

THE UNIVERSITY OF RHODE ISLAND
COLLEGE OF THE ENVIRONMENT AND LIFE SCIENCES
COOPERATIVE EXTENSION



Energy Literacy Initiative

EFFICIENT HOUSING FOR ALL | *Community of Practice*

Final Report Overview



THE
UNIVERSITY
OF RHODE ISLAND
COOPERATIVE
EXTENSION

Overview

EHACoP Goals

EHACoP Participation

EHACoP Data

EHACoP Key Takeaways

EEC Recommendations

Efficient Housing for All Community of Practice

Outputs (from Logic Model)

- **Form a Community of Practice** composed of those with professional and lived experience to a) survey; b) create tools; and c) measure effectiveness of outputs on outcomes herein.
- **Create a digital decision tree** (EE Roadmap) to guide ratepayers and community-based workers through the weatherization application process
- **Empower community-based workers to assist ratepayers with weatherization** programs using the EE Roadmap through a Energy Coach pilot program.
- **Curate the Plugged into Energy Research lecture series to build awareness** among general public and professional community **of the Community of Practice plan, outputs and outcomes.**
- **Evaluate the effectiveness of the above** on completion of projects addressing pre-weatherization barriers and home energy efficiency during the project period.



Efficient Housing for All Community of Practice

Short-Term Outcomes

(from Logic Model; immediate)

Primary audience will understand:

1. Why energy efficiency is important vis a vis reducing energy burden, home air quality and how both relate to social determinants of health;
2. 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
3. The Weatherization Assistance Program application process and income-eligible programs and funding to address weatherization deferrals.

Secondary audience will understand:

1. The importance of working with community-based organizations (CAP agencies, HEZ) in under resourced communities to effect nonparticipation in energy efficiency programs.



Efficient Housing for All Community of Practice

Medium-Term Outcomes

(from Logic Model; 1-2 yrs)

Primary audience will:

1. Direct and guide clients to/through appropriate EE program applications;
2. Share EE program information with landlords to increase participation; and
3. Increases number of participants applying for IES (e.g. LIHEAP > WAP).

Secondary audience will:

1. Continue to invest in community-level efforts to educate and empower ratepayers in under-resourced communities and community-based workers that serve them
2. Continue to invest in systems-level coordination amongst existing equity in energy efficiency efforts and intersecting public health initiatives.

Efficient Housing for All Community of Practice

Long-Term Outcomes

(from Logic Model; 3-5 yrs)

1. **Increase in completed weatherization deferral projects** (e.g. knob and tube replacement, roof replacement, window replacement, lead abatement) for ratepayers with high energy burdens in under resourced communities;
2. **Increase in completed weatherization retrofit projects** (e.g. insulation, ventilation) for ratepayers with high energy burdens in under resourced communities; and
3. **Community-based public health workers adopt an energy efficiency coach role** through their regular outreach and engagement practice.

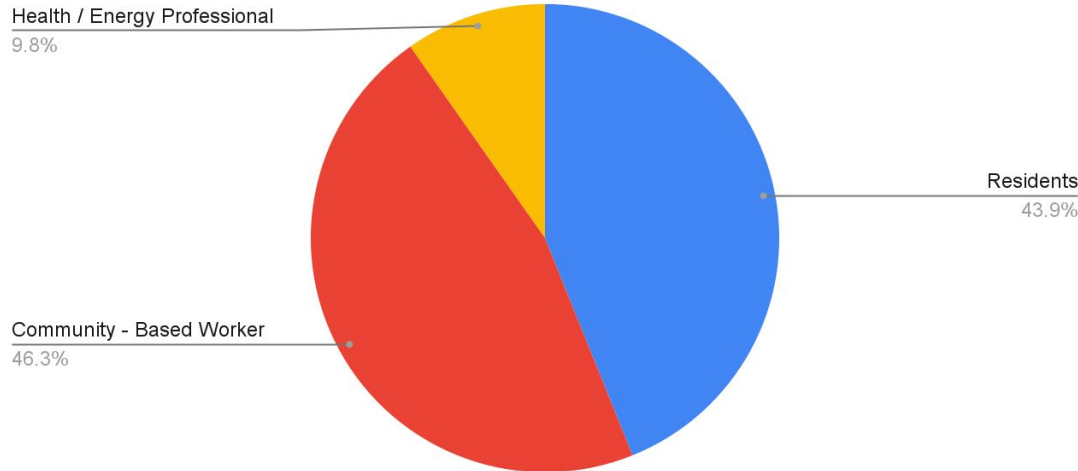
Efficient Housing for All Community of Practice

PARTICIPATION

Half of participants were community-based workers and 2 out of 5 were residents. One third were Spanish speakers.

