



Green & Healthy Homes Initiative®

National Grid Energy Efficiency Equity Working Group Report

Prepared by Green & Healthy Homes Initiative for inclusion in National
Grid's 2022 Annual Plan

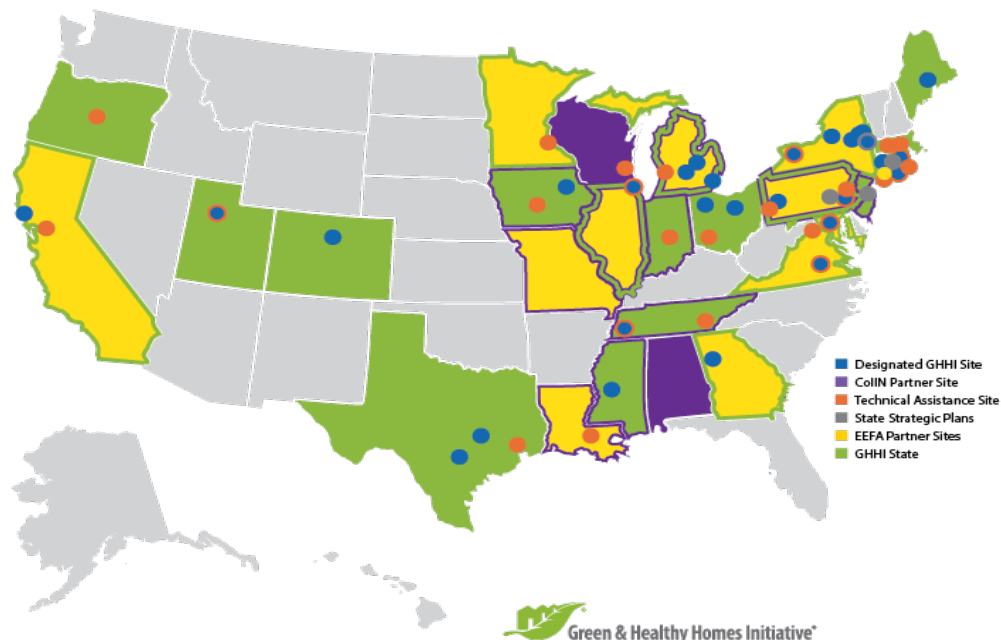
October 21, 2021

Background

- National Grid and Rhode Island Office of Energy Resources committed to co-host an Energy Efficiency Equity Working Group
 - Comprised of representatives from state agencies, community-based organizations, advocacy organizations, and local subject matter experts in equity
 - Provide a space where the voices and concerns of impacted communities could inform discussions on equity issues
 - Identify areas of importance and focus around issues of equity for the energy efficiency programs
 - Be a resource in the development of future Annual and Three-Year Energy Efficiency Plans, alongside
 - related evaluation efforts
- The desired deliverable from the EWG was to provide National Grid with written recommendations to advance equity in the planning, design, and delivery of its Energy Efficiency Programs.
- Green & Healthy Homes Initiative (GHHI) was brought on to facilitate the EWG, beginning in May 2021

About Green & Healthy Homes Initiative

- Vision: Advancing racial and health equity and opportunity through healthy housing.
- Mission: The Green & Healthy Homes Initiative is dedicated to addressing the social determinants of health and the advancement of racial and health equity through the creation of healthy, safe and energy efficient homes. By delivering a standard of excellence in its work, GHHI aims to eradicate the negative health impacts of unhealthy housing and unjust policies for children, seniors and families to ensure better health economic and social outcomes in low-income communities of color.



About Green & Healthy Homes Initiative Rhode Island

- Align and braid housing, health and energy efficiency resources, to offer a holistic set of services to meet the housing needs of families and children
- Workforce Development: Healthy Homes Training for Spanish-Speaking Contractors in partnership with RI Builders Association
- Gap Funding: Attorney General Funds support comprehensive interventions in different jurisdictions
- Partnership with Integra Community Care (Accountable Care Entity) – Asthma and HH services to 10 homes of Integra members with asthma
- GHHI Racial Equity in the Healthy Homes Workforce Initiative to provide healthy housing training to residents and contractor in Central Falls, RI.

