



**Better Buildings Residential Network Peer
Exchange Call Series:
*Best Practices for Fostering and Using
Contractor Networks (101)***

July 28, 2016

Call Slides and Discussion Summary

Agenda

- Agenda Review and Ground Rules
- Opening Polls
- Brief Residential Network Overview
- Featured Speakers
 - **Marc Bigby**, Engagement Services Manager, Build It Green (*Network Member*)
 - **Kelsey Horton**, Senior Building Policy Associate, Midwest Energy Efficiency Alliance (*Network Member*)
 - **Susan Thompson**, Strategic Planning Manager, Efficiency Vermont (*Network Member*)
- Discussion
 - How do you ensure that contractor networks work for both energy efficiency programs and participating contractors?
 - What services/support can contractor networks provide to less experienced contractors?
 - What are best practices for how programs decide where to focus their time/support for contractors in the network?
 - How do programs deal with customer complaints about participating contractors?
 - Other questions/issues related to contractor networks?
- Closing Poll and Upcoming Call Schedule

Better Buildings Residential Network

Better Buildings Residential Network: Connects energy efficiency programs and partners to share best practices and learn from one another to increase the number of homes that are energy efficient.

Membership: Open to organizations committed to accelerating the pace of home energy upgrades.

Benefits:

- Peer Exchange Calls 4x/month
- Tools, templates, & resources
- Recognition in media, materials
- Speaking opportunities
- Updates on latest trends
- Voluntary member initiatives
- Residential Program Solution Center guided tours

Commitment: Provide DOE with annual number of residential upgrades, and information about associated benefits.

For more information or to join, email bbresidentialnetwork@ee.doe.gov, or go to energy.gov/eere/bbrn and click Join

Best Practices: Build It Green (California)

Fostering & Engaging Contractors

Marc Bigby

Engagement Services Manager

7/28/16



About Build It Green

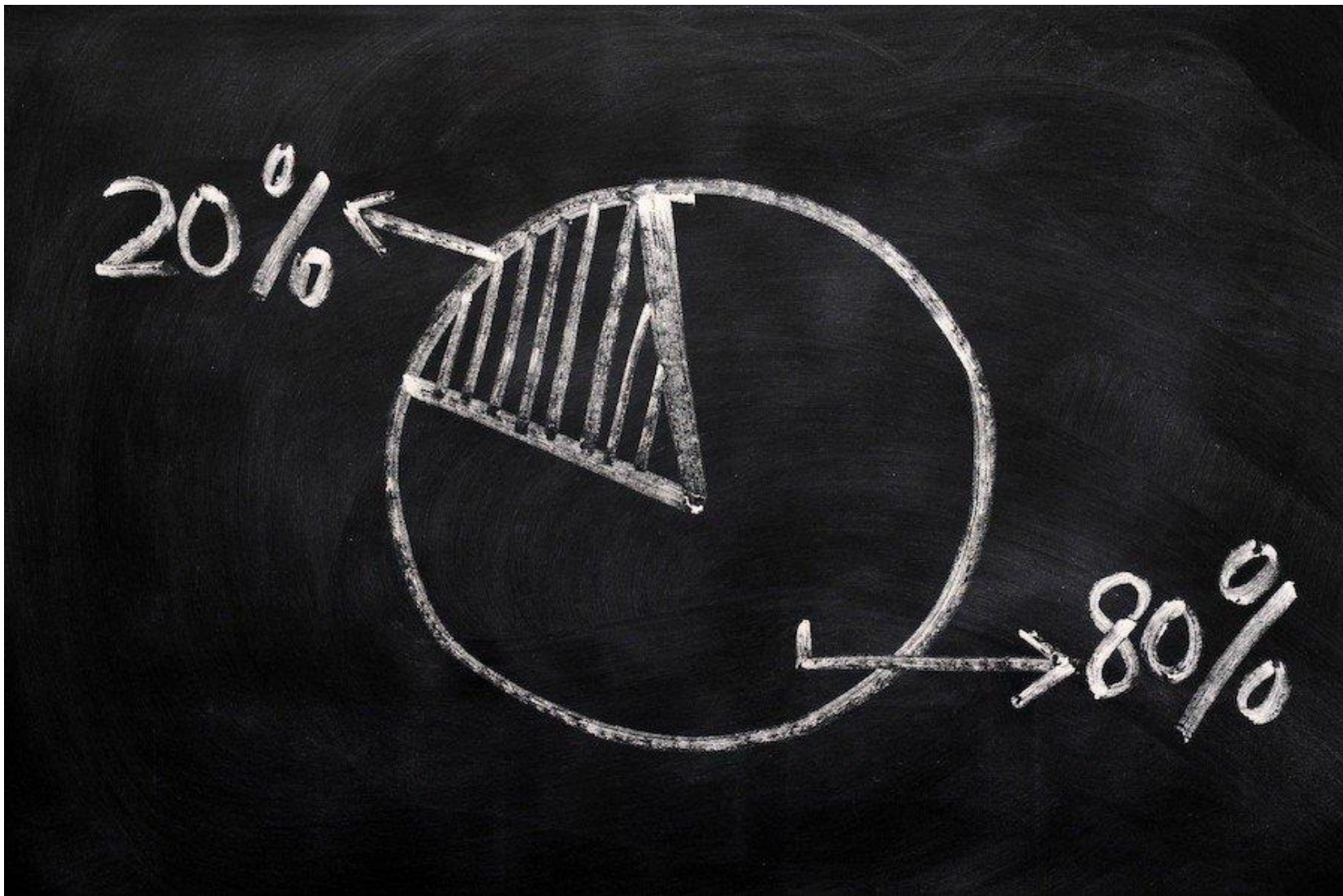
Build It Green's Mission is to help professionals adopt green practices and grow the market for efficient, healthy homes.

