

What Does Success Look Like? Evaluating Efficiency Programs with Community Organizations¹

Hale Forster, Research Into Action, Portland, OR

Dulane Moran, Research Into Action, Portland, OR

Alexandra Dunn, Research Into Action, Portland, OR

Carley Murray, New York State Energy Research and Development Authority, Albany, NY

Abstract

In the United States, regional and national policy directives are increasing the role of community organizations as energy efficiency program delivery agents and partners. Community organizations can use their positions in their communities to generate participation in energy efficiency programs while also maximizing the local benefit of these programs, thereby helping program sponsors meet increasingly multifaceted policy directives. While several recent evaluations of these programs have highlighted successful program models, guidelines on how best to incorporate these organizations are still evolving. How can evaluation help new generations of programs refine their designs to reduce the risks that community programs may present for traditional program administrators?

This paper discusses the lessons learned by evaluators charged with evaluating two large-scale programs through which community organizations successfully recruited participants into residential retrofit programs. We will review results from a process evaluation of the Green Jobs Green New York Outreach program and a process evaluation of a Better Buildings National Program grantee's Energy Champions pilot.

The lessons learned through these evaluations present specific opportunities for maximizing the success of community organization outreach, including leveraging organizations' community ties and building upon existing institutional knowledge and experiences within their communities. The authors will provide considerations for program designers and policy makers considering this approach: carefully define success metrics in the early stages of implementation, allow some program flexibility in program models to accommodate creative delivery mechanisms, and ensure that the organizations engaged have access to, and credibility with, the targeted population.

Introduction

The last decade has seen a dramatic increase in spending on community-based energy efficiency programs in the United States. In this paper, the authors will provide a brief overview of the U.S. community program landscape, review some of the lessons learned from two process evaluations of community programs, and present takeaways and recommendations for maximizing the success of future community organization outreach programs.

Program Landscape

Over the past decade, aggressive state energy efficiency savings goals have spurred increased interest in new program models to expand participation (Berry 2010). In 2009, the U.S. passed the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA). As part of an effort to stimulate the economy, the Act included \$508 million in funding for the Better Buildings Neighborhood Program (BBNP), designed to support building energy upgrades and demonstrate sustainable business models for providing energy upgrades in specific communities, identifying and spreading the most effective of

¹ Any opinions, are expressed, explicitly or implicitly those of the authors and do not necessarily represent those of the New York State Energy Research and Development Authority.

these approaches (Peters et al. 2013). At the same time, other regional entities passed legislation and policies to encourage community and local government partnerships to promote efficiency retrofits (e.g., New York State 2009; Boroski et al. 2013). Together, these policies have amplified a trend towards using local organizations and agencies to deliver efficiency programs to increase market penetration and meet increasingly multifaceted objectives.

Theoretical Framework

Social science research underlies the theory behind community-based outreach program designs. One of the theoretical bases for community outreach is Community-Based Social Marketing (CBSM). Broadly, social marketing aims to integrate conventional marketing with other approaches to “influence behaviors that benefit individuals and communities for the greater social good” (iSMA 2013, 1). CBSM is one type of social marketing and is based on research 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” (McKenzie-Mohr 2011 in Vigen & Mazur-Stommen 2012, 1). CBSM is defined by its five-step implementation approach: identify a target behavior, identify barriers and benefits of the behavior, design a behavior-change strategy to address identified barriers and benefits, pilot, and then scale up and evaluate this intervention (McKenzie-Mohr 2011). In describing the value of CBSM to energy efficiency programs, Vigen and Mazur-Stommen comment that, “barriers [to behavior change] are inherently local ... and thus CBSM programs are inherently custom-made to fit the needs of the target community” (2012, 4).

Using community organizations as program delivery agents is one possible strategy within the CBSM framework. Because of their connections and positions of trust within their community, community organizations are uniquely positioned to identify and overcome community-specific barriers to energy efficiency through civic engagement and CBSM approaches (Berry 2010). Some have argued that through these strategies, community organizations have the potential to expand energy efficiency programs to new audiences and more effectively leverage community resources than traditional energy efficiency program designs (e.g. Nelson et al. 2014).

