Bridging the Rural Efficiency Gap

Island Energy Conference
May 4, 2018
About the Project

Bridging the Rural Efficiency Gap is connecting rural communities in heating oil-dependent states like Maine, Alaska, New Hampshire, and Vermont with financial assistance for home energy efficiency.

- Participating States: Maine, Alaska, New Hampshire, Vermont
- Project Leads: Maine Governor’s Energy Office, Island Institute
- Target Audience: Efficiency program administrators and implementers; rural community leaders
- Funding: U.S. Department of Energy State Energy Program Competitive Award and private foundations
Mapping the Rural Efficiency Gap
Methodology

• Site visits to partners in Alaska, Vermont, New Hampshire

• Interviews with 50+ efficiency program implementers and administrators

• Review of efficiency program design and analysis of data about rural energy challenges
Shared Challenge: Rural communities

“You can’t get theya from heeya!”

A barge unloads an insulation truck on Monhegan Island, Maine. Photo credit: Portland Press Herald
Shared Challenge: Heating oil dependence

Shared Challenge: Inefficient building stock
Shared Challenge: Lower incomes in rural areas

Source: US Census
Shared Challenge: Workforce availability

Contractors providing energy assessment & air sealing services in ME. Source: www.efficiencymaine.com

Figure 4. Geographic distribution of businesses participating in the NHSaves program. Source: NHSaves
Shared Challenge? Access to EE financial assistance

Source: Efficiency Maine

Source: US Census
## Importance of Issues for Maine State Officials to Address

For each of the following issues, please indicate how important you think that issue is for state officials in Maine to address. Please use a scale from one to five, where ONE means you feel that issue should NOT be a priority at all, and FIVE means that issue should be an extremely HIGH priority.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Issue</th>
<th>Extremely High Priority (5)</th>
<th>High Priority (4)</th>
<th>Middle (3)</th>
<th>Low Priority (2)</th>
<th>Not at Priority at All (1)</th>
<th>Unsure</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Creating good jobs*</td>
<td>61%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Addressing drug addiction**</td>
<td>57%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>4%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lowering taxes**</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>5%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reforming welfare*</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helping Mainers become more energy efficient</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Addressing problems created by climate change*</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>15%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Helping Mainers switch to alternative energy sources such as wind and solar*</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*SSA Only, n=200; **SSB Only, n=200

**Ranked by Extremely High Priority**
Models for Bridging the Gap

Photo credit: Matthew Baron.
Bridging Models

• Aggregated Demand and Collective Purchasing
• Stable Program Funding
• Travel and Lodging Support for EE workforce
• Sharing, Leveraging Resources
• Diversification of delivered fuel companies
• Flexible Program Design
• On-bill and low-income financing
• Leveraging Community Based Organizations
• Cross-Sector Partnerships
Lessons Learned

• Aggregate demand in remote communities
• Address EE at community scale with community-wide weatherization campaigns
• Build partnerships between community, contractors, and administrators
• Incorporate energy education (energy fairs)
• Provide rebates and loans tailored for low-income residents
• Support capacity building at the local level
• Work across sectors and building types
  • Connect energy efficiency to other community priorities
• Provide policies that ensure equity of distribution to resources
Coming soon...

• Bridging the Rural Efficiency Gap Toolkit
• White paper for efficiency program administrators
• Video series
• Webinar