

Appealing (to) the Big Apple: Increasing New York City's Efficiency

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Purpose of the Evaluation

A program administrator seeking to expand energy efficiency program offerings in the NYC/Westchester region conducted two studies - a process evaluation and a market characterization study - to enhance the understanding of end user motivations for participation, assess how to improve relationships with market actors and trade allies, research the potential for programs in commercial and residential buildings, understand the decision-making processes regarding capital improvement projects, and investigate prevailing leasing structures.

Researchable Issues, Research Design and Methodology

The NYC/Westchester region differs from the rest of New York State in many ways that affect how energy efficiency programs are delivered and received. The downstate area is more densely populated, travel times are longer, vacancy rates are lower, many small commercial customers do not speak English, the cost of conducting business is higher, the “pace” of business is quicker, and projects are larger and more complex. Buildings are often connected (*e.g.*, row housing and high-rises with abutting walls), creating technical difficulties for some types of measures, such as venting. There are more high-rises and multifamily housing of all sizes, and similarly, businesses tend to be located in various multi-level and high-rise buildings, which influences measure recommendation and installation, marketing approaches, and incentives, among other factors. The higher incidence of renting and leasing exacerbates the “split incentive” barrier, and the ways that energy costs are incorporated into lease structures create further complications.

In order to understand how these and other factors affect program delivery and customer response in the NYC/Westchester region, in-depth interviews were conducted with program administration staff, participants in the administrator’s various programs, those who have dropped out of programs, and various other key market actors involved in the downstate NYC/Westchester market. In addition, secondary data sources were mined to develop a comprehensive view of existing building stock in the downstate region segmented by building type, occupancy patterns, size, energy intensity, and other relevant metrics. Characterization results are presented in graphical and tabular formats, as well as GIS maps, to identify and observe spatial and temporal trends in the data.

How the Results Will Be Used

Results from these evaluation activities will provide program and evaluation staff with extensive knowledge to assist with increasing participation in program offerings in NYC/Westchester, and increases the understanding of one of the most complex and largest single markets for energy efficiency that has relevance for all large urban areas.