BuildItGreen.org



About me





Mentoring the 20%



Engaging the 80%



Benefits



Contractor Support



Best Practices: Build It Green

Know your network: Oftentimes, 20% of your contractors account for 80% of the work being completed.

- Programs can grow not just by expanding program offerings, but also by helping contractors better utilize existing offerings.
 - **Training and Mentorship:** Support contractors by bringing in industry experts (e.g., business operations, sales, quality assurance, marketing) to speak at trainings.
 - **Outreach:** Building a contractor network requires extensive marketing. Site visits, regional forums, events, and phone calls are a **great way to reach out to contractors.**
- Building a relationship with contractors not only builds the network, it helps you **understand their business model and perspective.**
 - Not all contractors have the same structure. If you design a program around a single contractor business model, your program may not work for many businesses. **Contractor feedback and insight should inform program design.**

Best Practices: Midwest Energy Efficiency Alliance (MEEA) and Illinois Home Performance



Best Practices for Fostering and Using Contractor Networks

July 28, 2016



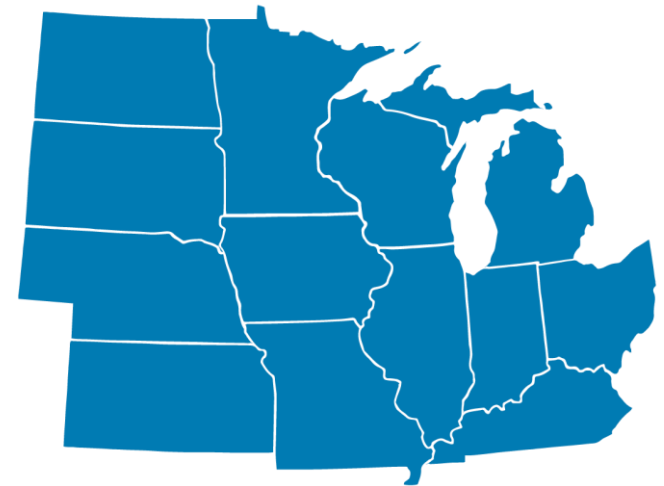
About MEEA

The Trusted Source on Energy Efficiency

We are a nonprofit membership organization with **160+ members**, including:

- Utilities
- Research institutions
- State and local governments
- Energy efficiency-related businesses

As the key resource and champion for energy efficiency in the Midwest, MEEA helps a diverse range of stakeholders understand and implement cost-effective energy efficiency strategies that provide economic and environmental benefits.



Illinois Home Performance

2011 - Present

- Illinois' version of national Home Performance with ENERGY STAR® program
- Statewide platform for whole home retrofit programs
- Statewide Sponsor: Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (grant with ratepayer funding)



Contractor Resources

- Trainings + Training Rebates
- Online Portals
- Building Science Hotline
- Equipment Loan Program + Discounts
- Co-Branding
- Newsletter



Contractor Support in Action



Lessons Learned

- IHP experiences the 80 / 20 rule
 - Our unique position means we can still support all contractors
- Providing resources to contractors not yet in network creates a funnel of qualified contractors
- Check in with contractors to ensure resources are useful

Thank you!

