

2023 Rhode Island Energy Efficiency Equity Working Group Report

Prepared by Green & Healthy Homes Initiative

For inclusion in

Rhode Island Energy's 2024 Annual Plan

September 2023

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Contents

Executive Summary	3
Background/Introduction	4
Methodology	5
EWG Member Recruitment	5
EWG Meeting Timeline and Process Overview.....	6
Meeting Summaries	7
Year 3 Kickoff Meeting – June 21 st , 2023	7
RI EWG Meeting #2 – August 8 th , 2023	7
RI EWG Meeting #3 – August 31 st , 2023	9
RI EWG Meeting #4 – September 29 th , 2023	11
Recommendations, Actions, & Metrics (as of 9/27/23)	11
Conclusion & Future Direction	11
Acknowledgements	12
Appendix	13
About GHHI	13
EWG Guidelines and Expectations.....	13
Year 3 RI EWG Meeting #1 – Slide Deck.....	14
Year 3 RI EWG Meeting #1 – Meeting Notes	14
Year 3 RI EWG Meeting #2 – Slide Deck.....	14
Year 3 RI EWG Meeting #2 – Meeting Notes	14
Year 3 RI EWG Meeting #3 – Slide Deck.....	14
Year 3 RI EWG Meeting #3 – Meeting Notes	14
Rhode Island Energy 2022 Q4 Equity Update	14
Rhode Island Energy 2023 Q2 Equity Update	14
Rhode Island Energy Equity Demonstration - Slide Deck	14
RI EERMC Consultant Team – RI EWG Year 3 Memo	14
Acadia Center – RI EWG Year 3 Memo	14

Executive Summary

As part of its [2021-2023 Energy Efficiency Program Plan](#) (2021-2023 EE Plan) Rhode Island Energy (“the Company”) committed to continue working with the Green & Healthy Homes Initiative (GHHI) to facilitate the Rhode Island Energy Efficiency Equity Working Group (RI EWG). With support from the Rhode Island Office of Energy Resources (OER), the desired goal of the RI EWG is to provide the Company with written recommendations to better incorporate equity in the planning, design, and delivery of its Energy Efficiency Programs. The Company will use these recommendations to propose the elimination of or alteration of current programs and services to better reach the Company’s diverse customer base.

In 2023 the RI EWG, comprised of thirty-three stakeholders representing a variety of organizations, personal backgrounds, and experience met four times during June and September to identify equity-related challenges and to develop recommendations to incorporate in the Company’s 2024 Annual Energy Efficiency Plan. Below is a table of key issues and recommendations that EWG members identified in Year 3. The equity issues and recommendations below are accompanied by a list of suggested strategies, metrics, and targets set out by group members later in this document.

