

*This Better Buildings Residential Network Community-Based Social Marketing Toolkit strengthens residential energy efficiency program outreach and marketing efforts through data-driven, tailored efforts that change behaviors. One of the greatest challenges facing the residential energy efficiency market is engaging people to take steps to save energy. This Toolkit provides practical guidance, resources, and examples for applying community-based social marketing to increase the number of homes that are energy efficient.*



Homeowners learn about Energy Upgrades at Energy House Party in Madison, Wisconsin

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## UNDERSTANDING COMMUNITY-BASED SOCIAL MARKETING (CBSM)

**Community-based social marketing** is a data-driven approach to community-level behavior change that reduces barriers to action while simultaneously enhancing motivation through social influences. The CBSM approach includes five steps outlined in the figure below. These steps may be used to enhance existing programs or to launch new initiatives.

### Community-Based Social Marketing Steps



Source: U.S. DOE illustration of concepts developed by Doug McKenzie-Mohr, *Fostering Sustainable Behavior*, [www.cbsm.com](http://www.cbsm.com)

CBSM differs from other forms of outreach and marketing in several important ways:

- **Focuses on Enhancing Motivations and Eliminating Barriers:** Unlike traditional marketing, which is oriented toward providing information about the “product” to customers, CBSM focuses on the reasons why a person is or is not engaging in a behavior.
  - Traditional marketing and outreach focuses on the four Ps – Product, Price, Placement, and Promotion – to sell services or products to customers.
  - CBSM, on the other hand, reduces the forces inhibiting people from engaging in desired behaviors and enhances their motivations. Importantly, this means CBSM is not limited to outreach, but can include reducing barriers such as complexity and lack of trust.
- **Uses the Power of the Community:** CBSM initiatives occur at the neighborhood or community level, and use social influence and norms to change behavior, for example through trusted messengers, social diffusion, competitions, etc.
- **Backed by Data and Social Science:** CBSM relies on local research of target audiences to develop customized initiatives based on behavioral science and community-specific barriers and benefits. CBSM initiatives also evaluate how well strategies actually change behavior, and then adjust strategies based on the results.

### Why Is CBSM Useful for Residential Energy Efficiency?

CBSM offers a powerful way for residential energy efficiency program managers to apply resources effectively while also developing community buy-in for longer-term behavior change. All residential energy efficiency actions have some connection to behaviors—whether they are ongoing behaviors related to energy use (e.g., changing the thermostat temperature), one-time choices about new equipment, or whole-home upgrades involving a series of actions. CBSM promotes behavior change by decreasing barriers to action and tapping into values that are powerful motivators to action. This focus can produce deep-seated benefits (see box).

#### BENEFITS OF CBSM FOR ENERGY EFFICIENCY

With its focus on behavior change and data-driven, community-specific strategies, CBSM can provide the following types of benefits compared to less targeted outreach and marketing efforts:

- **Higher participation rates** in energy efficiency programs among target audiences
- **Greater understanding** of consumer perspectives leading to smarter communication strategies
- **Deeper, longer lasting changes** in energy efficiency behaviors that can persist long-term, not months
- **Expanded consumer understanding** of and support for energy efficiency benefits
- **Increased demand** for increasingly complex energy efficiency measures
- **Stronger relationships** with local organizations and community leaders

For an example of the benefits of CBSM and how it has been applied to residential energy efficiency, see the Better Buildings Residential Network **Case Study of Fort Collins, Colorado**.