Equity Working Group Recruitment

- In May, GHHI recruited members to participate in the EWG based on:
 - The original vision of the EWG outlined in the Annual and Three-Year Plans
 - Internal GHHI connections and partnerships
 - Feedback and suggestions from National Grid, OER, and other key players in the Rhode Island energy efficiency field.
- With Recruitment, our intent was to
 - Prioritize individuals and organizations that had experience and expertise in providing services – or designing and implementing policies that support services – that benefit residents of underserved and under-resourced communities, particularly limited income households, Black and Brown residents, and other communities served by National Grid’s programs
 - Add perspectives that have not traditionally been heard in energy efficiency proceedings or policy and program advocacy
 - Support diversity including, but not limited to, gender, race, economic status, and geography to ensure that EWG members represented a wide range of perspectives.

Equity Working Group members

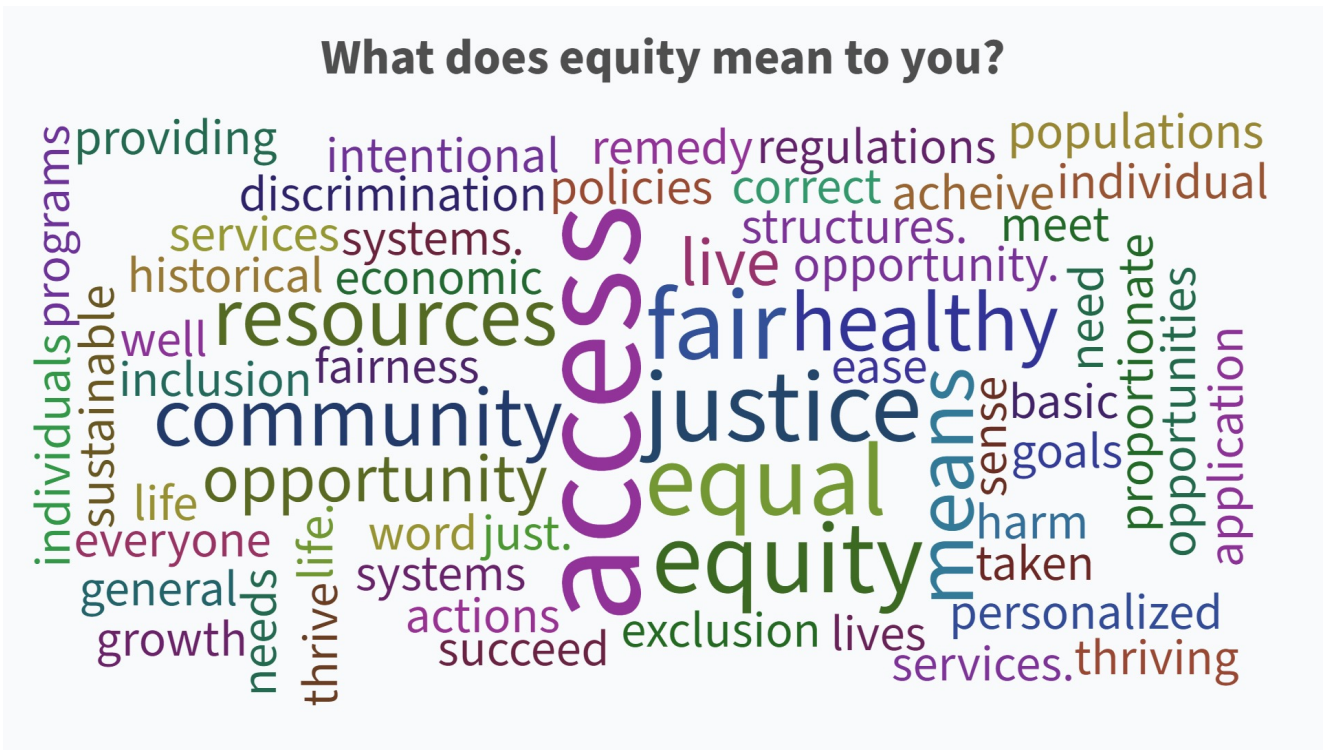
- Amy Vavak, National Grid (co-host)
- Laura Rodormer, National Grid (co-host)
- Becca Trietch, Rhode Island Office of Energy Resources (co-host)
- Joel Munoz, Rhode Island Division of Public Utilities
- Margarita Robledo-Guedes, GHHI Rhode Island
- Jamal Lewis, GHHI Rhode Island (facilitator)
- Stacy Wasserman, Rhode Island Housing
- Brenda Clement, HousingWorks RI at RWU
- Garry Bliss, Prospect CharterCare
- Rachel Calabro, Rhode Island Department of Health
- John Marcantonio, Rhode Island Builders Association
- Jeanne Cola, LISC Rhode Island Health Equity Zone (Pawtucket/Central Falls)
- Rilwan Feyisitan Jr., Community Action Partnership of Providence
- Jennifer Wood, Center for Justice
- Rob Hart, City of Providence
- Kathy McCabe, McCabe Enterprises
- Elizabeth Moreira, City of Pawtucket
- Tony Hubbard, Youth Build Preparatory Academy