2023 RI EWG Equity Key Issues and Recommendations

Key Issue	Recommendations
<p>1. Participation Barriers: The Company's energy efficiency programs continue to experience low participation rates among BIPOC and Low-to Moderate Income (LMI) residents.</p>	<p>A. Increase participation rates from residents living in the 5 Equity Communities and/or Justice 40 communities across the EnergyWise and IES Programs</p> <p>B. Offer Home Energy Assessments (HEAs) in at least 4 languages other than English (e.g., Spanish, Portuguese, Chinese (Cantonese/Mandarin), Creole) by the end of 2024</p>
<p>2. Multifamily Barriers: Multifamily housing has always been a difficult area for energy efficiency program implementers to reach due to multiple issues including the split incentive issue between landlords and renters.</p>	<p>A. Increase participation rates among EnergyWise Multifamily and Income Eligible Multifamily Programs statewide, with a focus on the 5 Equity Communities and/or Justice 40/EJ Communities.</p> <p>B. Increase focus on renter populations by developing renter-specific resources</p>
<p>3. Weatherization Deferrals: The presence of housing conditions that prevent or defer enrollment in weatherization programs in RI are common. RISE reported of the 11,930 homes receiving assessments through Q2 of 2023, 54 percent of those households had pre-weatherization barriers, and only 24.6 percent of those barriers were resolved.</p> <p>2022 Program Results EnergyWise (Market Rate):</p>	<p>A. Improve the assessment to successful weatherization ratio for the Income Eligible Program to more closely match that of the EnergyWise program.</p> <p>B. Leverage additional funding to address weatherization deferrals.</p> <p>C. Better coordinate and engage with state agencies (e.g., RI Department of Housing), cities/towns, and code officers/housing courts to address deferrals.</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 9,251 Assessments & 4,143 Wx Participants • Conversion Rate: 45% <p>Income Eligible Services (SF):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2,679 Assessments & 758 Wx Participants • Conversion Rate: 28% 	
<p>4. Workforce Development/Training: The RI EWG continues to have discussions and develop recommendations for the Company on equitable workforce development and training opportunities to better serve and work with Minority and Women Owned Business Enterprises (MWBES). The Company must focus on building a skilled workforce that better reflects the communities that it serves.</p>	<p>A. Increase the % of BIPOC workforce training participants and contractors that reside in the 5 Equity Communities.</p> <p>B. Increase #of and capacity of minority contractors in 2024.</p> <p>C. Increase the # and size of contracts given to MWBEs.</p>
<p>5. Microbusinesses and Small Businesses: Microbusinesses and small businesses (<250,000 annual kWh electric consumption) comprise the largest share of unique C&I customer accounts but have the lowest participation rates among C&I customers due to several challenges including split incentives, lack of technical capacity, and limited capital.</p>	<p>A. Leverage findings from the 2023 Small Business Process Evaluation to improve program strategy.</p> <p>B. Conduct Main Street efforts in all five communities identified in the 2024-2026 EE Plan Narrative</p> <p>C. Develop translated program materials, as suggested in the SBDI Process Evaluation</p>
<p>6. Metrics Tracking/Reporting: Based on RI EWG member feedback, the Company should significantly strengthen its equity-related data collection and reporting on key metrics tied to RI EWG recommendations.</p>	<p>A. Through Q4 2023, work with the RI EWG to finalize a reporting dashboard format, including metrics, baseline data, and targets that the Company can commit to tracking.</p>

Of note, the challenge identified above concerning metrics tracking and reporting was a recurring theme during meetings as workgroup members would like to see the Company develop a dashboard or more comprehensive reporting template comprised of baseline data and key metrics to enhance reporting concerning current and past recommendations. To help advance this work moving forward, the group explored and developed suggested metrics and targets for each recommendation to help the Company’s staff and RI EWG members increase their understanding of key issues and to support increasingly meaningful and impactful analysis and recommendations in the future.

Background/Introduction

The Company, as a part of its 2021-2023 Energy Efficiency Program Plan (2021-2023 EE Plan), committed to working with the Rhode Island Office of Energy Resources (OER) to co-host an Energy Efficiency Equity Working Group (EWG). The EWG was envisioned to 1) be comprised of representatives from state agencies, community-based organizations, advocacy organizations, and local subject matter experts in equity; 2) provide a space where the voices and concerns of impacted communities could inform discussions on equity issues; 3) identify areas of importance and focus around issues of equity for energy efficiency programs; and 4) 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 the Company with written recommendations to advance equity in the planning, design, and delivery of its Energy Efficiency Programs. The Company would then use these recommendations to propose the elimination of or alteration of current programs, or the development of new programs or services that would help to better serve the Company's diverse customer base.

The EWG has given impacted communities, and the organizations that serve them, an ongoing and structured opportunity to collaborate and provide input and feedback on the planning and delivery of the Company's energy efficiency programs, with a specific focus on equity.

The Company contracted with the Green & Healthy Homes Initiative (GHHI) in 2021 to facilitate the development and implementation of the EWG throughout Years 2 and 3. GHHI is a national non-profit organization 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. GHHI maintains a Rhode Island office that works to coordinate federal, state, and philanthropic resources to provide low-income Rhode Island residents with integrated energy efficiency, health, and safety housing retrofit programs. More information on GHHI can be found in the Appendix and at www.ghhi.org.

Methodology

EWG Member Recruitment

During Year 3, GHHI continued to work to retain participation in the RI EWG from previous years and to recruit additional stakeholders and residents to bring unique equity focused perspectives and solutions to the Company's energy efficiency related programs and activities. As in previous years, recruitment efforts aimed to:

- Prioritize individuals and organizations that had experience and expertise providing services or designing and implementing policies that benefit residents of underserved and under-resourced communities with a focus on limited income households, black and brown residents, and other communities served by the Company.
- Add perspectives that have not traditionally been represented in energy efficiency proceedings and/or policy and program advocacy, and
- Build diversity among RI EWG members including, but not limited to, gender, race, economic status, and geography to ensure a wide range of perspectives.

