



The Better Buildings Neighborhood View

January 2013

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"I would have been in the unemployment line if it weren't for this. I'm a pretty small fish, but it's been a huge difference to me."

-Mark McLain, a Carbondale, Colorado, architect who performs energy evaluations for Garfield Clean Energy customers

Consumer Energy Tip

Air ducts are a key part of one of the most important systems in your home. But ducts that leak heated air into unheated spaces can add hundreds of dollars a year to a home's heating bills! Keep the heat where you need it this winter by

Join the Better Buildings Neighborhood Program at the 2013 ACI National Home Performance Conference

Want to take your energy efficiency program the extra distance? Travel to the Mile-High City of Denver, Colorado, and join thousands of other home performance professionals this spring for the [2013 ACI National Home Performance Conference](#) and [Home Energy Leadership Summit](#). The ACI National Home Performance Conference (April 30-May 3) will feature innovative workshops, educational seminars, evening sessions, a trade show, and networking receptions. See the [newly released brochure](#) for a full schedule.

In addition to sharing lessons learned and next steps from the U.S. Energy Department Better Buildings Neighborhood Program, the Department also plans to release the beta version of its decision tool at the conference. The tool is an online collection of resources and partners' lessons learned that will help other residential energy efficiency program administrators plan, implement, manage, and evaluate residential energy efficiency programs.

Held in conjunction with the conference, the [Home Energy Leadership Summit](#) (April 29-30) will bring together key leaders working to move residential energy efficiency into the mainstream—including the Department and the Better Buildings Neighborhood Program. Participants will discuss which benchmarks are the most critical in developing an industry scorecard, as well as how to better align the interests of all parties crucial to developing a roadmap for a sustainable future. The summit aims to inspire innovation and collaborative opportunities for government, utilities, financial institutions, contractors, and homeowners.

All events will be held at the [Sheraton Denver Downtown Hotel](#). Late registration fees for the ACI conference and summit will go into effect on March 18, so [register today](#) to enjoy an early registration discount!

Better Buildings Innovators

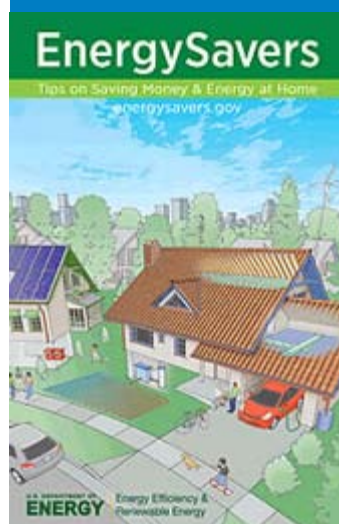
Take the Guesswork Out of Successful Program Strategies

*The following are snapshots from the first and second new **Focus Series** of interviews the Better Buildings Neighborhood Program is conducting with its partners to document successful program strategies and lessons learned.*

LaborWorks@NeighborWorks Provides Vermont Contractors With Help When They Need It

[NeighborWorks of Western Vermont](#) (NWWVT) established

sealing ducts to prevent air leaks, especially those located in spaces such as attics or basements. Get energy saving tips such as this one and more from DOE's [EnergySavers guide](#).



Related Events

[Lawrence Berkeley National Library "The Future of Utility Customer-Funded Energy Efficiency Programs in the United States" Webinar](#)

January 31, 2013

10:00–11:00 AM EST

[ACI 2013 Northwest Home Performance Conference](#)

February 5–6, 2013

Seattle, WA

[South-central Partnership for Energy Efficiency as a Resource's \(SPEER's\) First Annual Summit](#)

February 25–26, 2013

Austin, TX

[DOE's Office of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy "An Energy Literate Citizenry From K-to-Gray" Webinar](#)

February 6, 2013

4:00–5:00 PM EST

[DOE's Better Buildings Neighborhood Program "Preliminary Process and Market Evaluation" Webinar](#)

LaborWorks@NeighborWorks (LaborWorks), a nonprofit temporary labor pool, in 2011 to assist professional contractors involved with the Home Energy Assistance Team (H.E.A.T.) Squad during busy periods when they couldn't keep up with demand or hire full-time help. [Read the full interview](#) and some highlights from the December 2012 Focus Series about LaborWorks with H.E.A.T. Squad Coordinator, Melanie Paskevich.