Evidence of Opportunities and Challenges

Program evaluations have documented the varied successes, challenges, and lessons learned by these community-based outreach programs over the past decade. In some cases, organizations have found that outreach was more difficult than anticipated, and program ramp-up times have meant early results were often modest (MacRoy 2014; Moran et al. 2014). Consistent data tracking and reporting are critical to learning from these programs, but diverse program models have challenged evaluators (Rossman et al. 2013; Peters et al. 2013). Some of these programs have also failed to incorporate existing best practices in program design (Schueler 2013). Evaluations also documented specific outreach strategies that were less successful, such as mass mailings, and found evidence of oversaturation (Lightbourn 2014). Overall, these evaluations have found there is no single formula for success (Peters et al. 2013; Nelson et al. 2014), but community-based outreach programs can successfully recruit hard-to-reach populations (The Cadmus Group 2012; Peters et al. 2013; Schueler 2013). Deep engagement with potential participants and key delivery partners is a key component of successful outreach strategies (MacRoy 2014; Lightbourn 2014). The level of participant engagement and investment required affects the types of community outreach strategies that tend to be successful (Peters et al. 2013). Community-based outreach programs can also have benefits beyond the metrics: reaching new audiences, leveraging local governments and community resources, and developing program loyalty (Nelson et al. 2014). Indicators of program sustainability and additional funding also suggest the ongoing successes of these programs (Schueler 2013).

The next sections present lessons learned from two process evaluations of programs that used community organizations to conduct outreach and recruit participants into existing residential energy

efficiency retrofit programs.

NYSERDA GJGNY Outreach Program

On October 9, 2009, the Green Jobs Green New York (GJGNY) Act of 2009 was signed into law in New York State. Funded by New York State's share of the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative funds (a mandatory carbon dioxide trading program implemented by nine states in the Eastern U.S.), GJGNY created a statewide initiative that promotes energy efficiency, reduces energy consumption and greenhouse gas emissions, supports sustainable community development, and creates job opportunities (New York State 2009). The New York State Energy Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA) administers this initiative.

One component of the GJGNY initiative, the GJGNY Outreach program, delivered services in targeted communities through Constituency-based Organizations (CBOs). The Act directed NYSERDA to solicit competitive grants for CBOs to connect community members to the program to generate awareness of the program and enrollment. The Act defines a CBO as "an organization incorporated for the purpose of providing services or other assistance to economically or socially disadvantaged persons within a specified community, and which is supported by, or whose actions are directed by, members of the community in which it operates" (New York State 2009, 1891- 3). As defined in the Act, customer outreach by CBOs is targeted to economically distressed communities, non-attainment areas under the Federal Clean Air Act, and communities with high-energy costs in relation to income.

As implemented by NYSERDA, the GJGNY Outreach program tasked CBOs with conducting outreach to promote retrofits in the single-family residential, multifamily, small business/not-for-profit sectors, as well as workforce development outreach. This paper focuses on the CBOs' residential outreach, where a majority of resources were focused. CBOs recruited households to participate in NYSERDA's Home Performance with ENERGY STAR[®] (HPwES) program, which offers free or reduced cost audits, incentives, and access to on-bill recovery financing and low-interest loans for households completing comprehensive energy efficiency projects with Building Performance Institute-accredited contractors. Households with incomes greater than 80% of area median income receive a 10% cash back incentive through HPwES, while households making between 60% and 80% of area median income receive a grant covering 50% of efficiency upgrade costs through the Assisted Home Performance with ENERGY STAR (AHPwES) path.

In the first phase of the GJGNY Outreach program, NYSERDA issued two competitive solicitations for proposals and contracted 18 organizations to conduct outreach between 2011 and 2013. Each organization was contracted to conduct outreach in a specific region of New York State. CBOs worked with NYSERDA staff to develop contracts that included specific goals for the number of leads, audits, and retrofits they would achieve. A quarter of each CBO contract was paid based on progress towards residential retrofit goals. Most CBOs specified goals across multiple sectors, but with few exceptions, goal payment was based on residential progress only. This residential focus aligned with the program's primary emphasis on generating residential retrofits. While the performance payment was paid based on the number of retrofits recruited, program staff described broader program goals of expanding HPwES uptake among priority communities, increasing AHPwES uptake, encouraging more comprehensive upgrades, and increasing financing uptake.

Evaluation Methods

The goals of the process evaluation were to document the experience and lessons learned by the program actors and to develop a framework to understand CBO characteristics and how different strategies were implemented, in order to identify strategies that appear most effective at encouraging audits, upgrades, and financing among targeted customers (Research Into Action 2014).