In addition, the Rhode Island Office of Energy Resources (OER) provided additional recruitment support through the Climate Justice Hour group. The Climate Justice Hour, hosted by the Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management (RI DEM) and OER, is an open meeting space for community members, organizers, and environmental justice advocates to discuss pressing climate change issues that have affected Rhode Island communities. As a result of this recruitment effort, the RI EWG welcomed 15 new members who joined for one or more working group meetings this summer.

Year 3 RI EWG Facilitation Team:

- Bryan Evans, GHHI RI (Lead Facilitator)
- Bert Cooper, GHHI
- Catherine Lee, GHHI
- Angela Li, Rhode Island Energy
- Spencer Lawrence, Rhode Island Energy
- Brendan Dagher, Rhode Island Energy
- Brett Feldman, Rhode Island Energy
- Matthew Maini, Rhode Island Energy

- Steve Chybowski, RI Office of Energy Resources
- Greg Ohadoma, RI Office of Energy Resources

Year 3 RI EWG Members: Members listed below attended at least one meeting.

- Brenda Clement, HousingWorks RI
- Garry Bliss, Prospect Health Systems Medicaid AE
- Dayanarah Baez, Community Action Partnership of Providence
- Margie Lynch, RI Energy Efficiency & Resource Management Council C-Team
- Margarita Robledo, Rhode Island Builders Alliance
- Jordan Galluzzo, Optimal Energy
- Karen Verrengia, CLEAResult
- Emily Koo, Acadia Center
- Rachel Calabro, RI Department of Environmental Management
- Jeannine Silversmith, RI Environmental Education Association
- Leo Major, Green Energy Consumers Alliance
- Elder Gonzales Trejo, City of Providence
- Jenna Bagnall, Encolor
- Almin Pršić, Architect
- Priscilla De La Cruz, City of Providence
- Rele Abiade, One Rhode Consulting & Compete RI
- Karen Bradbury, RI Office of Energy Resources
- Brian Kearney, RISE Engineering
- Eileen Barrett, RISE Engineering
- Adrian Caesar, RI Energy Efficiency & Resource Management Council C-Team
- Lidia Nunez, Community Action Partnership of Providence
- Melina Lodge, Housing Network of RI
- April Brown, Racial and Environmental Justice Committee of Providence
- Sonakshi Saxena, National Grid

EWG Meeting Timeline and Process Overview

This year the EWG met during an abbreviated planning period that ran from June through September 2023 during which GHHI facilitated a total of four working group meetings. Multiple RI EWG members recommended reconvening earlier in the Winter to allow for ample time for in-depth discussions and feedback. Despite the abbreviated timeline, the group was able to develop a well-rounded set of recommendations and suggested strategies metrics and targets. During the final meeting on September 29th, EWG members provided final feedback, heard a preliminary response from the Company, and initiated discussions on the next steps for the RI EWG to sustain progress and build its capacity as a critical equity-focused resource for the Company.

RI EWG Meeting Dates and Agenda Summary			
Meeting #1, June 21 st	Meeting #2, August 8 th	Meeting #3, August 31 st	Meeting #4, September 29 th
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overview of Years 1+2 • Year 3 Priorities & Energy Efficiency Concerns • 2022 Q4 Equity Updates Review 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review Updated Year 3 Timeline <p>Guest Presenters</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rhode Island Energy, 2023 Q2 Equity Updates • RISE, EE Program Barriers & Opportunities 	<p>Guest Presenters</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rhode Island Energy, Equity Demonstration Overview • National Grid, MA EE Workforce Development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Report out on final set of recommendations • Obtain feedback from RI EWG and the Company • Discuss Future Direction and Next Steps for the EWG

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> EERMC C-Team, Equity-Related Priorities for the 2024-2026 Plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Member Feedback on Emerging Priorities & Recommendations 	
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Meeting Summaries

Year 3 Kickoff Meeting – June 21st, 2023

On June 21, 2023, GHHI facilitated the Year 3 Kickoff Meeting. With the addition of new EWG members, the facilitator provided an overview of the purpose of the EWG, intended goals for Year 3, and a high-level overview of Years 1-2. The facilitator explained that the group will develop recommendations to be included in the Company’s Annual Energy Efficiency Plan for 2024. In addition, the Company provided updates on the progress of equity commitments from Year1-2.