Timeline and Meeting Topics

Timeline and Projected Topics			
May	June	July	August
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Equity working group recruitment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Equity working group recruitment •Introductory meeting •Second topic: marketing and outreach 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Equity working group recruitment •Third topic: Data collection and metrics •Fourth topic: workforce development and training 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Equity working group recruitment •Fifth topic: funding and budget •Compile DRAFT recommendations

Introductory Meeting

- Introductions
- Defining Equity
- Overview of National Grid's Energy Efficiency Programs



Meeting #2 – Marketing and Outreach

- **Objective:** Create a prioritized list of action-oriented recommendations that can improve the way that National Grid markets and performs outreach for their energy efficiency programs.
- Meeting material: National Grid’s Current Marketing and Outreach Plan
- What is the goal of equitable marketing and outreach?
 - What are some recommendations/strategies to advance equitable marketing and outreach?
 - What does equitable outreach and marketing look like?
 - If you were developing a marketing and outreach plan, how would you ensure equity?
 - If funding wasn’t an issue, what strategies would you recommend?
 - Are you considering different audiences?

Meeting #2 – Marketing and Outreach (takeaways)

- Equitable marketing and outreach requires targeted outreach with targeting messaging
- Top recommendations
 - Develop multilingual marketing and outreach materials. Use accessible language to target audiences in each publication.
 - Hire multilingual staff and partner with trusted leaders who have the same ethnic background and that frequent popular community gathering places such as community centers, faith-based organizations, etc. - Include in the messaging that National Grid is not code enforcement so residents can feel more comfortable.
 - Develop age-appropriate marketing strategies to connect with various age groups that live in a household such as utilizing social media, apps, and text messaging to reach new audiences and help engage customers with their energy usage.
 - Partner with other home visiting programs to expand the reach and impact of National Grid's energy efficiency programs.
 - Allocate a portion of Energy Efficiency marketing budgets to municipalities for mailing energy efficiency materials; some municipalities use third parties for mailing.
 - Provide incentives to community groups that are serving vulnerable populations.
 - Develop a mechanism that allows participation or action to occur immediately after the marketing step.