This first phase of the evaluation was conducted through in-depth interviews with one program staff member, three implementation contractor staff members, one to two staff members

from each of the 18 organizations, site visits with four case study subjects, and reviews of supporting materials and databases. The evaluation team also created a decision map of CBO influence on the retrofit program process and reviewed the CBOs' retrofit performance. Participating households were surveyed through a separate evaluation of the HPwES program; the CBO evaluation focused on the experiences of the organizations and program staff. This CBO evaluation was a formative rather than a summative evaluation, conducted to inform future program iterations; as such, evaluation findings cover only the first 12 to 18 months of the CBOs' two-year contracts. The following sections summarize key findings of the GJGNY Outreach program evaluation.

Understanding CBO Influence

The evaluation team documented some of the underlying logic behind the CBO program design. On a community level, CBO ability to generate projects was predicated on their position of trust within their communities. On an individual level, CBOs can influence potential program participants in different ways at each point in the retrofit process (Table 1). This mapping aligns with the services CBOs provided through the program: increasing awareness of the program and providing support throughout the upgrade process. While CBOs have a high level of influence over several key barriers to participation, there are also some important barriers over which CBOs have little influence, such as eligibility and ability to pay. Thus, while CBOs have the potential to expand program participation among previously nonparticipating populations, their success will, to some extent, reflect whether or not the program opportunity is aligned with the needs of their constituents.

Table 1. Level of CBO Influence on HPwES Participation Barriers

Participation Stage	Barrier	CBO Influence Level
0 Awareness & interest	Lack of awareness	High
	Lack of trust & interest in opportunity	Medium
	Ineligible (homeownership)	Low
1 Find a contractor	Uncertainty about contractor choice	Medium
2 Apply for an assessment	Lack of capacity to fill out paperwork	High
3 Assessment	Time delay	Medium
4 Develop work scope	Lack of understanding of work scope	High
	Lack of interest in continuing	Medium
	Lack of sufficient energy savings identified	Low
5 Pay for the work	Lack of awareness of financial support	High
	Lack of capacity to fill out paperwork	High
	Complexity of financing offerings	Medium
	Ability to pay	Low
6 Sign a contract	Lack of capacity to fill out paperwork	High
	Lack of trust of contractor	Medium
7 Complete retrofit	Concerns with contractor	Medium

Successful Outreach Strategies

Organizations conducted varied types of outreach, including attending community events, networking with other organizations, direct mail, leveraging the support of community leaders, and door-to-door canvassing, among others. Recruiting participants was more difficult than many CBOs

had anticipated. The evaluation identified four characteristics of successful CBO outreach strategies:

Conduct activities to meet specific outreach goals. CBO outreach activities spanned the residential, multifamily, small commercial, and workforce development sectors, and 14 of 18 CBOs conducted outreach in more than one sector. CBOs experienced no efficiencies in attempting to conduct multiple types of outreach, however, and no CBOs conducted activities that successfully met more than a single type of outreach goal. The most successful CBOs conducted activities that addressed the specific needs of their constituencies, rather than balancing multiple types of outreach with varying levels of alignment with their organizational abilities and their constituents' needs.

Position projects within participants' realities. HPwES participation may involve a substantial upfront cost for the homeowner; successful CBOs developed several strategies to concretely frame the benefits of HPwES participation to potential participants. One CBO strategy for making the projects appeal to potential participants was using case studies as a tool to legitimize the offer to skeptical homeowners and to convince them the program can benefit people like themselves. Another strategy was to link the energy efficiency projects with other home repairs. CBOs were also responsive to individual barriers, locating matching funding for AHPwES participants and helping others navigate the financing options.

Provide support throughout the retrofit process. Increasing awareness of the program opportunity was not, by itself, sufficient to increase targeted populations' participation in energy efficiency programs: many CBOs learned awareness must be coupled with high-touch follow-up to generate retrofits. Successful organizations remained in contact with the participant throughout the process and helped address additional, individual barriers as they emerged. For residential efficiency retrofits, this high-touch outreach included support in working with the retrofit contractor, qualifying the participant for financing, and assisting in work scope development.

Build retrofit contractor relationships. Forming strong relationships with participating retrofit contractors also was a successful strategy for many CBOs. CBOs were not allowed to explicitly recommend one contractor over another, except through formal aggregation pilots, but these relationships allowed CBOs to informally connect participants to contractors who understood the program and were reliable. CBOs worked with contractors directly to help schedule audits and troubleshoot problems, kept homeowner motivation high by reducing the time it took to receive audit results and ensuring homeowners had sufficient information to move forward. A few CBOs implemented online tracking systems that contractors could access.