Gregory Ohadoma, Energy Justice Manager, spoke about his role at the Rhode Island Office of Energy Resources where he helps his office implement and include equity and justice in existing and future policies and programs. In addition, Greg helps facilitate the Climate Justice Hours group.

Matthew Maini, URI Energy Fellow and Rhode Island Energy Intern, then presented an overview of Q4 2022 Equity Updates, including improved outreach and marketing strategies to better reach non-participants and underserved communities, training courses for its Consumer Advocates, an improved customer follow-up process, and the early phases of a Rhode Island Workforce Needs Assessment with BW Research. For a full summary of each meeting and the Company’s quarterly Equity Updates, please refer to the Appendix.

RI EWG Feedback/Comments: Following the equity updates, GHHI opened the floor to hear from working group members on the Company’s Equity Updates, issues and topics they would like to focus on this year, and common concerns members hear or see regarding heating/cooling needs and energy efficiency programs. One key piece of feedback revolved around the need for more detailed equity updates. While members appreciated that work is being done in underserved communities, members would also appreciate seeing more meaningful data and metrics tracking. For example, it is good to see the number of events happening in underserved communities and the number of partner organizations the Company is working with, but it would be helpful to dive deeper into the results of these strategies – is there an increase in participation in a community after a Customer Expo? How many referrals from partners have been received and signed up for a home energy assessment?

RI EWG Meeting #2 – August 8th, 2023

On August 8th, GHHI reconvened the RI EWG for Meeting #2. Based on feedback from the kickoff meeting, GHHI invited a slate of presenters to inform EWG members on 2023 Q2 equity-related updates, program barriers and opportunities, and the Energy Efficiency Resource Management Council (EERMC)’s priorities and recommendations. The goal of inviting the presenters was to help EWG members understand actions the Company has taken related to equity and hear from the program

administrators of the EnergyWise programs concerning barriers households face and opportunities to overcome weatherization barriers. In addition, as the RI EWG prepares its recommendations for inclusion in the 2024 Annual Energy Efficiency Plan, the Company and other relevant stakeholders, including members of the RI EWG, were working concurrently on the 2024-2026 Energy Efficiency Three-Year Plan. During the meeting, the EERMC Consultant Team presented priorities from the plan.

Angela Li, Rhode Island Energy – Equity Updates: Angela Li, Supervisor of Residential and Low/Moderate Income Programs, provided an overview of the Company's 2023 Q2 Equity Updates. Angela provided a high level overview of the number of participants across each city/town that participated in EnergyWise's Home Energy Assessments, Weatherization, and Income Eligible Services Single Family programs. Angela also discussed current and potential organizations the Company would like to partner with to improve outreach strategies in underserved communities. For a full summary of each meeting and the Company's quarterly Equity Updates, please refer to the Appendix.

RI EWG Feedback/Comments: Following Angela's presentation, working group members were given an opportunity to ask questions and provide feedback. EWG members were interested in learning more about the Company's proposed plan to provide financial support to community-based organizations and provide strategic outreach support in underserved communities. The \$40,000 allocated in the draft 2024 Annual Plan seemed low to EWG members. The Company was interested in hearing from members on how they could improve their outreach strategies to these organizations, and what the fee structure should be for supporting organizations. The RI EWG dove deeper into this topic in Meeting #3.

Brian Kearney & Eileen Barrett, RISE Engineering – EnergyWise Programs Barriers & Opportunities: In the kickoff meeting, RI EWG members requested to hear directly from the program administrators working on key programs. Brian Kearney, Director of Residential Services, and Eileen Barrett, Manager of Residential Energy Assessments, from RISE Engineering presented on the barriers customers experience while participating in the EnergyWise program. Brian and Eileen walked through program data from 2022 into 2023, highlighting the 15,774 assessments performed throughout this period, 11,661 households were identified as needing weatherization services, however, 54.66 percent of the those households had pre-weatherization barriers that resulted in a deferral. The two most common barriers included knob and tube wiring and mold. To decrease deferral rates, the Company must identify opportunities for leveraging funding to address pre-weatherization barriers. Importantly, the group noted the disparities between the percentage of households that participate in the Income Eligible Services (IES) program had higher participation rates than the market rate programs. IES had 29.8 percent renter participation in Home Energy Assessments and 15.6 percent renter/landlord Weatherization participation through Q2 2023 while the EnergyWise program had 12.7 percent renter participation and 10.2 percent landlord/renter Weatherization participation. The EERMC C-Team did note that it is highly likely that renters comprise a higher percentage of IES customers than of market rate. Rhode Island Energy should provide any information on this to provide more baseline data to highlight the disparity.

