

Session 5B

EVALUATING LOW-INCOME PROGRAMS: NOT JUST FOR ENERGY EFFICIENCY ANYMORE

Moderator: Lynn Westerlind, National Grid

PAPERS

Comparison of Pooled and Household-Level Usage Impact Analysis

Dr. Jacqueline Berger, APPRISE

Dr. Ferit Ucar, APPRISE

Pathways to Success in Low-Income Energy Assistance Payment Programs: The Differential Effects of Customer Characteristics and Program Design on Payment Rates

Megan Campbell, Opinion Dynamics

New Opportunities in Low-Income Energy Conservation Programs

Scott Reeves, The Cadmus Group

Jamie Drakos, The Cadmus Group

M. Sami Khawaja, The Cadmus Group

SESSION SUMMARY:

Low-income programs provide assistance to utility customers who need it the most. This session will focus on the evaluation of these important low-income programs. The presenters will review a variety of evaluation methods to determine effectiveness of low-income programs, including pooled, household level and real-time evaluation. Programs discussed will include energy efficiency, weatherization and payment assistance programs.

The first paper explores the logistical and analytical advantages and disadvantages of house-by-house and pooled regression approaches to billing analysis. The paper first describes different models for each approach and then compares analysis of results using the two methods.

The second paper describes a case-study in which the author's evaluation team built a data tracking tool which tracks agency activities, including homes weatherized, measures installed, and costs incurred. The tool also computes a TRC value per participant and alerts the agency when potential deviations from the path appear likely, allowing the agency to take corrective actions. Based on this case-study and the authors' work with utilities, delivery agencies and commissions across many jurisdictions, the paper presents options for successfully delivering low-income conservation programs.

The third paper provides insights gained from an evaluation of an energy payment assistance program, which uncovered different factors that can influence program success. The paper provides evidence suggesting that certain customer characteristics, such as length of program enrollment or receiving Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) funds, drive success rates.