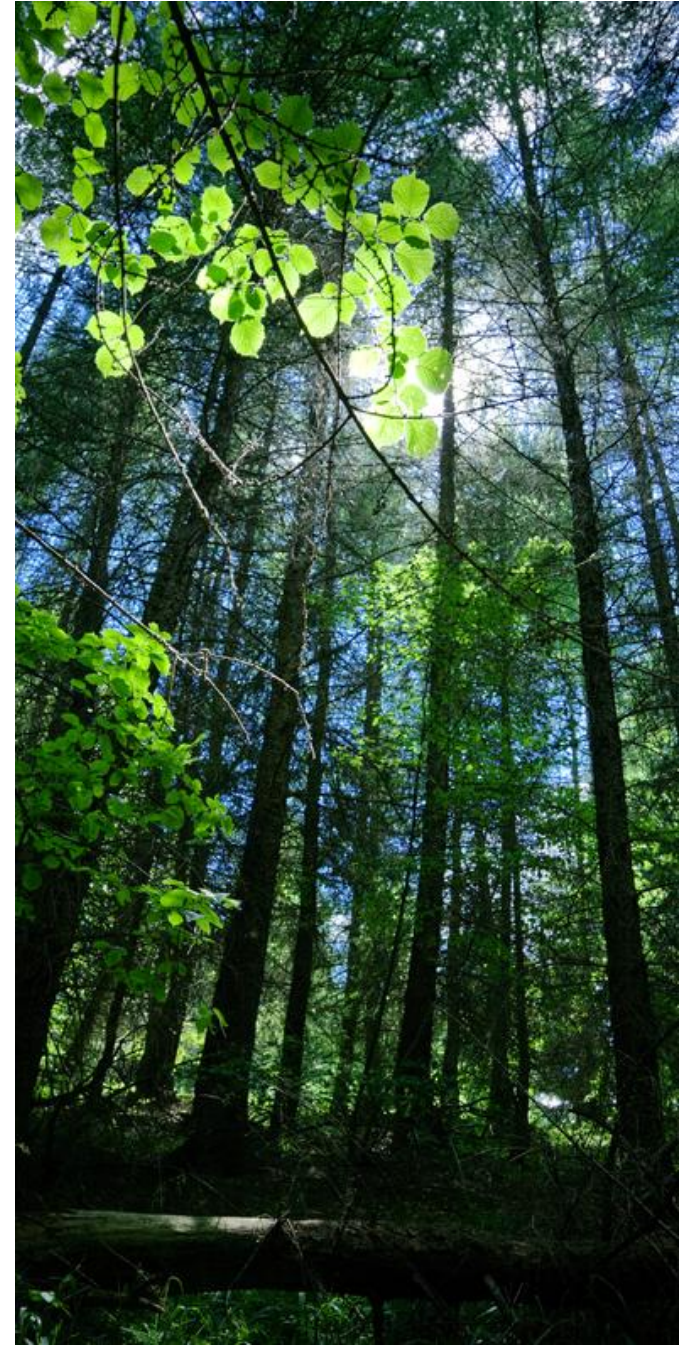


Frog Princes and Free-Ridership

Contractor Influence in Residential [HVAC] Programs

Jordan Folks, Research Into Action

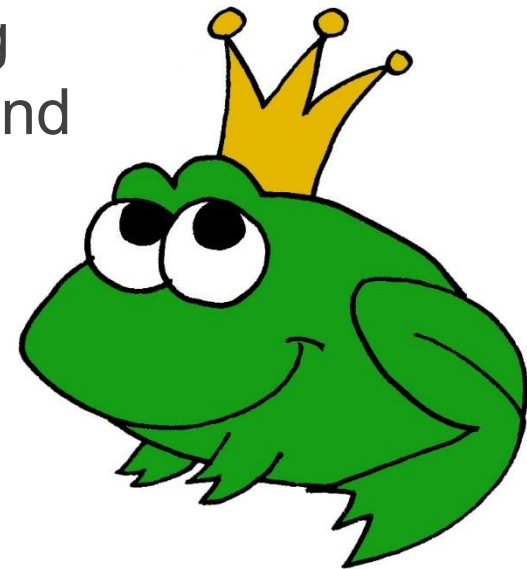
Ryan Bliss, Research Into Action



Once Upon A Time...