Lastly, Brian and Eileen provided an overview of its MWBE contractors that participate in the EnergyWise programs, and the percentage of work performed by MWBEs on the program as 12%.

RI EWG Feedback/Comments: Following the presentation, working group members were given an opportunity to ask questions and provide feedback. In particular, EWG members were interested in

learning more about potential funding opportunities to further address pre-weatherization barriers and current offerings, both in Rhode Island and regionally (e.g., Massachusetts). The Company explained the Heat Loan program, where to date, 26 customers used the 0 percent heat loan to overcome pre-weatherization barriers in 2022. Group members noted that lending programs may not be the most equitable or effective way to reach lower-income households and suggested that leveraging additional programs and grant funding can help address the deferral rates and improve participation in the Company's energy efficiency programs.

Margie Lynch, RI EERMC C-Team – Summary of Equity-Related Priorities for the 2024-2026 Plan

Margie Lynch, a member of the Rhode Island EERMC Consultant Team, provided a summary of equity-related priorities for the Company's 2024-2026 Energy Efficiency Three-Year Plan. Margie outlined key opportunities for the RI EWG to further provide input on and support the Company, including setting clear and objective determinants of success and increasing investments in underserved communities and partner organizations. The EERMC C-Team recommended that the Company improve its metrics tracking and set annual targets.

RI EWG Feedback/Comments: Following the presentation, working group members were given an opportunity to ask questions and provide feedback. Discussion around the Company's Community Solutions Program were discussed concerning how it awards \$20,000 grants to organizations meeting energy efficiency goals. The Company has been working in East Providence with small businesses on Main Street. It was noted by an EWG member that Massachusetts has a similar initiative with its Community First Partners where partner organizations can receive up to \$60,000 each and must hire energy advocates for at least 10 hours/week to provide services to residents in underserved communities.

RI EWG Meeting #3 – August 31st, 2023

To continue to hear from key stakeholders on equity-related work, GHFI invited Brendan Dagher, Rhode Island Energy, and Sonakshi Saxena, National Grid to present on the Company's Equity Demonstration and workforce development efforts in Massachusetts. Following the presenters, GHFI provided a brief overview of the emerging recommendations and suggested actions and metrics for discussion amongst the RI EWG.

Brendan Dagher, Rhode Island Energy – Equity Demonstration: Brendan provided an overview of the Company's proposed Equity Demonstration that is expected to launch in early 2024. The Equity Demonstration came about after realizing the number of non-profit organizations that are facing increased demands to provide energy efficiency education and outreach with no additional funding to support these efforts. In response, the Company will implement a demonstration to distribute \$40,000 in incentives to supporting organizations to provide direct education and outreach to landlords.

RI EWG Feedback/Comments: Following Brendan's presentation, working group members were given an opportunity to ask questions and provide feedback. A key piece of feedback revolved around the amount of funding available for the Equity Demonstration. EWG members suggested the Company to consider increasing the amount of funding available for these partners and/or energy advocates so they are able to provide strategic and robust efforts within underserved communities. In addition, allowing a

longer time period was preferred as EWG members agreed that a one-year timeline is too short to build and implement an effective program.

Sonakshi Saxena, National Grid – MA Energy Efficiency Workforce Development Efforts:

In Year 3, the RI EWG continued to focus on equitable workforce development and training throughout the state. GHHI invited Sonakshi Saxena to provide an overview of energy efficiency workforce development efforts happening in Massachusetts. Sonakshi shared a high level overview of Massachusetts's current workforce development goals, including the need to consider workforce barriers to entry, language access, focusing on MWBEs and developing a more streamlined pathways to engage with MWBEs. Sonakshi spoke about the Clean Energy Pathways Program, similar to the Rhode Island Builder's Association Residential Construction Workforce Partnership (RCWP), which provides a full-time paid 3-month internship to help create a sustainable pipeline of HVAC and Weatherization workers residing in Environmental Justice communities.