## CBSM AND RESIDENTIAL ENERGY EFFICIENCY

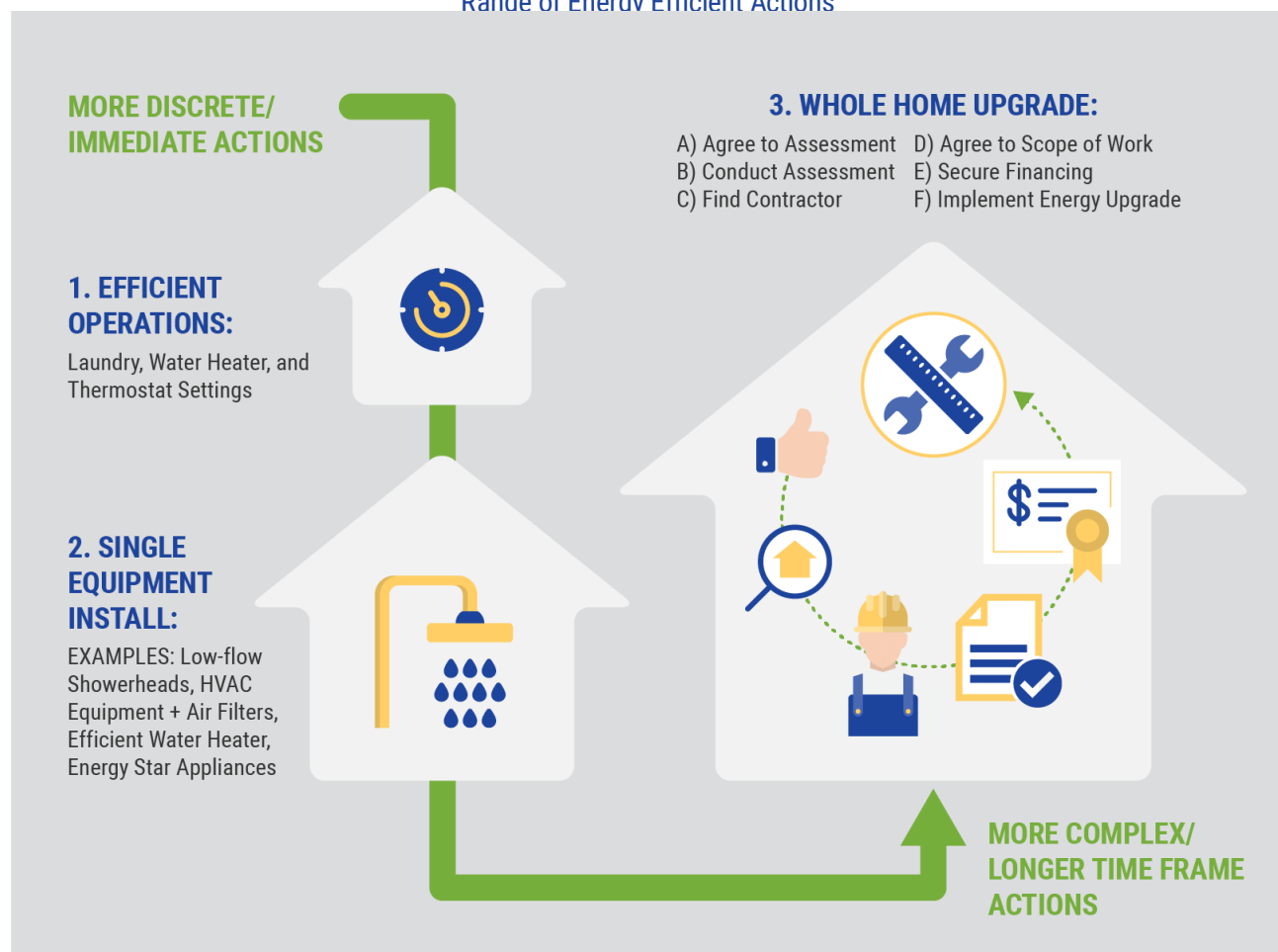
# 1

### Step 1: Select Behaviors to Promote

The first step in applying CBSM to residential energy efficiency is to select the behavior(s) you want to see adopted in your community. These behaviors can range from very simple (e.g., setting your washer cycle to “cold”) to complex (e.g., implementing a whole home upgrade, which evaluates all components of the home as part of one system to holistically reduce your energy use. This may include conducting an energy assessment, choosing a contractor, and making decisions about the extent of an energy upgrade). The closer that the behavior is to being an *indivisible* action (not separable into other actions) and an *end state* action (directly linked to the program's desired goals, such as energy use reduction or environmental improvement), the easier it will be to design and implement CBSM initiatives.

The figure below includes examples of actions that can significantly reduce household energy consumption from simple to more complex. Start by analyzing the range of behaviors and choose behaviors that are relevant to your population by considering community characteristics such as region, age of population, cultural traditions, languages, building stock, and type of energy use prevalent in your community, as well as engaging stakeholders to find out which energy use behaviors are important to them.

Range of Energy Efficient Actions



For more information, see the [U.S. Department of Energy’s explanation of the importance of energy efficiency upgrades](#) or the [Smarter House overview of household energy use](#), which outlines actions that can reduce energy use within homes.

After narrowing down your list of potential behaviors, you may want to prioritize behaviors by asking additional questions in three areas:

1. **Impact:** What changes will occur when individuals engage in this behavior? How will that affect energy use?
2. **Probability of Success:** Has this change been successfully implemented in the past? What is the likelihood that the target audience would successfully implement the behavior?
3. **Market Opportunity:** How many people do not yet engage in this behavior in your target audience?

Once you have collected this information, determine the best combination of these three factors by prioritizing behaviors with high impact, high probability of success, and large market opportunity. You may choose to conduct research or consult experts to make informed decisions. For example, to determine the **impact** of a behavior, rate each of your considered behaviors from “no impact” to “significant impact,” or use rating scales such as in the box below. Next, determine **probability** by conducting research into past programs that focused on each behavior and consider the adoption rates and the costs associated with changing behaviors. Finally, survey members of your community to determine the current rate of adoption and therefore the **opportunity** in your

## PRIORITIZING BEHAVIORS

In this example, we will assess the potential impact, probability of success, and market opportunity of two behaviors: *installing energy-efficiency lighting* and *whole home energy upgrades* using 1-10 scales. This example uses approximate numbers based on national averages for illustration purposes; however, CBSM initiatives should incorporate information about the specific, local target audience wherever possible.

**Energy-Efficient Lighting** receives a 2 (low) on impact as its potential to significantly reduce overall energy use is very limited, an 8 (high) on probability because the action is simple and quick, and a 3 (low) for opportunity since many homeowners have already replaced incandescent lighting with more efficient technologies, such as light emitting diode bulbs (LEDs)\*- although this may vary significantly depending on your community context.

**Whole Home Energy Upgrades** can have a significant impact on the energy use of a home, even resulting in a zero net energy home, where a home is able to produce as much renewable energy as it consumes over the course of a year. For this reason, a whole home upgrade receives a 10 (high) for impact. Due to the level of complexity in decision-making, upgrades involve a tricky combination of behaviors. This example uses 3 (low-medium) for probability, but the probability may vary in your community. Nationally, upgrade programs have very low market penetration, less than 2%, \*\* and present a very large (10, high) market opportunity.

Behavior (Action)	Impact	Probability of Success	Market Opportunity	Score
Energy Efficiency Lighting	2	8	3	<b>13</b>
Whole Home Energy Upgrade	10	3	10	<b>23</b>

In the example above, a program would likely prioritize whole home upgrades due to the much higher score; however, for more accurate results, programs would need to examine conditions specific to their target market.