Data Tracking and Support

The GJGNY Outreach program had its own program and implementation staff. This staff provided trainings as well as ongoing support and troubleshooting to help CBOs understand the retrofit programs, refine their outreach strategies, and track and report their progress. CBOs submitted monthly reports to the implementation team documenting their activities and progress. A CBO web portal and monthly meetings facilitated communication between CBOs and staff, and many CBOs adjusted their outreach strategies based on feedback from other organizations about successful strategies. The formal reporting and the use of the HPwES program database to track CBO activity facilitated consistent project attribution and evaluation.

Interim Retrofit Performance

At about halfway into the two-year CBO contracts, the CBOs had recruited 475 completed retrofits into the HPwES program. The top five performing CBOs recruited 82% of the retrofits.

As there was some concern about the appropriateness of the CBOs' original retrofit goals, the

evaluation team attempted to provide a broader context to understand the differences in organization successes. To do so, the evaluation team adapted the BBNP national evaluation methodology to rank the relative performance of the 12 CBOs contracted in the first round of contracts (Peters et al. 2013). The team ranked these CBOs' performance based on three indicators of success that aligned with their contractual responsibilities: percent of retrofit goal completed, total contract amount per retrofit completed, and audit to retrofit conversion rate (Table 2). The composite metric is equal to the sum of the ranks on each of the three individual metrics. These composite scores largely corresponded with CBO and program staff assessments of relative CBO success.

Table 2. CBO Retrofit Progress Metric Ranks

	% Goal Completed Rank 1=↑ progress to goal	Contract \$ per Retrofit Rank 1=↓ \$ / retrofit	Audit to Retrofit Conversion Rate Rank 1=↑ retrofit/audit ratio	Composite Metric	
CBO 1	6	2	1	9	Highest
CBO 2	3	1	7	11	
CBO 3	7	3	2	12	
CBO 4	1	4	9	14	
CBO 5	5	5	4	14	
CBO 6	4	6	6	16	Mixed
CBO 7	2	10	5	17	
CBO 8	10	7	3	20	
CBO 9	8	12	8	28	Lowest
CBO 10	9	9	11	29	
CBO 11	11	8	12	31	
CBO 12	12	11	10	33	

The team also examined the relationship of this composite metric with progress towards other, broader program goals. CBOs that scored high on this composite metric did not necessarily score high on three other indicators of program outcomes: proportion of regional HPwES program volume, relative Assisted path volume, and proportion of retrofits using program financing (Table 3). Interestingly, CBOs accounting for the greatest proportion of total regional program retrofits were among the lowest-performing CBOs, suggesting some regional market barriers that the CBOs were unable to overcome within the program timeframe. Note, however, that the lowest rankings were based on small sample sizes, and thus one additional project might have a large effect on rankings.

Table 3. CBO Priority Population Metric Ranks

	Composite Metric	% of Regional Retrofits Rank 1=↑ % of regional program activity	Proportion of Assisted Retrofits Rank 1=↑ % of assisted retrofits	Proportion of Retrofits with Financing Rank 1=↑ % of financed retrofits
CBO 1	9	10	5	9
CBO 2	11	4	9	3
CBO 3	12	8	2	7
CBO 4	14	9	8	6
CBO 5	14	7	12	4
CBO 6	16	6	11	2
CBO 7	17	5	3	11
CBO 8	20	11	10	8
CBO 9	28	3	6	1
CBO 10	29	2	7	11
CBO 11	31	12	1	10
CBO 12	33	1	3	4

Table 3 suggests that there may be a tradeoff between meeting the residential performance payment goals and successfully meeting the broader goals of the program by targeting AHPwES-qualified constituents in economically distressed communities. Preliminary performance data indicate those CBOs that had the most success in conducting targeted outreach to households in their priority communities (for example, recruited the highest proportions of AHPwES or financed projects, or had the highest retrofit success in an otherwise low-volume region) were not necessarily the CBOs that made the most progress towards meeting their performance goals. Some CBOs acknowledged shifting their outreach to target non-priority, higher-income communities, in order to meet their residential retrofit goals. The performance payment thus may have encouraged CBOs to recruit retrofits regardless of whether the participant was part of CBOs' targeted priority communities. At the same time, though, these three metrics represent a very narrow definition of targeted populations, and goals based on these very specific metrics would likely have placed an undue burden on CBOs' tracking systems.

The GJGNY Outreach program's performance incentive in this first round of the program was one of the more aggressive performance incentives found in U.S. community programs. As such, it was a source of contention for organizations during the evaluation. CBOs and program staff reported that in the future, they would base their goals on prior HPwES project volume and homeownership rates in their target region, allow time required to ramp up outreach activities, and account for the time it takes to complete retrofits. Despite these issues, the performance payment encouraged CBOs to monitor the effectiveness of their outreach strategies and adapt their approach in response to constituent need.