RI EWG Feedback/Comments: Following the presentation, working group members were given an opportunity to ask questions and provide feedback. Regarding MWBEs, an EWG member was able to share her personal experience while trying to qualify with the state as an MWBE with her own business. The process was described as "insanely burdensome" to the point where she declined to pursue certification. Other EWG members were aware of similar experiences. The Company followed up as they are considering using self-attestation since a lot of the contractors they work with are minority or women-owned, but decide not to pursue MWBE certification because of the burdensome process. EWG members liked the idea of self-attestation and are looking forward to future discussions to address this issue. In addition, the group discussed the importance of building trust within communities and working with trusted community based organizations to increase participation in underserved communities. For additional feedback from Sonakshi's presentation, please refer to the Appendix.

Draft Year 3 Matrix Review

Following the presenters, GHHI walked through an initial draft matrix of recommendations, actions, and metrics that were developed based on input and feedback from the first couple of meetings. During the discussion, EWG members reiterated that it is difficult to develop recommendations and actions without better understanding baseline data and related metrics from the Company. Members continued to note that they haven't seen the recommendations, actions, and metrics from Year 2 translated into the Equity Updates.

In thinking about how the Company can better share data, one member asked if there is any way the Company can dive deeper into the data to learn about programs in key geographies including Equity Communities, Justice 40 communities, and at the neighborhood level. The member noted that one issue with existing data is that data is very high level and isn't detailed enough to use effectively to strengthen programming or monitor progress towards goals. In addition, the member asked if there any type of pathway or mechanism for people who are directly affected by the Company's program to see and help analyze data to help the Company better understand the customer/consumer experience.

RI OER – Equity Reporting Metrics

Dollars saved (\$) in energy expenditures due to technology adoption in DAC	Energy saved or reduction in fuel by DACs	Avoided air pollutants (CO2 equivalents, NOx, SO2, and/or PM2.5) in DACs	Number of jobs created for DACs because of DOE program/Number of hires from DACs resulting from job trainings	Dollars spent (\$) and/or number of participants from DACs in job trainings programs, apprenticeship programs, STEM education, tuition, scholarships, etc.	Number of stakeholders events, participants, and/or dollars spent to engage with organizations and residents in DACs including participation and notification of programs	Change in air quality in BIPOC –F-LI communities	Reductions in asthma or respiratory distress	% Contracts awarded to frontline-owned businesses	% of households and communities that have access to reliable and sustainable energy sources
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Greg Ohadoma, Energy Justice Program Manager at RI OER shared the table above of equity reporting metrics that he put together for OER’s energy efficiency programs. These metrics were based on the Biden’s Administration’s Justice40 Initiative. Based on EWG member feedback, GHHI plans to incorporate suggested metrics into the final report.

RI EWG Meeting #4 – September 29th, 2023

Summary will be included following meeting.

Recommendations, Actions, & Metrics (as of 9/27/23)

The following section is a breakdown of draft Year 3 Recommendations, Actions & Metrics.

To note, this section is intentionally cut out and the Matrix will be finalized following the September 29th RI EWG meeting.

Conclusion & Future Direction

Throughout Year 3, a common theme among RI EWG members was the need to improve tracking and reporting of equity-related metrics from previous years. Members would like to see more timely and sophisticated data collection and reporting in the quarterly Equity Updates that can be used to catalyze discussions, promote target setting, and monitor progress. One workgroup member stated that they “expect to see more specific, measurable commitments which the Company intends to undertake...metrics should be established for each commitment which are quantifiable, time-bound, and supported by reporting data and other relevant information.” Desired sources of data include hearing directly from the Company’s Consumer Advocates on current activities they are working on and any learning from barriers or opportunities they see in their day-to-day work. This would, in turn, help members better formulate solutions to address ongoing barriers. It is strongly recommended by GHHI and EWG members that the group meet at least one more time this year to continue discussions on equity metrics and targets the Company can commit to. GHHI and EWG members understand that in the current draft of 2024 Annual Energy Efficiency Plan outlines that metrics development will begin in Q1 of 2023, with a first report out in the 2024 Q2 Equity Update report. However, we would like to acknowledge that this timeline may stall the EWGs current momentum as it is eager to continue work building on the suggested metrics developed during this process. In addition, having solid baseline data early in Q1 would support EWG-related planning moving into the new year.