\**The State of the Market: A Residential Lighting Brief* Northeast Energy Efficiency Partnerships, July 2016

\*\*Neme, Gottstein, Hamilton, (2011) *Residential Efficiency Retrofits: A Roadmap for the Future*, 3.

market. The size of the market you can influence is limited to those who have not already adopted the behavior or who are in a position to adopt it again (e.g., moved, new appliances, etc.). During this step, it is also useful to identify community organizations that could be potential partners in reaching out to target audiences.

See the [resources section](#) in this Toolkit for more information on effective behaviors to target and guidance on choosing and evaluating energy-saving behaviors. For other examples of how to prioritize behaviors, see Doug McKenzie-Mohr's website, [Fostering Sustainable Behavior, Step 1: Selecting Behaviors](#) and the State and Local Energy Efficiency Action Network's [Community Based Social Marketing Webinar](#).

## Step 2: Identify Barriers and Benefits



The next step in a CBSM approach is to identify the *specific* barriers and benefits relevant to your target audiences. Barriers are obstacles that inhibit the desired behavior, while benefits motivate people to perform the behavior (see box for examples of benefits and barriers associated with energy efficiency upgrades). The barriers and benefits will

vary depending on the behavior you selected in Step 1 (e.g., whether you want homeowners to choose more efficient HVAC equipment or participate in an energy efficiency direct install program). Different segments of the market (tenants vs. property owners, new vs. established homeowners, low vs. moderate incomes, etc.) will also have different barriers and motivations.

Successful CBSM initiatives depend on selecting strategies targeted to the barriers and benefits of your chosen action specific to your market. Historically, programs across the nation have emphasized the financial benefits of energy efficiency to households. However, recent market research indicates that the non-monetary benefits of energy upgrades may be much more appealing to some individuals than energy savings or reduced expense.<sup>1</sup> Similarly, each energy efficient action will come with its own set of barriers, such as cost, trust, complexity, or competing priorities.

Don't rely on hunches – use research to find out what benefits and barriers matter most to your target audience. Conduct market research or supplement the research your program has already done with the following techniques:

- **Literature Search:** Review past market studies, white papers, and other key information about your target market to gain a better understanding of market segments and characteristics relevant to the desired behaviors.

<sup>1</sup> For more information on non-monetary motivations for energy efficiency upgrades, see Skumatz, Dickerson, Coates's report, Non-Energy Benefits in the Residential and Non-Residential Sectors, [http://www.seattle.gov/light/Conserve/Reports/paper\\_6.pdf](http://www.seattle.gov/light/Conserve/Reports/paper_6.pdf).

### SAMPLE BENEFITS AND BARRIERS RELATED TO UPGRADES

#### BENEFITS:

- Reduced utility bills
- Higher bill-predictability
- Improved health outcomes
- Higher indoor air quality
- Decreased noise
- Increased comfort
- Increased property value
- Decreased maintenance
- Increased renter retention

#### PERSONAL BARRIERS

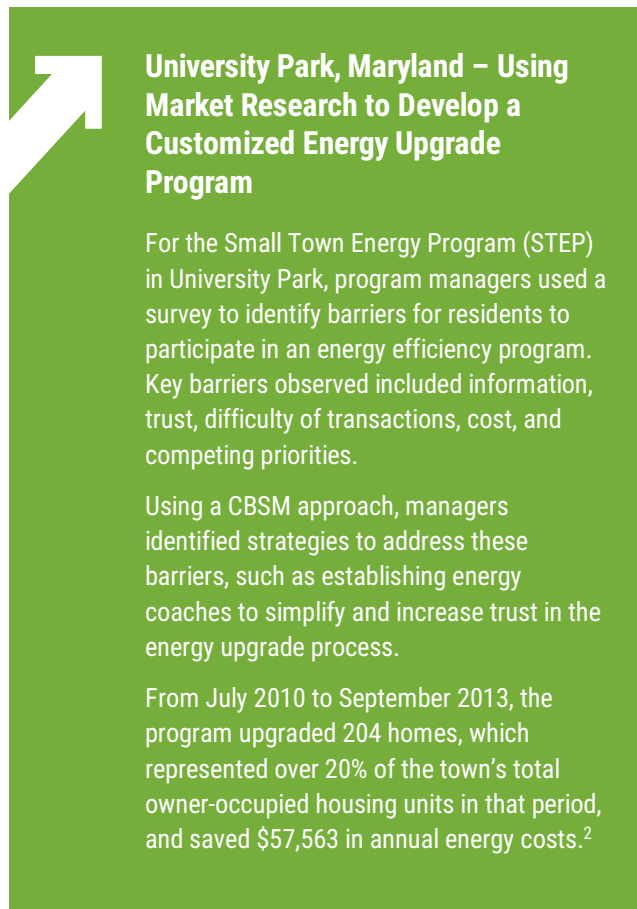
- Lack of awareness
- Lack of motivation
- Trust (e.g., of contractors)
- Competing priorities

#### STRUCTURAL BARRIERS

- Cost/time required for taking action
- Complex/difficult process
- Inconvenient or disruptive to home

- **Observation:** Where possible, directly observing your target audience’s actions can provide a nuanced understanding of people’s motivations and difficulties (e.g., an energy efficiency assessor can observe a homeowner’s behavior).
- **Focus Groups:** Conducting in-depth discussions with small groups of people is a useful way to more precisely define the perspectives of different market segments. Focus group participants should be randomly selected from target audiences (e.g., low or moderate income). You may also choose to interview industry experts.
- **Surveys:** Surveys can be conducted in-person, online, by phone, or by mail, and provide a way to collect a standard set of information on behaviors and attitudes across a potentially wider sample of the community.

