

2026 Energy Efficiency Council Education Proposal

Submitted by University of Rhode Island Cooperative Extension, last updated 07.25.25

SITUATION

1. Income-eligible ratepayers have the highest energy burden and the unhealthiest homes, but participation in energy efficiency programs that reduce energy costs and enhance building performance because:
 - They lack of awareness of energy efficiency programs;
 - They lack trust in utility services and energy-related programs; and
 - Applications, timelines and stigmatizing language limit ratepayer participation in energy efficiency programs.
2. Community-based health workers have the skills and community trust needed to fill this gap, but they lack the specific knowledge required to teach income-eligible ratepayers about:
 - Why energy efficiency is important vis a vis reducing energy burden, home air quality and how both relate to social determinants of health;
 - The difference between market rate and income eligible EE services, the commonly used terminology for each, and the most common weatherization deferrals in RI; and
 - The Weatherization Assistance Program application process and income-eligible programs and funding to address weatherization deferrals.

INPUTS

1. Facilitation by the URI Cooperative Extension Energy Literacy team based on learnings from the *Efficient Housing for All* Community of Practice
2. Advisement from the RI Energy Efficiency Council (RI EEC) Education team and RI Energy Equity Working Group (EWG)
3. Community participation through the RI Department of Health Health Equity Zone Initiative Learning Community, RI Energy Equity Working Group (EWG) and the Community Health Worker Association of RI (CHWARI)
4. Translation services

AUDIENCE

1. **Primary:** Community-based public health workers
2. **Secondary:** Income eligible ratepayers

ACTIVITIES

1. **RI Home Weatherization Roadmap:**
 - a. Refine the roadmap drafted in 2025 with input from the EEC and EWG to create a digital decision tree that can be used as an educational tool for community-based workers and to guide ratepayers through the weatherization process.

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ACTIVITIES (cont'd)

2. Community Worker Training:

- a. Design and deliver a bilingual (English/Spanish) Rhode Island Weatherization Ambassador training for community-based workers using lessons learned from the EHACoP, including a training workbook.

3. Workforce Development Credential:

- a. Work with the CHWARI / RI Certification Board and the RIDOH Health Equity Zone Initiative / Learning Community to formalize a public health workforce development microcredential for workers to provide an upskilling opportunity

4. Program Marketing:

- a. **Refine and offer the [In-Home Energy Assessment Opportunity](#)** developed in 2025 to EHACoP and RIWA training participants;
- b. **General social media content** that incorporates DIY video with energy assessment participant testimonials to be shared by a contracted social media influencer, community-based organizations, Spanish radio **and** RI Energy, the RI Office of Energy Resources and URI
- c. **Create a branded yard sign and sticker decal design** for home energy assessment participants to display on their property that say "This home uses less energy through weatherization!" or similar
- d. **Host one Plugged into Energy Research lecture** to share information about the Energy Efficiency Council's commitment to workforce development through this project, in conjunction with other lectures in the series that may highlight the URI Energy Fellows Program as another workforce development initiative.

OUTPUTS

1. Digital RI Home Weatherization Roadmap web tool
2. Community Worker Training lesson plans and instructional materials
3. Community Worker Training through RIDOH HEZ and CHWARI events
4. Energy Efficiency Ambassador Public Health Workforce Development Credential
5. Energy Efficiency Program Marketing Materials (e.g. social media content, signage)
6. URI Plugged Into Energy Research (PIER) lecture

OUTCOMES

Short-term (Knowledge): Community-based health workers [primary audience] are empowered to assist ratepayers with weatherization programs using the EE Roadmap through a Weatherization Ambassador pilot training program with knowledge about a) why energy efficiency is important vis a vis reducing energy burden, home air quality and how both relate to social determinants of health; b) the difference between market rate and income eligible EE services, the commonly used terminology for each, and the most common weatherization deferrals in RI; and c) the Weatherization Assistance Program application process and income-eligible programs and funding to address weatherization deferrals.

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OUTCOMES (cont'd)

Mid-term (Actions): Community-based health workers [primary audience] will a) Guide clients through appropriate Energy Efficiency programs using the RI Home Weatherization Roadmap; b) Share Energy Efficiency program information with landlords to increase participation; and c) Increase the number of residents applying for IES (e.g. LIHEAP > WAP). Through training and support offered by community-based health workers, income-eligible ratepayers [secondary audience] will understand a) why energy efficiency is important vis a vis reducing energy burden, home air quality and how both relate to social determinants of health; b) the difference between market rate and income eligible EE services, the commonly used terminology for each, and the most common weatherization deferrals in RI; and c) the Weatherization Assistance Program application process and income-eligible programs and funding to address weatherization deferrals.

Long-term (Conditions): We expect to see a) an increase in completed home energy assessments for ratepayers with high energy burdens in under-resourced communities; b) an increase in completed home weatherization projects for ratepayers with high energy burdens in under-resourced communities; and c) community-based public health workers adopt an Energy Efficiency Coach role through their regular outreach and engagement practice.

DRAFT BUDGET BY ACTIVITY

ACTIVITY	LEAD	COST
1. Roadmap	- URI staff salary & fringe (content development) - ESRI consultant (digital story map development)	\$10,000
2. Training	- URI staff salary & fringe (content development, training facilitation) - Refreshments - Instructor stipends	\$35,000
3. Credentialing	- URI staff (employer partner coordination) - Credentialing consultant (skills matrix, job description, etc.)	\$10,000
4. Program Marketing	- 2026 Energy Literacy Fellow hourly (content development) - Incentive payments for in-home energy assessment opportunity participants - Social media influencer - Yard signs and sticker decals - PIER lecture series refreshments	\$20,000
Indirect Costs	<i>Need to confirm state agency rate of 25%</i>	\$20,000
TOTAL:		\$100,000