With the Company committed to at least six EWG meetings in 2024, GHHI and RI EWG members strongly urge we kickoff Year 4 early in the calendar year. This will allow for ample time for the group to meet its goals and have sufficient time for EWG members to provide feedback on the recommendations and final

report. EWG members have expressed interest in working closely with GHHI and the Company to map out Year 4, prioritize topic areas for discussion, and set agendas and meeting goals throughout the year. One suggestion from the EERMC C-Team involved developing a detailed calendar for Year 4 by the end of 2023 that outlines proposed activities and a specific timeline for next year's recommendations and final report. To ensure that RI EWG members have the opportunity to review and provide feedback, Year 4's final report and recommendations should be carefully aligned with the development of the first draft of the 2025 Energy Efficiency Plan.

Lastly, GHHI would value the opportunity to continue to work with the Company, RI OER, and workgroup members to increase participation and representation from consumers who are not affiliated with any specific organization but have personal experiences that can help the EWG better understand issues and challenges facing community members who wish to avail themselves of the Company's energy efficiency programs and services. Notably, to date, no one has taken advantage of the stipends offered for members who are not otherwise paid to participate in the RI EWG. The Company's Consumer Advocates could be a major asset in this effort.

GHHI invited a handful of residents, including low-to-moderate income renters, and presented at Health Equity Zone meetings to discuss the RI EWG, its goals, and help recruit more residents to the group. GHHI has also offered meeting times that start after the workday (e.g., 5:30-7 PM) on meeting Doodle Polls, however, the later times have not proven to be popular. In trying to think through how we can recruit and retain consumer participation, GHHI will discuss with the Company the possibility of hosting a second group of residents after work hours or increasing the presence of the Company at monthly/quarterly Health Equity Zones meetings to build trust and make connections with community members and leaders.

Lastly, RI EWG members will continue to be asked to provide referrals and recommendations for stakeholders and organizations to join the group. GHHI looks forward to connecting with any new invitees and provide them with a brief orientation and background materials so new members feel comfortable and are up to speed on the work.

GHHI and RI EWG members value the opportunity to provide feedback and recommendations to the Company's energy efficiency efforts with a focus on equity and look forward to continuing these discussions throughout the remainder of 2023 and through 2024.

Acknowledgements

The Green & Healthy Homes Initiative (GHHI) would like to thank:

- All the Rhode Island advocates that have continuously pushed the Company to develop, implement, and deliver their energy efficiency programs more equitably.
- The Company and the Rhode Island Office of Energy Resources (OER) for co-hosting and their commitment to the RI Equity Working Group.
- Each of the EWG members for their participation and engagement during the process.
- Those who presented their work and other non-EWG members that devoted time to providing their perspective.

Appendix

About GHHI

The Green & Healthy Homes Initiative (GHHI) is a national organization with the mission 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 for low-income communities of color. The vision of our work is to advance health and racial equity through healthy housing, with a focus on limited-income communities of color.

GHHI is the largest healthy homes organization in the country, operating in over sixty-five communities and states, focused on improving housing quality and establishing public-private partnerships that allow local governments to efficiently and effectively utilize resources related to housing. GHHI has worked to design and implement policies and programs at the federal, state, and local level that promote healthy, energy efficient, and climate friendly housing. In Rhode Island, GHHI aligns and braids housing, health, and energy efficiency resources to offer a holistic set of services to meet the housing needs of families and children, offers healthy homes training for Spanish-speaking contractors in partnership with the Rhode Island Builders Association, manages HUD's Lead Hazard Control Grants for Rhode Island Housing and the City of Providence, partners with the West Elmwood Health Equity Zone team to deliver a 4-unit pilot to reduce the number of asthma-related pediatric and adult emergency department visits and inpatient hospitalizations in the 02907 region.

EWG Guidelines and Expectations

Below are the guidelines and expectations that guided each EWG meeting. Meeting attendees shall:

- Make every attempt to attend every meeting on time
- Share the oxygen – ensure that all participants who wish to have an opportunity to speak are afforded a chance to do so
- Listen to other points of view and try to understand differing viewpoints and other interests
- Maintain a focus on collaboration and solutions
- Share information openly and respectfully
- Make sure information given is accurate
- Remain flexible and open-minded
- Review meeting notes and documents prior to next meeting
- Respect the privacy of the meeting
- Meeting notes are for participants only
- What is said during meetings is important, who said it is not
- Make sure information given is accurate
- Remain flexible and open-minded.

[Year 3 RI EWG Meeting #1 – Slide Deck](#)

[Year 3 RI EWG Meeting #1 – Meeting Notes](#)

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DRAFT