Kelsey Horton
Midwest Energy Efficiency Alliance



Best Practices: Illinois Home Performance

- **Open Network:** Illinois Home Performance (IHP) has offerings for member and non-member contractors, which allows access new contractors while still making membership valuable to participants.
- **Member benefits** include access to utility rebates for customers and program-branded materials.
- **Non-Member offerings** include resources aimed at outreach and education:
 - **Training:** Experts host one-day trainings around the state.
 - **Educational Rebates:** IHP provides rebates for the cost of taking BPI classes or other certifications.
 - **Equipment Loan:** Contractors can check out equipment from blower doors to infrared cameras.
 - **Building Science Hotline:** The hotline provides contractors with access to a building science expert that can provide real time answers to their questions.

Best Practices: Efficiency Vermont

Efficiency Excellence Network

Susan Thompson

Strategic Planning Manager

Efficiency
Excellence
Network

Efficiency
Vermont

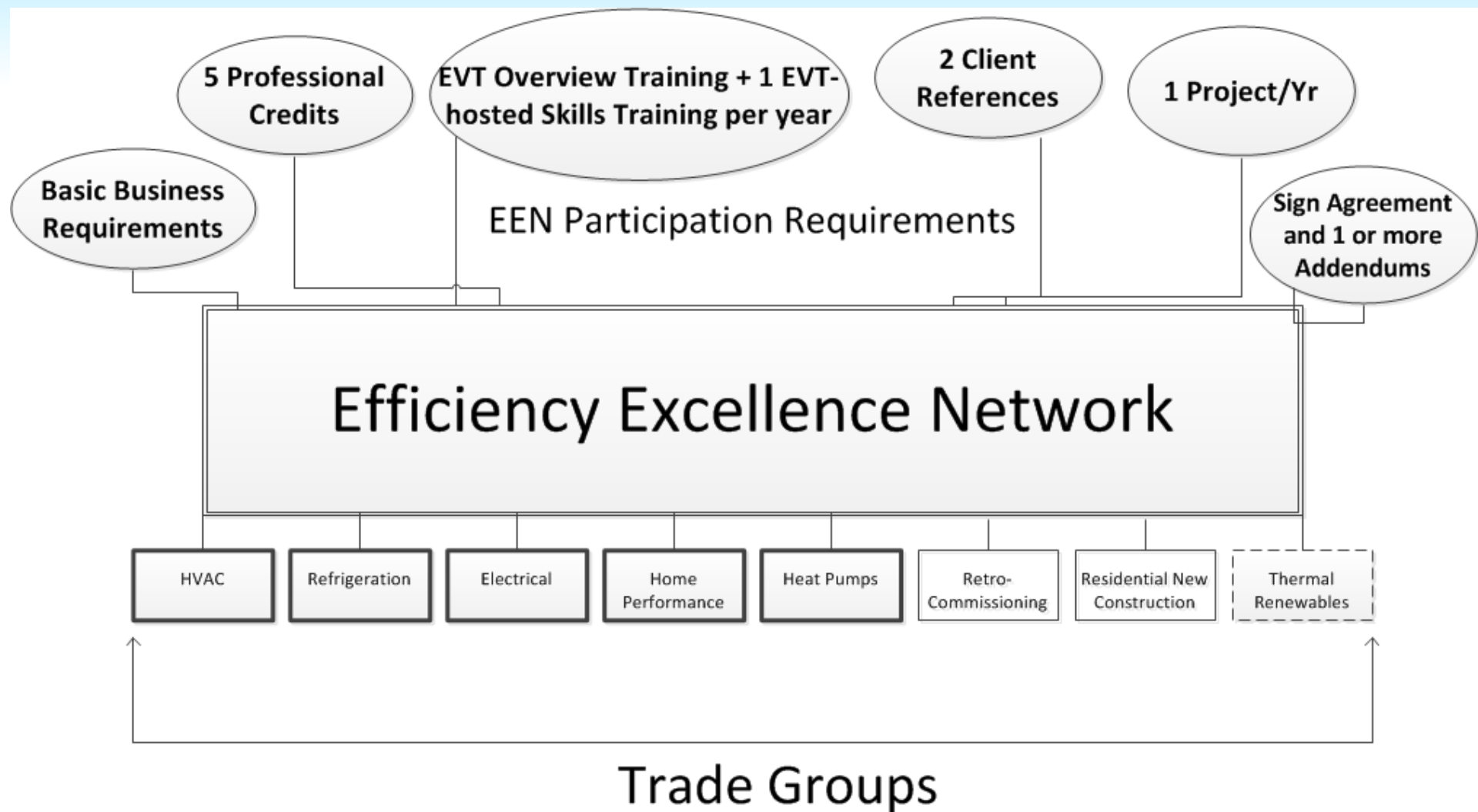


Goals of the EEN

- Develop a **strong long-term partnership and network** with trade allies;
- **Proactively work with contractors** to encourage energy efficiency equipment and opportunities in their work;
- **Support and stay in touch** with our key partners;
- **Increase educational opportunities** for contractors;
- **Identify and differentiate** contractors with dedication to efficiency and quality.

Benefits to Contractors

- **Leads and referrals**
 - Business listing on Efficiency Vermont website
- **Trainings**
 - Technical trainings and support
- **Differentiate**
 - Marketing resources
 - Financing Opportunities
 - Co-Op Advertising



EEN Trade Group:

Home Performance with Energy Star

Requirements:

- ✓ **Adhere to HPwES** program requirements
- ✓ **Attend HPwES/BP Annual** Contractor meeting
- ✓ **Complete at least (4)** HPwES and/or Building Performance projects per year



The EEN Today

EEN Members	180
Who are they?	(29) Lighting (26) Refrigeration (97) HVAC (51) HPwES (27) Heat Pump
# of EEN Trainings completed	16
Engagement and Communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Quarterly Newsletter• Bi-monthly Program Updates• Face to Face• Annual appreciation event• Better Buildings By Design

