficiency practices that are low-cost and high-impact. The resulting handbook can be used by university systems to achieve real energy savings. The second CBSM initiative is focused on owners and occupants of apartments and condominiums. The effort includes detailed research on behaviors to target, identification of barriers and benefits to changing those behaviors, and pilot projects to test out effective strategies. Successful behavior change efforts targeting the apartment and condominium audience in Hawaii has the potential for significant energy savings. This presentation will describe the overall model for implementing effective CBSM campaigns through partnerships, results of the current efforts and a discussion of successes, challenges, and implications for future programs.