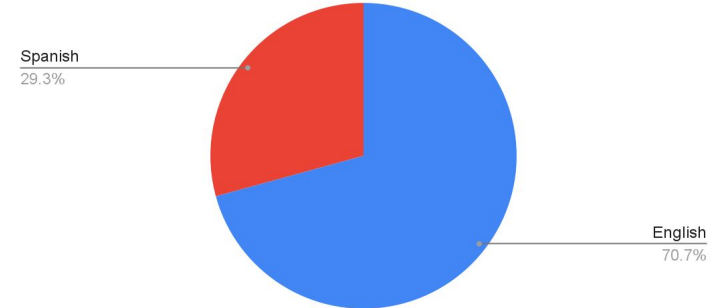
Category of Total Participants Over All Sessions

2025 Efficient Housing for All Community of Practice



Preferred Language of All Participants Over All Sessions

2025 Efficient Housing for All Community of Practice



THE
UNIVERSITY
OF RHODE ISLAND
COOPERATIVE
EXTENSION



THE
UNIVERSITY
OF RHODE ISLAND
COOPERATIVE
EXTENSION

Efficient Housing for All Community of Practice

DATA

Data Collected	What We Learned
Pre-EHACoP (Session 1) and Post-EHACoP survey (Session 6)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Trust in utility increased as result of knowledge gained
Group Activity Responses (Session 1, 2, 3)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Best practices for under resourced community engagement• List of trusted community-based venues for engagement
Session Notes (Session 1-6)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Barriers to accessing energy efficiency programs
“Witness” Feedback (Session 1-6)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• CoP best practices• Improved data collection from participants
Participants’ “Questions & Comments” (Sessions 1-6)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• CoP best practices• Barriers to accessing energy efficiency programs
HEA Opportunity Feedback & Videos	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Obstacles in the energy assessment process
HEA Opportunity Non-Participant Survey	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Barriers to scheduling and completing a home energy assessment; barriers to implementing weatherization recommendations

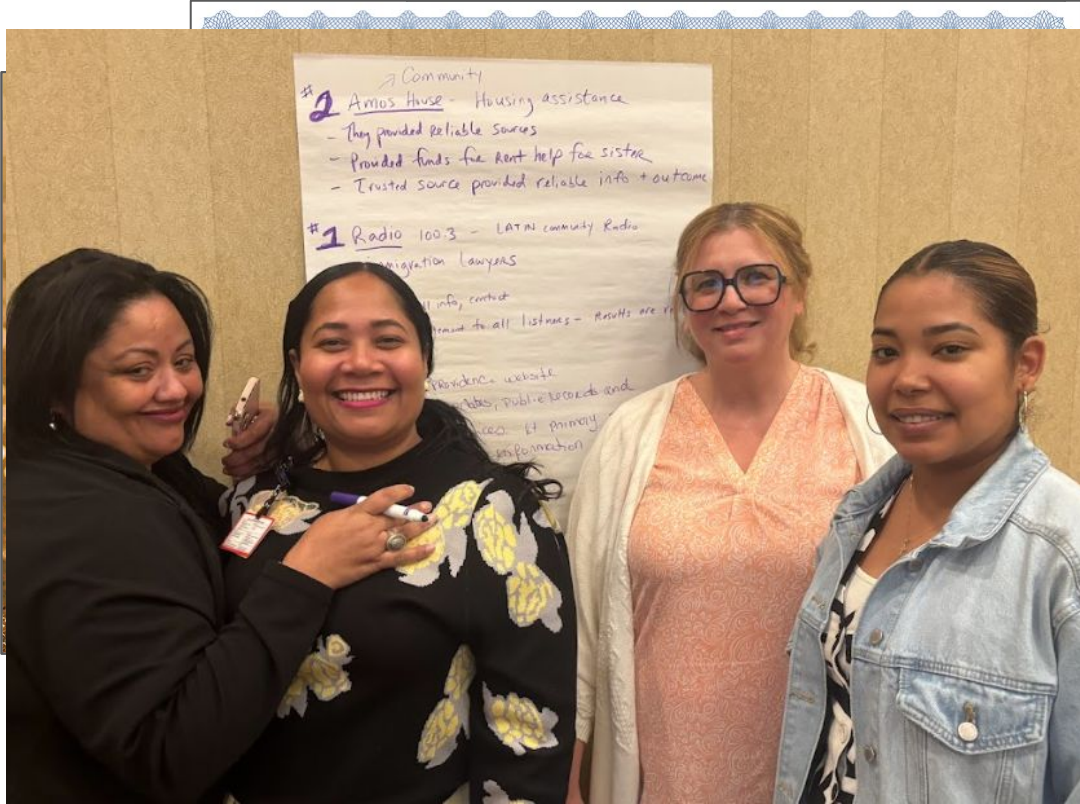
Efficient Housing for All Community of Practice

KEY TAKEAWAYS

Meaningful community engagement to build trust is not inexpensive or expeditious.

