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Poster Title: It takes two (or three or four) to tango: how stakeholder engagement and the leveraging of additional funding effect low income programs and evaluations

Abstract: This comparative analysis of income eligible programs reveals key insights for maximizing savings per household and enhancing the range of program benefits delivered through multi-agency coordination. Income eligible programs are often some of the most complex programs to administer and evaluate because of the multitude of stakeholders responsible for implementation of the program. In many jurisdictions, community action agencies, non-profit organizations, state and federal weatherization programs, and environmental justice advocates, in addition to the program implementation contractor and the utility, play a role in shaping how these programs are designed and implemented. The purpose of this paper is to 1) evaluate the current status of stakeholder engagement and behavior associated with income eligible programs, 2) assess the current status of utility savings from income eligible programs that involve funding from multiple agencies 3) identify best practices for both stakeholder engagement and multi-source funding and 4) present key challenges and guidelines for evaluation. The presentation will contain two case studies on income eligible program stakeholder engagement processes in Illinois and Michigan. The presentation will compare the role of these statewide stakeholder groups including their mission, objectives, and metrics for success. In addition, the presentation will include results from interviews with internal and external subject-matter experts, who will provide background on the legislative framework and stakeholder interactions for the state. The paper will include an analysis of how these policies have benefited income eligible programs and increased energy efficiency savings. Findings will provide utilities, regulators, and other key stakeholders with practical program and policy solutions that have been shown to improve income eligible programs and ensure energy, health and safety needs are being met for those most in need.