Meeting #3 – Metrics and Data Collection

- **Objective:** Create a prioritized list of metrics that National Grid should consider to assess how equitable their programs are
- Meeting materials: Dimensions of Equity Measurement (paper), Current National Grid Metrics
- Brainstorming in break out groups using Mural
 - What should the goals of the energy efficiency programs be?
 - Which benefits of energy efficiency should be captured?
 - How do we ensure that the most vulnerable customers are benefitting?
 - What metrics should National Grid prioritize to measure equity in within its energy efficiency program portfolio
 - How would you measure equity in energy efficiency programs?

Meeting #3 – Metrics and Data Collection (takeaways)

- Metrics should reflect whether program services and resources meet resident needs
- Measuring equity in program delivery and program impact by assessing through program participation and outcomes by demographics and geography
- Also tracking non-energy program impacts like health and environmental quality are also important equitable program impact are important to track
- Top recommendations
 - Benchmark Energy Efficiency Program participation data for race, geography, socioeconomic status, language, age of home, age of owner, age of renter, heating fuel type, type and age of heating /hot water/cooling systems.
 - Track late payments and shut offs.
 - Align energy efficiency programs with healthcare and partner to achieve healthcare goals, promote further engagement, and sharing health outcome and impact data

Meeting #4 – Workforce Development and Training

- **Objective:** Identify gaps and barriers that exist and prevent the development of a diverse workforce that is prepared to serve an equally diverse customer base and solutions to overcome these challenges.
- Meeting material: Guidehouse Workforce Development report
- National Grid vendor panel discussion and Q/A
 - Brian Kearney, RISE Engineering
 - Vin Graziano, RISE Engineering
 - Paul Salera, Westbay Community Action
- Brainstorming in break out groups using Mural
 - How can we ensure that the energy efficiency workforce is as diverse as possible?
 - What barriers exist for entry and retention of potential energy efficiency workers?
 - What recommendations do you have that can overcome these barriers?
 - What can National Grid vs. other entities can do to advance equity in the energy efficiency programs?

Meeting #4 – Workforce Development and Training (takeaways)

- Currently, there's a shortage of workers, specifically in-home weatherization and energy efficiency services, that are trained and certified to perform services
- Barriers
 - Culture of competition leads to high turnover of workers
 - Background check requirements
 - Inaccessible training centers (many are out of state) and infrequent trainings (occur twice a year)
 - Economic – low wages, high upfront costs (training, equipment, startup costs), childcare, transportation
 - Delays in payment from program administrators
 - Lack of awareness/availability of professional development opportunities
- Top Recommendations
 - Perform a full review of all HR policies and remove outdated policies that restrict hiring such as background checks
 - Reduce barriers to professional development, as well as entry into the energy efficiency workforce.
 - Collaborate with local diverse community organizations to train and certify potential workers (Progresso Latino, Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, Cape Verdean Community Development of RI)

Meeting #5 – Program Budgets

- **Objective:** To prioritize recommendations that should receive a budget allocation from National Grid
- Meeting material: National Grid's current Programs and m Budgets
- Brainstorm: How would you review a budget for equitable allocation?
- Voting on most impactful recommendations

Top 5 Recommendations

1. Hire multilingual staff and partner with trusted leaders who have the same ethnic background and that frequent popular community gathering places such as community centers and faith-based organizations. Potential partnerships can include 1) working with YMCA's, senior centers, schools and universities, or other community organizations to provide program information at an event they are hosting, 2) co-hosting events in partnership with community organizations, 3) sponsoring events or efforts that help to meet other community needs such as a food drive or trash pick-up, or 4) partnering with trade associations or career centers to host trainings and job fairs.
2. Benchmark Energy Efficiency Program participation data for race, geography, socioeconomic status, language, age of home, age of owner, age of renter, heating fuel type, type and age of heating /hot water/cooling systems.
3. Develop multilingual marketing and outreach materials. Use accessible language to target audiences in each publication.