Q: How did the program recruit temporary workers?

Having hosted several trainings put on by Vermont Green (a statewide green jobs training initiative), we were already aware of a pool of skilled laborers that had completed the training and were seeking employment. We also contacted the Vermont Department of Labor and the [U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs] and used our contractor base to spread the word about this opportunity.

Q: What has the program accomplished so far?

Ten employees—of various ages and backgrounds—have worked in the temporary pool since the program started, and about three to five workers are in the pool at any given time. Anecdotally, many of the professional contractors have shared their enthusiasm for the temporary worker pool, and the extra staffing has helped reduce the number of backlogged projects throughout the community. We think the ultimate success of this program is achieved when a contractor hires a trained temporary worker on a full-time basis, which has happened on two occasions since we started in February 2012. Also, all 12 professional contractors that access the temporary pool have added staff since our program began.

[Read the full Focus Series interview](#) to learn more about how this labor pool is working for NWWVT and ways to recruit temporary workers in your area.

It's Academic: BetterBuildings for Michigan Partners With University to Reach Employees

[BetterBuildings for Michigan](#) has conducted numerous neighborhood "sweeps" to promote energy efficiency upgrades to homeowners in the Grand Rapids, Michigan, area. To expand its reach, the program initiated a semester-long, employer-assisted partnership with Grand Valley State University (GVSU). [Read the full interview](#) and some highlights from the January 2013 Focus Series with two BetterBuildings for Michigan leaders: Program Manager Mary Templeton and Grand Rapids Regional Coordinator Selma Tucker.

Q: What results has the partnership achieved to date?

In total, 215 people (nearly 10% of total employees) signed up through GVSU. Furthermore, the GVSU partnership was tremendously successful as an inexpensive lead generator. We spent one-fourth to one-third as much money per participant for marketing and communications compared to a typical neighborhood sweep. We were also excited to sign up such a high number of non-city residents—115—even though these customers were not eligible to receive additional incentives beyond contractor-funded assessments and utility rebates.

Q: How were university leaders/champions engaged in helping to encourage upgrades?

We also had early buy-in from the sustainability staff at GVSU, and the senior management of the university's human resources (HR) department was very supportive. Using data that the HR department provided to us, we developed a sophisticated customer relations management database to manage services to

February 13, 2013
3:00–4:30 PM EST

[American Council for an
Energy-Efficient Economy
\(ACEEE\) and Consortium for
Energy Efficiency \(CEE\)
National Symposium on
Market Transformation](#)
March 24–26, 2013
Washington, DC

[ACI National Home
Performance Conference](#)
April 30–May 3, 2013
Denver, CO
*Site of the next Better
Buildings Neighborhood
Program workshop.*

[ACEEE Energy Efficiency
Finance Forum](#)
May 13–15, 2013
Chicago, IL

customers. This was key from a practical standpoint, as it allowed us to manage questions and concerns quickly and efficiently. Good customer service strengthened how our program was perceived by GVSU employees; we built trust with our audience even before entering their homes. The provost's office and the university president were on board as well, which added to our credibility. They were instrumental in writing letters to staff and making their participation in the program publicly known.

[Read the full Focus Series interview](#) to learn more about how BetterBuildings for Michigan and GVSU are working together and tips for forming partnerships in your community.

Driving Demand

Community Power Works Uses Housing Data to Make the Emerald City Even "Greener"

In Seattle, Washington, owners of oil-heated homes are ineligible for city-sponsored electric and gas utility rebates. But that didn't stop the city's Better Buildings Neighborhood Program partner, [Community Power Works](#), from using housing data to break through to this untapped market. Given the lower efficiency and high cost of heating oil, the program recognized the energy- and cost-savings potential for these Seattle homeowners and acted to engage them in undertaking home energy upgrades.

In spring 2012, Community Power Works purchased a mailing list from Data Marketing, Inc., that identified all owners of oil-heated homes in Seattle. The program used the data to send letters to 30,000 of these homeowners describing the energy efficiency services available through Community Power Works during April and May 2012. To encourage quick responses, the letters included a limited-time \$500 rebate available to homeowners after they submitted a receipt for decommissioning their oil tank.