Leveraging Organizational Capacities and Partnerships: A Case Study

The evaluation used case studies to profile successful CBOs' outreach models. There were a number of organizations in the GJGNY Outreach program that developed successful outreach models. One of them was an activism and policy research organization in a rural region of New York. The organization's strategy involved two key elements: partnering with a second organization with prior experience generating residential efficiency upgrades, and an aggressive media strategy that leveraged local government partnerships. Lacking prior experience with efficiency work, the organization partnered with a second organization, which had worked with a local Mayor in implementing an ARRA-funded Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grant. The partner helped the primary organization hire staff for the program, helped design their strategy, and played a supervisory and reporting role throughout the pilot. The two organizations eventually divided outreach efforts by region, with the partner continuing to oversee and facilitate reporting as needed.

The primary organization developed an aggressive media outreach strategy focused on publicizing HPwES success stories. The small size of the media market allowed them to receive coverage from news media and secure high-visibility coverage in local print and on the radio. Staff started by conducting program "launches" in each county, sending press releases and stories to local papers in particular towns or regions. They continued to conduct outreach region by region, to maximize exposure while avoiding saturating each market. A letter of recommendation from the Mayor helped them secure the endorsement of other regional government officials. They conducted outreach events, generated newspaper ads and articles, and did radio interviews in each of their focus regions. The primary organization's most successful media activities highlighted successful HPwES participants, their contractors, and endorsements from local government officials. The partner's outreach strategy focused on events and high-touch outreach, such as "lunch and learns" with local employers. Leveraging local government officials and other influential community members, they presented the program opportunity at several area events.

Although maximizing their audit-to-retrofit conversion rate was not a primary concern for the organization, staff tracked the source of awareness for each contact and regularly adjusted their outreach strategy based on the types of outreach that generated the most promising leads.

Staff developed a tracking system to ensure that they followed up with potential participants at each phase of the HPwES process. Identifying the billing history requirement as a barrier to energy audit enrollment, the organizations also worked with the local utility to receive direct access to customers' utility data. Another element of the two organizations' case management strategy was their relationship with contractors. Both organizations followed up with contractors regularly about individual HPwES projects.

Los Angeles (LA) County CBSM Energy Champions Pilot

Between 2010 and 2013, BBNP grantee LA County and six grant partners in California implemented the Retrofit California portfolio of 24 pilot projects. Many of the Retrofit California pilots promoted the California utilities' Energy Upgrade California (EUC) program, which provided incentives for residential efficiency retrofits achieving at least a 10% reduction in energy usage through the basic or advanced upgrade package. The goal of the Retrofit California program was to "test new and innovative program models that would result in comprehensive energy efficiency retrofits" (The Cadmus Group & Research Into Action 2013, 15). The pilot designs aligned with three strategies to address market barriers to comprehensive efficiency retrofits: delivery innovation to streamline the process and reduce transaction costs, financing innovation to address upfront cost barriers, and marketing and outreach innovation to reach property owners. The specific program components varied across the pilots, including: financing, additional EUC upgrade paths, contractor training, whole neighborhood approaches, community-based social marketing, building labelling, home improvement retail partnerships, and multifamily approaches.

One of these pilots was the LA County CBSM Energy Champions pilot. This pilot created a referral program to provide incentives for participating community organizations for retrofits generated. It also provided technical and marketing support to encourage community organizations to promote EUC to their constituents. The Energy Champions pilot recruited 103 organizations as Energy Champions, representing a wide variety of organization types including 62 groups with a specific low-income focus, 16 faith-based groups, 13 environmental groups, eight schools, and four chambers of commerce or homeowners associations.

Evaluation Methods

The evaluation team conducted two interviews with implementation contractors and surveys of 23 participating organizations, as well as a document review. These enabled them to assess how well community organizations can raise awareness and influence participation in EUC, provide insights about the pilot performance, capture lessons learned, and recommend improvements for future efforts. The evaluation also included surveys of 47 participating homeowners to understand the influence of the organizations and any additional efficiency upgrades; these results are not reported here.

Recruitment Strategies

Initial retrofit recruitment was more difficult than expected, and 19 of the 103 organizations ultimately recruited at least one project. A majority of organizations reported that their constituents were good candidates for the program. The key challenges faced included the perceived cost and the complexity of the EUC process. Delays in the EUC program also affected program success.