Summary

- Networks provide a strong model of continuous engagement and communication.
- Engaging contractors can be difficult
 - Face to Face engagement is important.
- Contractors value the support of a network.
 - A training calendar is a real value add.
- Establish clear expectations around requirements and performance for remaining in network.
- Gather feedback and input from contractors.
- Establish clear internal processes for managing the network.

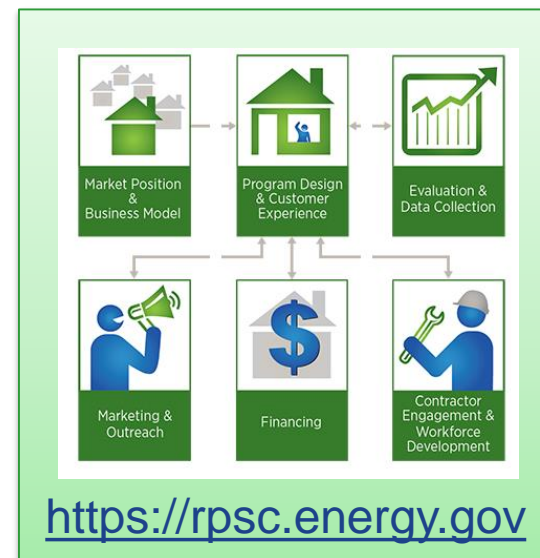
Best Practices: Efficiency Vermont

- A network is a great way to **develop long term partnerships** with contractors.
 - **Grow the network:** Efficiency Vermont lists network contractors on its website and offers a low-interest Heat Saver Loan to customers that use network contractors.
 - **Maintain the relationship:** Efficiency Vermont provides technical training, appreciation events, and provides discounts to annual conferences.
- **Be clear about requirements:**
 - **Internal:** Managing a network involves many moving pieces. Develop clear roles and responsibilities internally to avoid oversight and error.
 - **External:** Communicate the requirements for inclusion in the network and actively gather feedback to ensure quality of the program and meaningful support of contractors.

Related Resources in the Residential Program Solution Center

Resources related to home performance contractor networks:

- Explore the [Contractor Engagement & Workforce Development – Identify Partners](#) handbook to learn about building and enhancing contractor relationships.
 - The [Contractor Engagement & Workforce Development – Deliver Program](#) handbook provides step-by-step instructions on recruiting contractors and working with them to deliver home energy upgrades.
 - The “[Establish collaborative partnerships with contractors and communicate with them early and often](#)” tip discusses how programs have fostered relationships with contractors.
- While you're there, see the latest [Proven Practices](#) post on [Contractor Selection](#).
 - The Solution Center is continually updated to support residential energy efficiency programs—[member ideas are wanted](#)!