Top 5 Recommendations

4. Partner with other home visiting programs to expand the reach and impact of National Grid's energy efficiency programs. Home visitors as part of visiting programs are typically discussed in a healthcare context and can include nurse case managers, occupational and physical therapists, home-based healthcare nurses, travelling doctors or physicians, and case workers. Partnering with these individuals or entities can include 1) offering trainings so that home visitors can identify potential beneficiaries of energy efficiency programs and make referrals into National Grid's programs 2) incentivizing home visitors to educate their clients on energy efficiency and refer their clients into energy efficiency programs 3) co-hosting outreach and marketing events that cover health- and energy-related topics 4) targeting energy efficiency programs, energy bill assistance, and heating or cooling assistance at high-risk households that often have medical conditions that cause them to have health-based home visitors.
5. Reduce barriers to professional development as well as entry into the workforce. This can include 1) helping to pay for, or support employees in paying for, necessary trainings for interested individuals 2) investing in building new, accessible training centers in underserved communities , particularly in cases where the closest training center is out of state 3) incentivizing certified trainers to host more frequent trainings in different parts of the state, particularly in underserved areas 4) helping to create on-the-job training programs to allow trainees to get necessary and valuable experience 5) providing upfront seed capital to foster the creation of more minority- or women-owned businesses by covering costs for tools, trucks, and supplies as well as operating investments for costs such as liability insurance 6) potentially paying off student loans of energy efficiency workers to reduce economic burden 7) sponsor other professional development and skills trainings to allow workers to build competencies in other areas that enable expansion of work into new fields.

Meeting #6 – Finalization of Recommendations

- **Objective:** Discuss National Grid’s proposed actions for the 2022 Annual Plan in response the recommendations that the EWG developed and the desired outcome for the future of the EWG
- Meeting material: National Grid proposed actions for 2022 Annual Plan
- Survey on EWG process and Future of EWG
- Brainstorming and Reflection:
 - Do the recommendations listed accurately reflect the conversations of the EWG?
 - Do National Grid’s proposed actions make sense based on the recommendations proposed by the EWG?
 - Does it make sense to continue this EWG? If so, what does EWG engagement look like?

National Grid 2022 Proposed Actions

#	EWG Recommendations	2022 National Grid Proposed Actions
1	Develop multilingual marketing and outreach materials. Use accessible language to target audiences in each publication.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. All Residential and Income Eligible (IE) email and direct mail will more consistently be translated into both English and Spanish. 2. The Company will launch a new, larger multi-cultural energy efficiency education campaign with the goal of increasing energy efficiency awareness and program participation among multi-cultural customers.
2	Hire multilingual staff and partner with trusted leaders who have the same ethnic background and that frequent popular community gathering places such as community centers and faith-based organizations.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Provide additional energy efficiency program training to the Company's existing Customer Advocates 2. Hire an additional, multi-lingual Customer Advocate that will focus on promoting the energy efficiency programs.
3	Include in the messaging that National Grid is not code enforcement so residents can feel more comfortable.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Provide vendor call centers with scripts to help answer any customer/landlord inquiries on this subject. 2. Consider adding the language to landlord outreach, as appropriate.
4	Develop age-appropriate marketing strategies to connect with various age groups that live in a household such as utilizing social media, apps, and text messaging to reach new audiences and help engage customers with their energy usage.	N/A
5	Partner with other home visiting programs to expand the reach and impact of National Grid's energy efficiency programs.	By March 2022, establish a working group to explore how to more comprehensively leverage other home visiting programs for energy efficiency outreach and education
6	Allocate a proportion of Energy Efficiency marketing budgets to municipalities for mailing energy efficiency materials; some municipalities use third parties for mailing.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Continue to support municipality efforts to promote energy efficiency through the Community Initiative. 2. Test the inclusion of energy efficiency program information in the water/sewer bills of one or more of the 2022 Community Initiative participants.
7	Provide incentives to community groups that are serving vulnerable populations.	The Company will expand collateral for more community groups that serve vulnerable populations.