In response to these challenges, the recruitment model changed throughout the pilot, with pilot staff and contractors playing an increasingly large role in promoting the program and answering technical questions. Several of the active organizations reported having relationships with at least one EUC contractor and cooperating to promote EUC. Although the pilot had at first discouraged close relationships between Energy Champions and retrofit contractors, over time program staff and the participating organizations realized that contractor support in promoting the program and

answering technical questions was an important component of outreach.

Organization feedback suggests that active outreach (such as meetings or one-on-one contact) was more effective than passive activities such as mailings, email, and social media. An analysis of the correlates of organization success also revealed that organizations with higher fundraising capacities tended to be more successful as Energy Champions.

Organization Support

Staff reported that organizations required more support and time than anticipated, despite the library of information they provided. Midway through the program, staff culled the number of Energy Champions to only those who had recruited at least one retrofit (indicated by submittal of a Homeowner Action Form that formalized the intent to proceed with a retrofit), but allowed other Energy Champions to re-enter the program by submitting a Homeowner Action Form. Tracking retrofits was a challenge for the pilot: homeowners frequently completed the Homeowner Action Form only after being re-contacted, after their EUC upgrades were underway.

Retrofit Performance

The pilot delivered 231 Homeowner Action Forms (indicating an intent to proceed), upon which Energy Champions incentives are based. The pilot failed to meet its goals, which were revised down to 700 retrofits midway through delivery. Staff considered the pilot successful in achieving other pilot goals to reach out to diverse communities.

Sustainable Claremont Case Study

Sustainable Claremont was the most successful Energy Champion, accounting for over half of the total retrofit volume generated by the pilot. Sustainable Claremont's success is attributable to several factors: organization experience, mission alignment, and community connections.

Sustainable Claremont, an organization that promotes a range of sustainability efforts, had promoted EUC prior to becoming an Energy Champion. In partnership with the City of Claremont, they had developed a brand for the Claremont Home Energy Retrofit Program (CHERP), including a web presence, lawn signs, and t-shirts prior to the start of the pilot.

Nearly half of Sustainable Claremont's retrofits occurred through Pilgrim Place, a community of retired service workers including several active Sustainable Claremont members. These residents worked with the community's staff to develop a plan to retrofit all residences over five years. Sustainable Claremont shared their referral incentive with Pilgrim Place to fund future upgrades. A map of the pilot's retrofits demonstrated the importance of Sustainable Claremont, and Pilgrim Place in particular, to the pilot.² This organization's success as an Energy Champion was also a function of one individual's influence and relationships with key pilot stakeholders, including a community with an interest in completing retrofits, an EUC contractor to conduct retrofits, and the Energy Champion organization to facilitate the process (Figure 1).

² For map, see The Cadmus Group & Research Into Action 2013, page 39.