Despite extending knowledge, providing monetary incentives, facilitating community connections and recognizing participants...

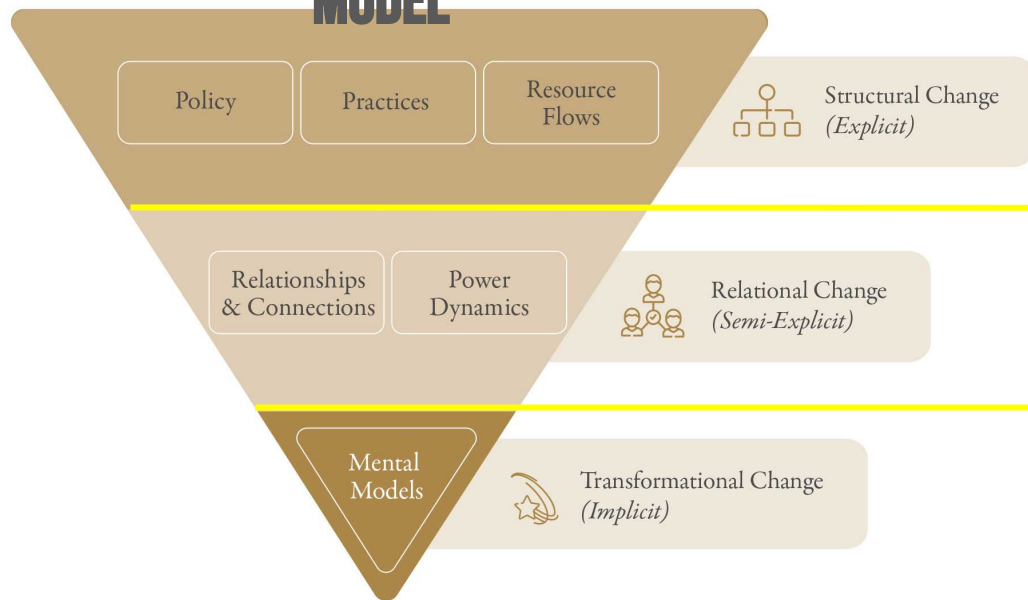
...less than 20% of participants completed an in-home energy assessment.



Efficient Housing for All Community of Practice

KEY TAKEAWAYS

SYSTEMS CHANGE MODEL

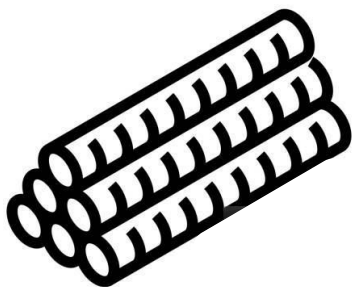
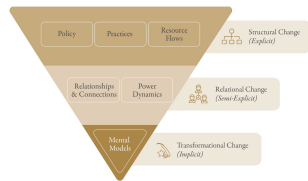


RI ENERGY EFFICIENCY LANDSCAPE



Efficient Housing for All Community of Practice

RECOMMENDATIONS



Targeted Structural Changes within Existing EE Ecosystem to Reduce Barriers to Participation



Enhanced Approach to Relational Change that Builds Islands of Coherence Among CHWs

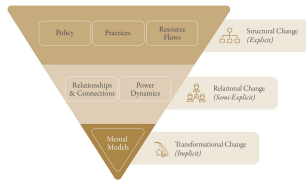


Incentivized and Integrated CHW Training Model that Incorporates EE and Weatherization as Tools for Improving Health Outcomes



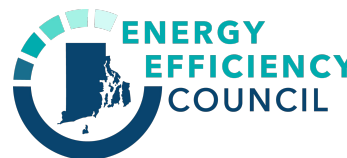
Efficient Housing for All Community of Practice