National Grid 2022 Proposed Actions

#	EWG Recommendations	2022 National Grid Proposed Actions
8	Develop a mechanism that allows participation or action to occur immediately after the marketing step.	Expand follow-up outreach for customers who receive a recommendation from the on-line home energy assessment, in-home/virtual home energy assessment, and/or home energy reports.
9	Benchmark Energy Efficiency Program participation data for race, geography, socioeconomic status, language, age of home, age of owner, age of renter, heating fuel type, type and age of heating /hot water/cooling systems.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Work with external stakeholders to determine if the data sets and each related report should be refreshed on a regular basis. 2. Using internal data, establish a separate, regular report by Q2 2022 that shows participation for the EnergyWise, MF, and the Income Eligible Single-Family programs at the zip code level. Utilize the report to target outreach. 3. Continue gathering rental unit participation data and reporting on that information quarterly at the “sector level meetings” with the RI Office of Energy Resources, their Consultant Team, and the Division of Public Utilities and Carriers.
10	Track late payments and shut offs.	None are needed since we already track this information and the data is public.
11	Align energy efficiency programs with healthcare and partner to achieve healthcare goals, promote further engagement, and sharing health outcome and impact data.	See recommendation 5.
12	Perform a full review of all HR policies and remove outdated policies that restrict hiring such as background checks.	The Company believes it has reached the right balance to ensure the safety of customers and their property through its background check and exception process.
13	Reduce barriers to professional development, as well as entry into the energy efficiency workforce.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Complete a workforce development needs assessment modeled after this report completed in MA: https://ma-eeac.org/wp-content/uploads/Massachusetts-Energy-Efficiency-Workforce-Development-FINAL-REPORT-CAREER-PROFILES.pdf. 2. Continue the lead vendor collaboration with the RI Builders Association, and their affiliate Residential Construction Workforce Partnership, to complete at least two additional Energy Efficiency Program related trainings in 2022. RI Builders Association will report participant demographic information to the Company from the September 2021 training.
14	Collaborate with local diverse community organizations to train and certify potential workers (Progresso Latino, Hispanic chamber of commerce, cape Verdean community development).	See recommendation 13. The new workforce development needs assessment, as well as demographic reporting from the new trainings will help to determine whether new recruitment and upskilling efforts with a focus on diversity are necessary.

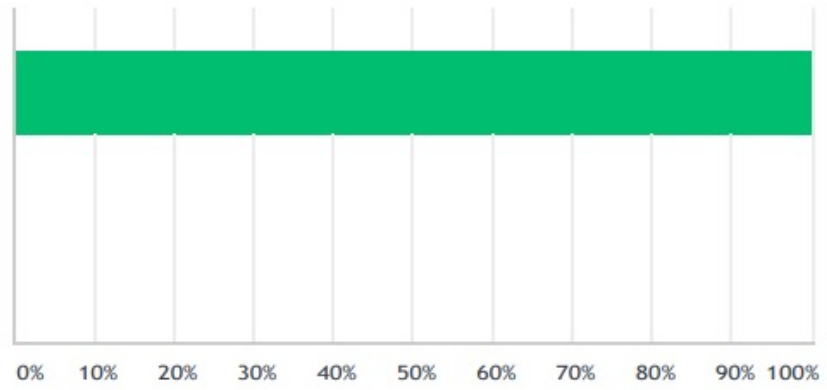
EWG Reactions to National Grid Proposed Actions

- Generally, EWG members were supportive of National Grid’s proposed actions with several members specifically referring to these proposed actions as “solid steps forward”, “a great start” and “a great beginning”.
- Many EWG members expressed a desire to monitor the progress of these proposed actions, assuming they are approved by the PUC, and continue to meet with National Grid in an advisory capacity to ensure and support effective implementation.
- Specific comments
 - Proposed recommendation #1: Additional language capacity is needed beyond English and Spanish
 - Proposed recommendation #9: Might be helpful to track program participation at levels more granular than zip code
 - Proposed recommendation #12: Increase transparency around background check process to candidates know that they weren’t selected for a position because of issues with their background check

Results of Final Survey

Q1 Did you find value out of this EWG?