Solution Center Seeks Focus Group Volunteers

- Do these criteria describe you?
 - I have used the Solution Center to look for information
 - I am an program administrator or in a decision-making role for a residential energy efficiency program
- If interested, please respond in the chat field, or email BBRPSolutionCenter@ee.doe.gov (by 7/29) with:
 - Name
 - Email address & phone number
 - Organization & title/role
- WHEN: Focus group will take place the week of Aug. 15 by conference call. Time commitment ~1 hour

Discussion

Outreach: Face-to-face interaction is key to building a relationship.

- Meet contractors where they are:
 - **Early Bird:** Schedule trainings and networking events early in the morning to work around contractor hours.
 - **Trainings:** Educational offerings are a great way to introduce contractors interested in home performance to your program.
- From a contractor perspective, programs can feel like a wizard behind the curtain. **Designate individuals within your program to consistently interact with contractors.**
 - Designated **account managers** responsible for calling, emailing, and visiting contractors can **strengthen relationships**.
 - Once contractors understand who their “person” is, they know exactly how to get program information and **stay engaged**.

Peer Exchange Call Series

We hold one Peer Exchange call the first four Thursdays of each month from 1:00-2:30 pm ET

Calls cover a range of topics, including financing & revenue, data & evaluation, business partners, multifamily housing, and marketing & outreach for all stages of program development and implementation

Upcoming calls:

- August 4: Energy Efficiency Olympiad: Best Practices from Around the World (201)
- August 11: Gold Medal Approaches for Obtaining and Using Energy Efficiency Data (101)
- August 18: Vinicius, Quatchi, and You: Using Power Words and Branding to Increase Interest and Participation (301)
- *No call scheduled for August 25*

Send call topic ideas to peerexchange@rossstrategic.com

See the Better Buildings Residential Network Program [website](#) to register

Addenda: Attendee Information and Poll Results

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Call Attendees: Network Members (1 of 2)

- BKi
- Building Performance Center, Inc.
- Center for Sustainable Energy
- City of Plano
- CLEARResult
- Cleveland Public Power
- County of San Luis Obispo
- CSRA
- Ecology Action
- Elevate Energy
- Energy Response Corps
- Energy Services Group
- EnerScore Inc.
- Enhabit
- Focus on Energy
- GoodCents
- Holy Cross Energy
- ICF
- Mitsubishi Electric Cooling and Heating
- Montana Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ)
- New York City Energy Efficiency Corporation (NYCEEC)
- New York State Energy Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA)

Call Attendees: Network Members (2 of 2)

- Parker Interests Unlimited
- PG&E
- Rocky Mountain Institute
- Snohomish County PUD
- Solar and Energy Loan Fund (SELF)
- Sonoma County Energy Independence Program (SCEIP)
- Sprayrock Building Systems, LLC
- The Oberlin Project
- TRC Energy Services
- U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development

Call Attendees: Non-Members

- Air Conditioning Contractors of America
- ASC Energy
- BA Consult
- County of Sonoma-Energy & Sustainability
- Department of Public Utilities, Massachusetts
- Eco Energy
- EfficiencyOne
- Flathead Electric Cooperative
- Hot Water Solutions
- New Leaf Home Design
- Off The Grid Renovations
- Ryan Taylor Architects LLC
- Thermostat Recycling Corporation
- XLR8SUN

Opening Poll #1

- Which of the following best describes your organization's experience with contractor networks?
 - Some experience/familiarity – **34%**
 - Very experienced/familiar – **32%**
 - Limited experience/familiarity – **18%**
 - No experience/familiarity – **16%**
 - Not applicable – **0%**

Opening Poll #2

- Which choice best represents your organization's role?
 - Energy efficiency program administration and support – **54%**
 - Other (please explain) – **16%**
 - Energy auditor, contractor, or service provider – **11%**
 - Equipment manufacturer – **11%**
 - Research, education, or advocacy organization – **8%**

Closing Poll

- After today's call, what will you do?
 - Consider implementing one or more of the ideas discussed – **48%**
 - Seek out additional information on one or more of the ideas – **36%**
 - Make no changes to your current approach – **16%**
 - Other (please explain) – **0%**