A homeowner participated in a utility's HVAC rebate program

- Saw program marketing,
- Was inspired to save energy,
- Researched offer and participating contractors on program website, and
- Hired a contractor to conduct upgrades.



Many Stumble into HVAC Programs

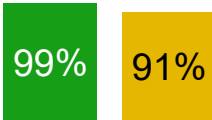
Immediate or imminent need



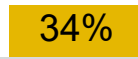
Calls contractor – often one *who installed old system*



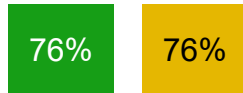
Contractor recommends qualifying system, does rebate paperwork



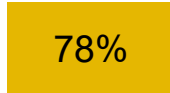
Reason for replacing HVAC: broke or old



How found contractor: previous relationship



Heard of rebate via contractor

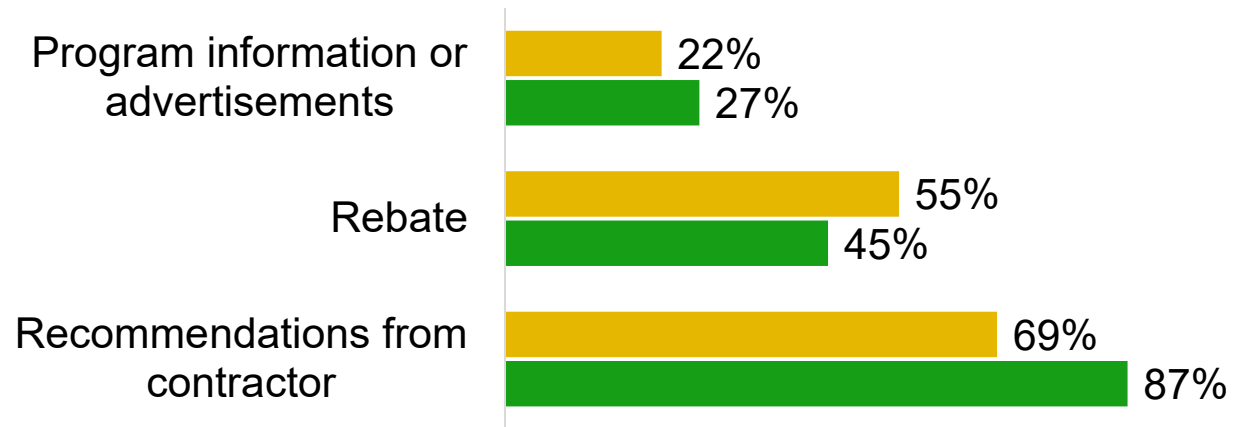


How selected system: contractor recommendation

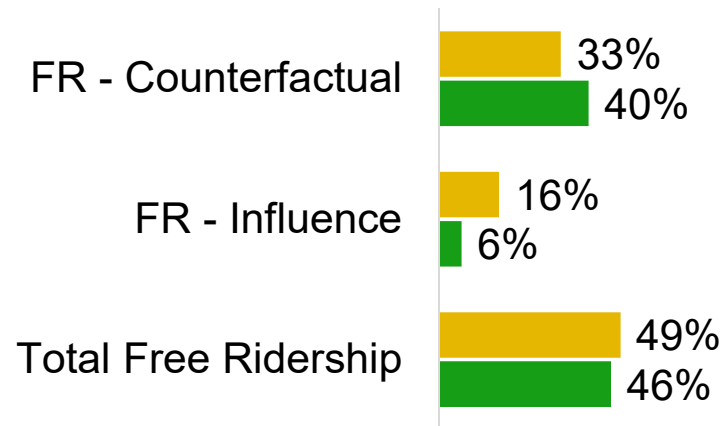


Free-Ridership Implications

“Highly Influential” on Decision to Participate



Mean Free-Ridership



Does FR Assume a Fairy Tale World?

- Basing FR on self-reported counterfactual doesn't adequately account for contractor influence
(In residential HVAC equipment replacement)
- High contractor influence and equipment need may underlie “high free-rider” counterfactual
(“I still would have installed the high efficiency furnace ... because that's what my contractor recommended – and I'm freezing in here!”)
- Additional research shows indirect influence is high: Program → Contractor → Customer
- FR methods need to account for real world market forces



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