See the [resources section](#) in this Toolkit for examples of workshops, community assessment tools, and surveys that other programs have used.



**University Park, Maryland – Using Market Research to Develop a Customized Energy Upgrade Program**

For the Small Town Energy Program (STEP) in University Park, program managers used a survey to identify barriers for residents to participate in an energy efficiency program. Key barriers observed included information, trust, difficulty of transactions, cost, and competing priorities.

Using a CBSM approach, managers identified strategies to address these barriers, such as establishing energy coaches to simplify and increase trust in the energy upgrade process.

From July 2010 to September 2013, the program upgraded 204 homes, which represented over 20% of the town’s total owner-occupied housing units in that period, and saved \$57,563 in annual energy costs.<sup>2</sup>



### Step 3: Develop Strategies

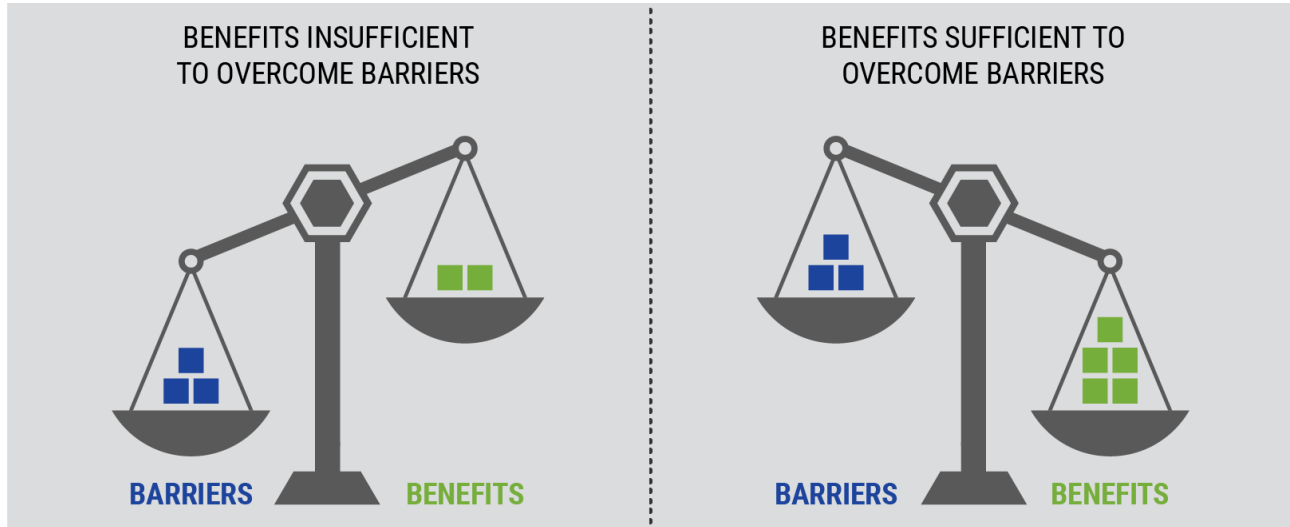
Once you have identified barriers that limit engagement in the chosen behavior and understand what motivates your community, the next step is to develop strategies for your program.

Successful strategies will leverage social science principles and incorporate context-specific knowledge of your target audience to decrease barriers and highlight the benefits of the behavior you chose in Step 1.

The figure below is a conceptual representation of the role of barriers and benefits in either motivating or blocking behavior. Benefits, or the motivations for a person to take action, must be high enough that they overcome barriers. The goal of this section is to determine the right combination of strategies to minimize barriers and increase benefits to tip the scale toward behavior change.

<sup>2</sup> U.S. Census Bureau, [2011-2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates](#): University Park Town, Maryland

## Benefits Must Exceed Barriers to Change Behavior



To determine which strategies are right for your program, match the barriers and benefits you have identified in Step 2 to one or more of the strategies listed below. It is often important to use multiple strategies to address different barriers and benefits. This toolkit includes eight different strategy categories; however, this is not a definitive list, as there have been many studies into the range of CBSM strategies.<sup>3</sup>

### Behavior Change Strategies, When to Use Them, and Energy Efficiency Examples

Strategy	When to Use	Example
<b>Commitment</b> <i>A spoken or written statement of intent</i>	Use commitment when individuals already believe in the value of an action; but, due to lack of motivation, have not yet acted.	The <a href="#">Baltimore Energy Challenge</a> encouraged the community to take a public, <a href="#">online pledge</a> to help the city achieve its 2020 energy usage goals. In return for taking the pledge, individuals received an Energy Savers kit that included LEDs, toilet tank banks, draft stopper gaskets, and a guide with tips and tricks to help change behavior. By the end of 2016, 26,907 individuals signed the pledge.
<b>Incentives</b> <i>Financial or status-based awards for engaging in a desired behavior</i>	Use incentives when there are high financial barriers or the motivation to act is very low.	<a href="#">Pacific Gas and Electric</a> (PG&E) incentivized <a href="#">comprehensive energy efficiency improvements in multifamily housing</a> by providing \$400-\$3,000 per unit (an average of 26% of the total upgrade cost) to property owners and managers.
<b>Tailored Communication</b> <i>Vivid, memorable, and culturally appropriate messaging targeted to your audience</i>	Use tailored communication when there is a lack of knowledge about your chosen behavior and its associated benefits (or impacts) in your community.	<a href="#">Efficiency Maine</a> used the following message to reach its specific audience and address homeowner concerns about local temperatures and prices in the community: " <a href="#">Oil prices remain high. Last winter was mild. Will we be as lucky next winter?</a> "

<sup>3</sup> For more information on the full spectrum of CBSM strategies, see Doug McKenzie-Mohr and P. Wesley Schultz, "Choosing Effective Behavior Change Tool," 2012, <http://media.cbsm.com/uploads/1/BECC.pdf>.