A significant increase in program participation among owners of oil-heated homes indicates that the direct mail strategy made a measurable impact. [Read more](#) about the results of Community Power Works' targeted direct mail efforts and advice for programs considering a similar approach.

Innovation Nation

Denver Energy Challenge Makes Waves Online

Looking to inspire an energy efficiency ripple effect in your community? Don't overlook the creative possibilities of sharing customer success stories. The [Denver Energy Challenge](#) has demonstrated an innovative approach by launching the interactive, online [Denver Ripple Map](#) to highlight homes and businesses that have completed energy



Residents can follow the ripples to read success stories in their own backyard.

efficiency upgrades through the program. With one click, visitors can learn about local home and business owners who undertook energy upgrades through Denver Energy Challenge, why these energy projects mattered to the customer, and the savings they achieved.

[Read more success stories](#) of happy home and building owners from across the country undertaking upgrades to achieve energy and cost savings.

Maryland Students STEP Up Their Energy Skills

University Park, Maryland, elementary students are schooling their teachers on energy efficiency. The local [Small Town Energy Program](#) (STEP) partnered with the national Alliance to Save Energy to deliver the [PowerSave Schools Program](#) to University Park Elementary School and Hyattsville Elementary School in Maryland. The program's curriculum engages students as advocates for energy efficiency in their communities. For example, students at University Park Elementary busted energy-wasting teachers in a "Wattage Walk" [video series](#) that caught power strips left on throughout the evening. The Hyattsville Elementary [Green Team](#) took a similar in-school field trip to learn firsthand about electricity use throughout the school.



University Park Elementary School students take a "Wattage Walk" to find energy vampires.

Beyond the Neighborhood Program

Residential Energy Efficiency Tax Credit Extended Through 2013

In the recently passed American Taxpayer Relief Act of 2012 (H.R. 8, 01/02/13), federal tax credits for energy efficiency measures were extended through December 31, 2013. Homeowners who have installed energy efficiency upgrades to their homes can apply for a tax credit of up to \$500. For more information, visit the [Database of State Incentives for Renewables and Efficiency](#).

Lend Your Expertise to the Energy Efficiency Standardization Coordination Collaborative

The Department and the American National Standards Institute (ANSI) invite you to join the [Energy Efficiency Standardization Coordination Collaborative](#) (EESCC). The collaborative will assess the energy efficiency standardization landscape and develop an EESCC standardization "road map" to help increase deployment of energy efficiency solutions in the public and private sectors. To initiate this effort, EESCC will inventory the standards, codes, specifications, and conformance programs that are currently available or under development. EESCC will also identify gaps and evaluate what additional standardization-related activities are needed to advance energy efficiency.

Participation in EESCC is open to all interested stakeholders, including representatives of companies; advocacy organizations; trade associations; standards development and conformity assessment organizations; government agencies; and academia. To join, complete and return a [participation response](#)

[form](#) to ANSI at EESCC@ansi.org. You can also [read a fact sheet](#) for information on participant benefits, fees, and EESCC's priorities.

Reports Reading List

From an overview of the home performance contracting market to utilities' role in code compliance, these recent reports can help programs shape their local energy upgrade market:

- [A Regulator's Privacy Guide to Third-Party Data Access for Energy Efficiency](#) provides guidance on issues and policy options related to providing access to customer energy use information [State and Local Energy Efficiency Action Network (SEE Action), December 2012].
- [Building America Energy Renovations: A Business Case for Home Performance Contracting](#) gives an overview of the needs and potential opportunities in the U.S. housing market for home performance contracting (The Department's Building America Program, October 2012).
- [Building Energy Code Advancement through Utility Support and Engagement](#) details pilot program concepts that can help utilities play a meaningful role in promoting building energy codes (American Council for an Energy-Efficient Economy, December 2012).
- [Energy Efficiency Program Impact Evaluation Guide](#) provides information on standard procedures and best practices for planning and conducting evaluations and reporting results (SEE Action, December 2012).
- [The Future of Utility Customer-Funded Energy Efficiency Programs in the United States: Projected Spending and Savings to 2025](#) presents 12-year projections of future spending on energy efficiency programs funded by electric and gas utility customers in the United States (Lawrence Berkeley National Library, January 2013).

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