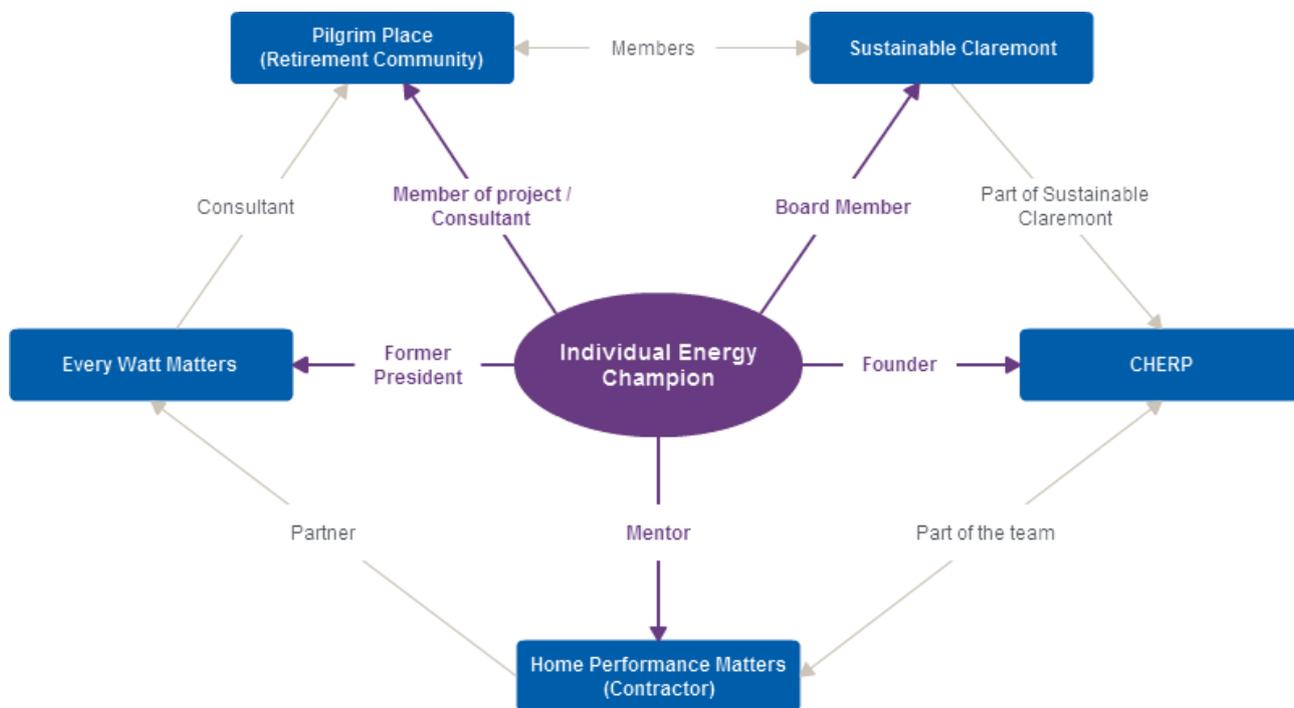


Figure 1. Map of Key Influencer's Relationships with Stakeholders

Overall, the referral incentives offered by the pilot allowed Sustainable Claremont to expand the scope of its promotion of EUC; the organization's existing capacity enabled it to effectively and rapidly use the resources provided by the pilot.

Conclusions and Lessons Learned

These two programs provide examples of ways that community-based organizations can successfully conduct outreach to generate retrofits through existing energy efficiency retrofit programs. The results of these two evaluations suggest several takeaways about these types of programs:

- Community organizations can successfully recruit energy efficiency retrofits.
- Community organizations will require support to conduct outreach, and carefully designing data tracking systems will facilitate tracking and evaluation.
- Organizations will use a variety of delivery models depending on their communities and experience.
- Organizations will tend to be most successful when their outreach leverages existing community connections and organizational capacities.
- Numeric program goals will be subject to political scrutiny and will not necessarily convey the full value of the program in delivering services to hard-to-reach populations.
- Thoughtful evaluations can illuminate program successes.

Considerations for Future Community-based Outreach Efforts

Community-based outreach programs present some very real opportunities for policy and programming that promotes social goals and expands the reach of traditional programs. Recently, many of the most publicized opportunities have been realized through legislation designed to promote public benefits in addition to watt-hours. As such, many of these programs have been self-consciously experimental, allowing varied and creative delivery mechanisms. How can the results of these innovative programs inform the next generation of community programs? In their efforts to

maximize success and mitigate the risks of community-based outreach programs, policy makers and program designers face some choices. There is no magic formula for designing and implementing these programs. We present some recommendations, based on evaluations of these two programs. These recommendations focus on community outreach programs that align with existing energy efficiency retrofit programs.

- **Carefully define program goals and success metrics.** Some of the challenges faced by U.S. community efficiency programs come from the need to meet too many goals. Programs must use community organizations and deliver community benefits, but also meet specific retrofit metrics. Furthermore, goals to reach underrepresented populations are difficult to quantify, and retrofit completion metrics may not fully capture progress toward these goals. Select one program objective and design the program around it. In defining success metrics, develop realistic expectations that consider the level of CBO influence on customer choice relative to external constraints and larger market barriers to the program.
- **Align organization recruitment with program goals.** The goals of the program should dictate the most suited types of outreach organizations to recruit. Using community organizations without prior experience working with energy efficiency programs necessarily involves some degree of organizational capacity building. At least in the short-term, there may be a trade-off between building that capacity and maximizing program project recruitment. If maximizing project recruitment is a goal, then recruit organizations with prior efficiency experience and specific ties to both retrofit delivery agents and communities with demonstrated retrofit demand.
- **Ensure selected organizations have access to and credibility with the target population.** As others have noted, the fundamental value of community organizations to these programs is their unique influence within targeted communities. During the organization recruitment process, require organizations to provide evidence that their constituents are eligible for, and can benefit from, the program offer.
- **Allow program flexibility in program models to accommodate creative delivery mechanisms.** While there is no magic formula for a successful community outreach program and no formula to predict which organizations will be the most successful, successful organizations tend to use outreach strategies that recognize the characteristics of their constituents and leverage their organizational capacities. Program models that allow for flexibility and adaptation will most fully leverage these organizations' strengths.