Strategy	When to Use	Example
<b>Social Norms</b> <i>Informal understandings of acceptable behaviors within a community</i>	Use social norms if there is a lack of social pressure or motivation in your community. Individuals are more likely to change behaviors when their peers are perceived as already engaging in a desired behavior.	Seattle City Light partnered with OPower to provide <a href="#">Home Energy Reports</a> to customers. The reports included current and historical energy use, comparative data to their neighbors, and energy-saving tips for their specific home profile. Households that received the reports <a href="#">saved an average of 3.5% more</a> than the control households.
<b>Social Diffusion</b> <i>The process by which an idea or behavior is spread through a social group through trusted channels</i>	Use existing, trusted networks and community leaders to overcome the lack of trust in your desired behavior or distrust of information.	<p><a href="#">Energy Impact Illinois</a> used social diffusion to design its “house party” initiative, and <a href="#">the program yielded impressive results</a>: Of the 3,110 people that attended house parties in one year, 900 participants completed upgrades (41% conversion rate from sign-ups to completed upgrades).</p> <p>Additionally, <a href="#">Green Madison</a> used well-established and active community listservs to promote <a href="#">Energy House Parties</a>. By hosting these events in the homes of community members, the program generated peer momentum for energy upgrades (see <a href="#">video</a>). The house parties contributed to the program’s success in completing 183 energy assessments and 97 energy upgrades in single family homes in 2015–16.</p> <p>For more examples of social diffusion, see the Rocky Mountain Institute’s <a href="#">Peer Diffusion Report</a>.</p>
<b>Prompts</b> <i>Prompts are self-explanatory visual or audible aids that can remind individuals to act</i>	Use prompts close to the time or location of the desired action to reduce forgetfulness within your community.	<p><a href="#">Efficiency Nova Scotia</a> provided residents with stickers to place on the front of their washing machines, reminding them to use cold water when choosing their wash cycle. The program educated residents on washing clothes in cold water, and asked them to sign pledges. Based on a follow-up survey, residents who received the persuasive messages were 60% more likely to wash their clothes in cold water.<sup>4</sup></p>
<b>Competition</b> <i>An event or contest in which people can compete against themselves or others</i>	Use gamification, competition, and goals to generate excitement and overcome a lack of interest in your chosen behavior.	<p><a href="#">Cool Choices</a>, a game-based sustainability program, was able to foster a fun, competitive atmosphere by allowing individuals to record their energy saving behaviors, win prizes, and cheer others on via <a href="#">an online platform</a> in a number of Wisconsin communities including LaCrosse and Madison.</p>
<b>Convenience</b> <i>The ability to do something with little effort or difficulty</i>	Use this strategy to make it easier or more convenient to act (e.g., remove structural barriers) if your desired behavior is more difficult than inaction.	<p>The <a href="#">City of Fort Collins Utilities</a> developed a streamlined approach for homeowners to more easily and comprehensively complete energy upgrades. In the streamlined approach, homeowners choose from packaged upgrade options, with standardized pricing from participating contractors, which simplifies the process and improves upgrade consistency and completeness. Home energy advisors help homeowners navigate the entire process.</p> <p>In the pilot phase for this CBSM project, which targeted neighborhoods with the highest propensity to act and to save, the City produced 50% more electricity savings and 70% more natural gas savings per home than the traditional approach.</p>

<sup>4</sup> Evaluation of Efficiency Nova Scotia’s direct install program conducted by Econoler, 2015, as reported in Reuven Sussman and Maxine Chikumbo, “Behavior Change Programs: Status and Impact,” ACEEE October 2016, <http://aceee.org/research-report/b1601>.





## Columbia, Missouri – Capturing Community Excitement for Energy Efficiency

The Columbia, Missouri (CoMo) Energy Challenge used CBSM to reduce energy use in a low-to-moderate income school district with high energy savings potential. Based on prior research, the program knew its audience was primarily renters who were mostly interested in reducing waste from electronics that drained energy when plugged in but unused.

The program designed Energy Challenge Kits to appeal to residents' technology interests, provided a simple "to do" list of actions, and shared messages through trusted peer networks, including PTA meetings. In the first year of the CoMo Energy Challenge in 2015, energy use for program participants in this neighborhood declined by 20% relative to the baseline.



CoMo Energy Challenge Kit

See the [resources section](#) in this Toolkit for additional examples of programs that have used a tailored set of strategies to overcome barriers and maximize benefits in their communities.

# 4

## Step 4: Pilot Test Strategies

Think of a pilot as a cost-effective way to test strategies before investing the time and resources necessary to launch a full-scale initiative. In each pilot, your program will apply one or more of the strategies you selected in Step 3 to try to change behaviors with small audiences in your community. A pilot will give you the opportunity to assess the reaction of your target audience, evaluate the effectiveness of your strategies, adjust your approach, and determine whether you are ready for full implementation.