Answered: 13 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Yes	100.00% 13
No	0.00% 0
TOTAL	13

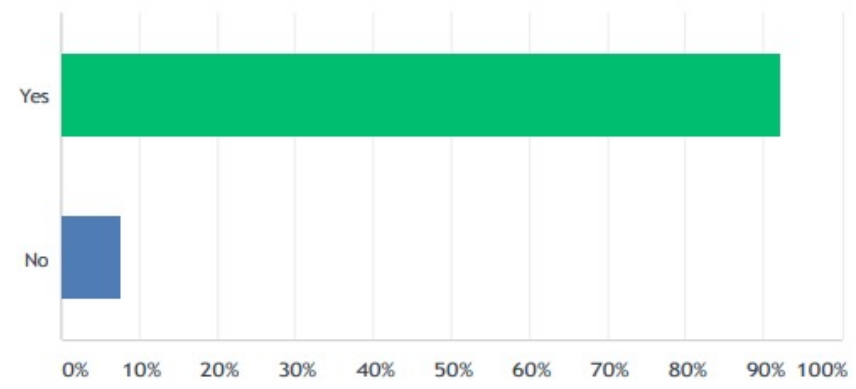
Results of Final Survey

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Meeting other stakeholders interested in RI equity issues	69.23%	9
Learning about National Grid's programs and efforts to call out and/or add components of equity within their EE Programs	30.77%	4
Working on a definition of equity	38.46%	5
Developing word clouds to understand the priorities of EWG participants	7.69%	1
The breakout sessions to discuss and document relevant information and ideas.	61.54%	8
Learning about various efforts in RI that are addressing, or pursuing, steps to achieve equity	38.46%	5
Working collaboratively to develop specific recommendations for National Grid	84.62%	11
Other (please specify)	15.38%	2

Results of Final Survey

Q3 Should this EWG continue?

Answered: 13 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	92.31%	12
No	7.69%	1
TOTAL		13

Results of Final Survey

Q4 If the EWG continues, what should the objective of the group be?

Answered: 13 Skipped: 0

#	RESPONSES	DATE
1	Advise National Grid on marketing, outreach strategies to foster equity and inclusion	8/24/2021 1:58 PM
2	Advisory capacity to track National Grid implementations and outcomes progress and make recommendations as needed	8/24/2021 1:42 PM
3	to generate a network of channels to help promote the RI EE Program through all the participating stakeholders.	8/24/2021 10:48 AM
4	Helping to evaluate programs and continue recommendations	8/24/2021 10:42 AM
5	Monitor implementation of recommendations, continue to develop and refine additional recommendations, support a continued equity focus in ALL NG programs and priorities	8/24/2021 10:40 AM
6	for check ins /coordination	8/24/2021 10:36 AM
7	Since Equity work is not a singular event, the EWG should continue to home in and evolve the work and provide advisory role in the implementation.	8/24/2021 10:36 AM
8	Monitor implementation of recommendations.	8/24/2021 10:33 AM
9	oversite of initial recommendations and bring stakeholders who did not participate	8/24/2021 10:33 AM
10	Assessing progress towards equity and revising strategies.	8/24/2021 10:27 AM
11	To be a voice and feedback to National Grid on equity issues, monitor progress of plan, suggest revisions/ fine tuning of the plan as needed; to urge National Grid to incorporate equity more broadly within its services and programs (not just energy efficiency)	8/24/2021 8:51 AM
12	Not sure	8/23/2021 11:46 PM
13	Explore how participating organization and other can support and/or collaborate with National Grid to advance equity initiatives. Conduct accountability check-ins with National Grid on the progress of their energy equity efforts.	8/23/2021 8:07 PM

Questions and Comments

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