Some of the evaluation tools discussed here may help program designers select organizations and refine programs early in the implementation phase. Mapping organization influence on retrofit program barriers can help clarify the type of support organizations can provide, and provide insight into the extent to which organizations can help participants overcome key participation barriers. Visual representations of influence networks can help program designers understand organizations' community influence. These evaluation methods can aid program design and capture the nuanced successes of this outreach.

References

- Berry, D. 2010. "Delivering Energy Savings Through Community-Based Organizations." *The Electricity Journal* 23 (9): 65-74.
- Boroski, J., Rasmussen, T., and R. Friedmann. 2013. "Howdy Partner! Lessons Learned from an Assessment of Local Government Partnerships." *In Proceedings of the 2013 International Energy Program Evaluation Conference*. Chicago, Ill.: International Energy Program Evaluation Conference.

- The Cadmus Group. 2012. *Evaluation of NWWVT's H.E.A.T. Squad*.
[http://www.greenmountainpower.com/upload/photos/372NWWVT HEAT Squad Final Evaluation Report_01DEC12.pdf](http://www.greenmountainpower.com/upload/photos/372NWWVT_HEAT_Squad_Final_Evaluation_Report_01DEC12.pdf). West Rutland, Vt: NeighborWorks of Western Vermont.
- The Cadmus Group and Research Into Action. 2013. *Retrofit California Process Evaluation Final Report*. Available by public request to Los Angeles County's Internal Services Department:
<http://www.lacounty.gov>.
- [iSMA] International Social Marketing Association, European Social Marketing Association, and Australian Association of Social Marketing. 2013. *The iSMA, ESMA and AASM Consensus Definition of Social Marketing*. http://www.i-socialmarketing.org/assets/social_marketing_definition.pdf.
- Lightbourn, S. 2014 "Community Marketing: What worked? What didn't? What We Would Do Again." *In Proceedings of the 24th National Conference & Expo*. San Diego, Calif.: Association of Energy Services Professionals.
- MacRoy, P. 2014. "Applying a Political Campaign Model to Energy Efficiency Outreach." *In Proceedings of the 24th National Conference & Expo*. San Diego, Calif.: Association of Energy Services Professionals.
- McKenzie-Mohr, D. 2011. *Fostering Sustainable Behavior: An Introduction to Community-Based Social Marketing*. Third ed. Gabriola Island, British Columbia: New Society Publishers.
- Moran, D., Dunn, A., and C. Kan. 2014. "Mining for Community-based Gold: Striking it Rich in California." *In Proceedings of the ACEEE 2014 Summer Study on Energy Efficiency in Buildings*. Washington, D.C.: American Council for an Energy-Efficient Economy.
- Nelson, C., Boots-Camp, S., Booth-Tobin, H., Struss, E., and M. Lyon. 2014 "Takin' it to the Cul-de-Sac: Community-based Marketing in the Suburbs." *In Proceedings of the 24th National Conference & Expo*. San Diego, Calif.: Association of Energy Services Professionals.
- New York State. 2009. "Green Jobs Green New York Act of 2009." Public Authorities Law Section 1890-1899-a.
- Peters, J.S., McRae, M. R., Bliss, R., and E. Vine. 2013. "How Is the Neighborhood? Preliminary Results from the Better Buildings Neighborhood Program." *In Proceedings of the 2013 International Energy Program Evaluation Conference*. Chicago, Ill.: International Energy Program Evaluation Conference.
- Research Into Action. 2014. *Process Evaluation and Market Characterization Assessment GJGNY Outreach Program*. <http://www.nyserda.ny.gov/-/media/Files/Publications/PPSER/Program-Evaluation/2014ContractorReports/2014-EMEP-GJGNY-Outreach.PDF>. Albany, N.Y.: New York State Research and Development Authority.
- Rossmann, J., LeDuc, A., and G. Parrington. 2013. "Apples to Audits: Challenges Affecting the Reliability of Performance Metrics for ARRA-Funded Energy Programs." *In Proceedings of the 2013 International Energy Program Evaluation Conference*. Chicago, Ill.: International Energy Program Evaluation Conference.
- Schueler, V. 2013. "Community-Based Energy Programs in Washington: Rediscovering and Relearning the Lessons of Thirty Years of Residential Energy Efficiency Program Delivery." *In Proceedings of the 2013 International Energy Program Evaluation Conference*. Chicago, Ill.: International Energy Program Evaluation Conference.
- Vigen, M., and S. Mazur-Stommen. 2012. Reaching the "High-Hanging Fruit" through Behavior Change: How Community-Based Social Marketing Puts Energy Savings within Reach. Washington, D.C.: American Council for an Energy-Efficient Economy.