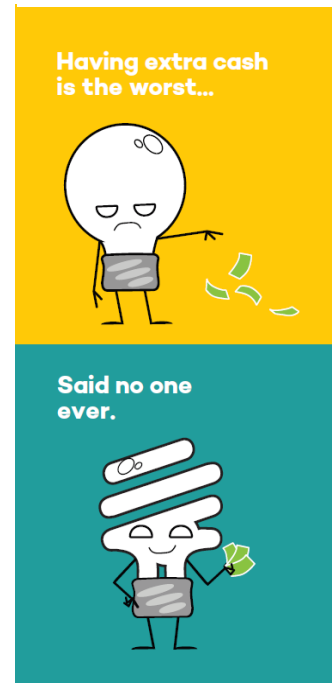
Below are several key principles to keep in mind while designing your pilot:

1. **Design Matters:** Without a good design for your chosen strategies, the pilot will fail to give the insights needed for successful full-scale implementation. For that reason, try not to test too many strategies at once and focus on strategies that are scalable. Also, clearly define the scope, responsibilities, and schedule for conducting and evaluating the pilot.
2. **Use a Control Group When Possible:** While many programs evaluate the effectiveness of pilots based on before and after data for a single group, it is much more meaningful to test strategies with at least two groups receiving different interventions. Consider designing your pilot to include a control group that is not affected by the strategy and/or testing different strategies on different audiences.
3. **Measure Your Impact:** The most important aspect of your pilot will be to evaluate whether or not individuals have engaged in your chosen behavior and the real energy-savings of those action(s).

- To accurately measure this, differentiate between your activities (conducting a workshop, providing information about the program, etc.), changes in the behavior of individuals (installing new equipment, signing up for an energy assessment, contacting a contractor, etc.), and changes in outcomes (e.g., changes in energy use).
- Avoid relying exclusively on self-reporting; the best method for determining effectiveness is to collect quantitative data, such as the number of energy upgrades conducted and change in energy use. Collect qualitative and quantitative data both before and after your pilot.
- Visit the [State and Local Energy Efficiency Action Network EM&V Report](#) (2012) for a more in-depth discussion of measuring impact.

4. **Calculate the Return on Investment:** If useful for your program, estimate the relative costs of the strategies in your pilot and compare those with the benefits you've achieved. With this information, you will be able to make informed decisions about which interventions are most appropriate for broad-scale implementation.
5. **Revise Your Approach:** If your pilot is ineffective, review successes, challenges, and metrics, determine how to best revise your design, and conduct another pilot to ensure that the problems have been fixed before moving on to full-scale implementation. Conducting a second pilot with a modified design will save time and money as you move to full-scale implementation.

### [Empower Chattanooga](#) Marketing Images Using Social Norms



## CBSM ON A SHOESTRING

Designing and implementing CBSM initiatives doesn't have to break the bank. Below are some tips and tricks to keep your CBSM initiative within the program's budget.

- **Consult Experts:** Reduce costs and speed up steps 1 and 2 of CBSM by interviewing experts who know your community.
- **Shrink Your Pilot:** Test strategies on a small number of people and/or limited geographic area to gauge effectiveness.
- **Form Partnerships:** Partner with local organizations, such as community, religious, non-profit, or social organizations, that have similar goals or serve the same audience to increase impact.
  - Announcements in partner organization newsletters and mailing lists can sometimes be secured at no cost and can increase visibility dramatically.
- **Use Established Platforms:** Leverage existing events and meetings (and their built-in audiences) to reduce cost and increase reach.
  - Getting on the agenda for meetings such as city council, chamber of commerce, and service clubs generally does not require registration fees.

See the [resources section](#) in this Toolkit for additional resources and examples of effective ways to design and implement pilot programs.

# 5

## Step 5: Implement and Evaluate Strategies Broadly

After testing the effectiveness of different strategies during the piloting stage, the next step will be full-scale implementation of the

strategies that proved to be most cost-effective at meeting your goals. Similar to designing a pilot, develop a clear implementation plan for your program, including specific activities you and your partners will conduct, a timeline, staffing and resources, and a measurement and evaluation plan.

When implementing a program at a larger scale, new barriers may arise that need to be addressed, or you may identify new ways to achieve greater impacts. Continue to measure the success of the program, evaluate which aspects are contributing to program success and which are not, and modify the program for greater efficacy moving forward. Similar to the evaluation during the pilot stage, measure the real impacts of your efforts by including a control group that is not affected for comparison.

As in the pilot stage, it is useful to collect data on the following:

- Qualitative feedback on program activities
- Changes in energy-related behaviors
- Changes in energy use or other outcomes

Plan for your evaluation or involve those that will be in charge of evaluation early in the implementation period. Consider conducting evaluations of targeted interventions that occur over relatively short time periods (e.g., the City of Somerville, Massachusetts does 5-12 month campaigns) and of the overall program at regular intervals (e.g., every 1-3 years). It is also useful to do follow-up studies to examine whether interventions have led to lasting changes.

For more information on how to effectively evaluate the impact of your program, check out the Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory [Evaluation of Residential Behavior-Based Programs presentation](#) and [webinar](#).



### Somerville, Massachusetts – Evaluation Leads to Improvement

When evaluating its efforts, the Somerville Energy Efficiency Now! (SEEN) program compared the number of participants that signed up for energy efficiency assessments each month to its communications calendar.

Based on that data, Somerville determined its most effective communication channels (e.g., City communications) and peak demand times (e.g., early spring). Somerville then improved its 2017 strategy for SEEN by restructuring city mailings to be sent at peak-demand times.

In 2016, SEEN completed 591 energy assessments and saved about 9,060 MMBtu in energy use with air sealing, insulation, heating systems, and wireless thermostat upgrades. The program used CBSM techniques such as social norming and reducing barriers.

For more information on the program, visit the [SEEN webpage](#).

## CONCLUSION

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By going through the CBSM steps, your program will combine knowledge of the specific constraints and motivations of your community with strategies based on behavioral science to push the community toward energy efficiency and sustainability goals faster. The CBSM process often requires more time upfront to collect data and customize an approach than a traditional marketing effort might, but this extra investment will help make your program more cost-effective and deliver better results. This Toolkit provides a starting point to understand and apply CBSM approaches to reducing energy use in your community. The resources on the following pages provide additional examples, templates, tools, and guidance to produce better results.

### TIPS FOR SUCCESS FOR COMMUNITY-BASED SOCIAL MARKETING

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#### Step 1: Select Behaviors to Promote

- **Beware of Silos:** CBSM should not be considered exclusively a “marketing” effort for marketing staff, but rather as integral to your program’s overall design or redesign of its services.
- **Build Capacity for CBSM:** Learn about CBSM techniques and best practices from peers and existing literature, as well as build expertise through “learning by doing.” (See the Resources in this Toolkit.)

#### Step 2: Identify Barriers and Benefits

- **Use Local Research:** Identify the specific barriers and benefits relevant to your target audiences based on local research, not hunches.

#### Step 3: Develop Strategies

- **Tailor Your Messages:** Find messages that will resonate with your community. Make sure messages are culturally appropriate and inclusive.
- **Use Trusted Messengers:** Use peer champions to spread your messages, and find trusted places in each community (church, park, neighborhood association, etc.) to reach residents.
- **Build Trust and Show Consistency:** Communicate regularly with your audience to promote trust and consistency (e.g., through conference calls, regular workshops, or other community-specific means).

#### Step 4: Pilot Test Strategies

- **Make a Timeline:** To keep organized, plan and track your CBSM initiatives using a timeline.
- **Pilot First:** Pilot strategies before you implement them broadly.

#### Step 5: Implement and Evaluate Strategies Broadly

- **Measure Your Effectiveness:** Collect data that will allow you to evaluate your efforts and gauge your impact.

*These tips are from [Better Buildings Residential Network](#) members and others who contributed to this Toolkit.*

## COMMUNITY-BASED SOCIAL MARKETING CHECKLIST



*This Checklist provides a step-by-step list of actions a program can take to apply community-based social marketing toward increasing the number of homes that are energy efficient. It is a synopsis of the Better Buildings Residential Network Community-Based Social Marketing Toolkit.*

- Step 1:** Select energy-efficient behaviors you want to see adopted in your community
  - Refine the list of behaviors by considering community characteristics
  - Engage stakeholders to find out which energy-related behaviors are important to them
  - Prioritize behaviors based on potential impact, probability of success, and market opportunity
- Step 2:** Identify the barriers and benefits associated with the desired behaviors for target audiences
  - Literature search
  - Observation
  - Surveys
  - Focus groups
- Step 3:** Select strategies that reduce the barriers and enhance the benefits identified in Step 2.  
Categories of strategies include:
  - Commitment
  - Incentives
  - Tailored communication
  - Social norms
  - Social diffusion
  - Prompts
  - Competition
  - Convenience
- Step 4:** Pilot the strategies you selected in Step 3 to assess their efficacy
  - Design with comparison groups
  - Measure the impact of the pilot
  - Calculate return on investment
  - Revise the pilot approach based on results
- Step 5:** Implement the strategies at a larger scale and evaluate the results
  - Develop an implementation plan (e.g., staffing, budget, and schedule)
  - Measure the impact on behavior change and end results
  - Evaluate the program at regular intervals
  - Revise program approach based on evaluation

## RESOURCES

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### Overarching Resources

- Doug McKenzie-Mohr, [Fostering Sustainable Behavior: Community-Based Social Marketing](#) (2011) (book and additional resources available online)
- Wesley Schultz, "[Community Based Social Marketing Workshop](#)" Presentation (2011)
- Susan Mazur-Stommen, Michelle Vigen, Stuart Hickox, and Chris Granda, "[Community-Based Social Marketing: State of Play 2012](#)," Webinar (2012)
- Michelle Vigen and Susan Mazur-Stommen, ACEEE, "[Reaching the 'High-Hanging Fruit' through Behavior Change: How Community-Based Social Marketing Puts Energy Savings within Reach](#)," Report (2012)
- Amy Hollander, National Renewable Energy Laboratory, "[Community Based Social Marketing Presentation](#)" (2011)
- State and Local Energy Efficiency Action Network, Community-Based Social Marketing Webinar, [Presentation 1](#), [Presentation 2](#), [Presentation 3](#) (2014)
- Robert B. Cialdini, *Influence: The Psychology of Persuasion*, Book, 2006

### Step 1 Resources (Selecting Behaviors)

- James Stewart and Annika Todd, The Uniform Methods Project: Methods for Determining Energy Efficiency Savings for Specific Measures, Report (2014)

### Step 2 Resources (Identifying Barriers and Benefits)

- [U.S. Energy Information Agency Residential Energy Consumption Survey](#) – for overall housing and energy market characteristics and trends (2015)
- [The University of Texas at Austin Energy Poll](#) – for general information on attitudes to energy behaviors (2016)
- Efficiency Maine, [Keeping Up With Your Audience, So They Keep Up with Your Program](#), Webinar (2012)
- Energy Impact Illinois, Phone Survey and Ethnographic Research, [Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning CRIBB Communications](#), Report (2014)
- U.S. DOE, Better Buildings Residential Program Solution Center – [Marketing & Outreach – Assess the Market Handbook](#) (2016) (See step-by-step guidance for market research and audience segmentation.)
- Connecticut Neighbor to Neighbor Energy Challenge, [Listening to the Consumer Behavior Analysis Workshop](#) (2010)
- Rotary International, [Community Assessment Strategies](#) (2013) – includes templates and instructions for surveys, community mapping, panel discussions, and other community assessment strategies
- [Los Angeles County Energy Issues Phone Survey](#) (2010)
- [PG&E Whole House Survey](#) (2012)

### Step 3 Resources (Developing Strategies)

- Doug McKenzie-Mohr and P. Wesley Schultz, "[Choosing Effective Behavior Change Tools](#)," Report, (2012)

- Douglas Miller and Larry Zarker, "[Peer Diffusion: A Promising Way for Service Providers to Unlock Investments in Home Energy Upgrades.](#)" Report (2016)
- Lena Prickett, "[Storyboarding: The Secret to Creating More Engaging Content](#)" Blog Post, (2015)
- U.S. DOE, Better Buildings Residential Network, [Social Media Toolkit](#) (2015)
- Georgetown Energy Prize, [Archived Webinars on Strategies and Best Practices](#) (2014–16)
- P. Wesley Schultz, "Strategies for Promoting Proenvironmental Behavior: Lots of Tools But Few Instructions," Book, *European Psychologist*, Vol 19(2), 2014, 107–117

## Steps 4 & 5 Resources (Piloting and Evaluating Strategies)

- Doug McKenzie-Mohr, Nancy R. Lee, P. Wesley Schultz, and Phillip Kotler, [Social Marketing to Protect the Environment, What Works](#) Book (2012)
- State and Local Energy Efficiency Action Network, "[Evaluation, Measurement, and Verification \(EM&V\) of Residential Behavior-Based Energy Efficiency Programs: Issues and Recommendations.](#)" Report (2012)
- Research Into Action, "[Designing Insightful Pilots: A Review of Key Principles That Help Answer Your Questions.](#)" Webinar (2016)
- Nancy Lee, "[Addressing the Major Behavioural Challenges of Our Time,](#)" Presentation at the 2nd World Non-Profit & Social Marketing Conference (2011)
- Lawrence Berkley National Laboratory, [Evaluating and Quantifying the Non-Energy Impacts of Energy Efficiency Report](#) and [Webinar](#) (2016)
- Lawrence Berkley National Laboratory, [Evaluation of Residential Behavior-Based Programs Presentation](#) and [Webinar](#) (2016)

## TOOLKIT WORKGROUP PARTICIPANTS

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**Mary Pat Aardrup**

City of Fort Collins, CO\*

**Christine Andrews**

City of Somerville, MA\*

**Barbara Buffaloe**

City of Columbia, MO\*

**Brian Butler**

Enerscore Inc\*

**Kim DeVoe**

City of Fort Collins Utilities (CO)\*

**Michelle Finchum**

City of Fort Collins Utilities (CO)\*

**Sam Fulbright**

green|spaces (Chattanooga, TN)\*

**Dawn Hjelseth**

green|spaces (Chattanooga, TN)\*

**Jeanne Hoffman**

City of Madison, WI\*

**Hugo Jule**

RUPCO, Inc. (NY)\*

**Ted Kidd**

Energy Efficiency Specialists\*

**Judy Knight**

Southeast Energy Efficiency Alliance (SEEA)\*

**Kathy Kuntz**

Cool Choices\*

**Connie Malone-Jones**

TRC Solutions

**Anna Markowski**

Elevate Energy\*

**Jequita P. McDaniel**

International Center for Appropriate & Sustainable  
Technology (ICAST)\*

**Doug Miller**

Rocky Mountain Institute\*

**Eileen O'Hara**

Energy Solutions Professionals, LLC

**Brittainy Pond**

C+C

**David Siddiqui**

CLEAResult\*

**Alyssa Spiel**

Wisconsin Energy Conservation Corporation (WECC)\*

**Reuven Sussman**

American Council for an Energy-Efficient Economy  
(ACEEE)\*

**Michelle Vigen**

California Energy Efficiency Industry Council

**Lindy Wordlaw**

Elevate Energy\*

\* Better Buildings Residential Network member





## ABOUT THE BETTER BUILDINGS RESIDENTIAL NETWORK

The 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.

The [Better Buildings Residential Program Solution Center](#) is a robust online collection of nearly 1,000 examples, strategies, and resources from a \$500 million energy efficiency grant program funded by the U.S. Department of Energy, [Home Performance with ENERGY STAR® Sponsors](#), and others.

To date, the Better Buildings Residential Network has completed five toolkits: Community-Based Social Marketing, [Designing Incentives](#), [Partnerships](#), [Social Media](#), and [Training](#). In addition to these resources, the network hosts weekly peer exchange calls that bring together state and local government agencies, utilities, program implementers, tradespeople, businesses, nonprofit organizations, financial institutions, and others to increase the adoption of energy efficiency practices, discuss similar needs and challenges, and identify effective strategies to reduce costs and increase benefits to homeowners.

For more information contact [bbresidentialnetwork@ee.doe.gov](mailto:bbresidentialnetwork@ee.doe.gov), and go to [www.energy.gov/eere/bbrn](http://www.energy.gov/eere/bbrn).

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