RECOMMENDATIONS



**Targeted Structural
Changes within
Existing EE
Ecosystem to
Reduce Barriers to
Participation**

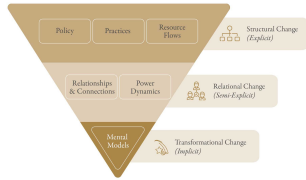
- Simplify program enrollment by creating a single sign-up process
- Institute follow-up procedures so that everyone receives the same level of information and support after their home energy assessments
- Secure (more) funding to address pre-weatherization barriers, as this is a key reason why residents don't follow through with weatherization upgrades
- Require cultural competence training for program providers to ensure that they are prepared communicate across language and cultural barriers
- Create feedback loops to ensure iterative structural change



THE
UNIVERSITY
OF RHODE ISLAND
COOPERATIVE
EXTENSION

Efficient Housing for All Community of Practice

RECOMMENDATIONS



Enhanced
Approach to
Relational Change
that Builds Islands
of Coherence
Among CHWs

- Improve relationships and connections through authentic partnerships with local organizations in trusted spaces (see appendices for suggested venues)
- Shift power dynamics to create “islands of coherence” among community-based workers through iterative Energy Navigator training
 - Refine and publish an *Energy Navigator Workbook* informed by key takeaways from the EHACoP as a training tool
 - Implement the *RI Energy Efficiency Roadmap* as a practice guide to support “Energy Navigators”



THE
UNIVERSITY
OF RHODE ISLAND
COOPERATIVE
EXTENSION

Efficient Housing for All Community of Practice

RECOMMENDATIONS

Mental
Models



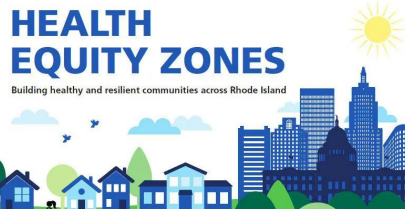
Transformational Change
(*Implicit*)

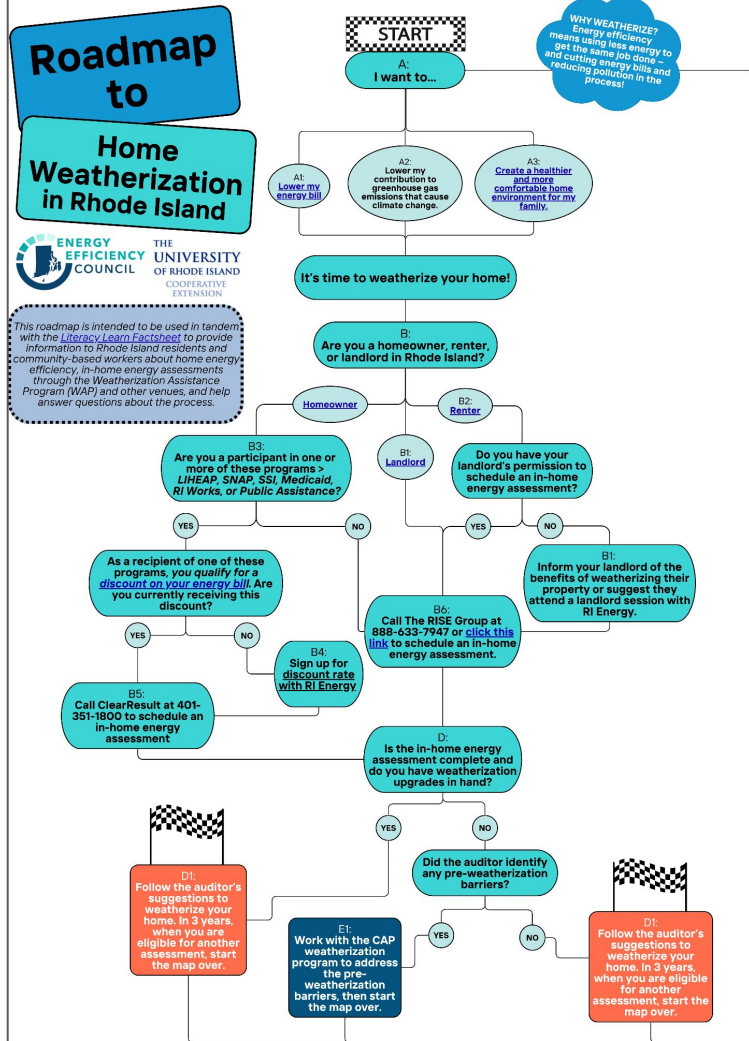
**CHW Energy Navigator
Training Pilot**

*Credentialed through
RI Certification Board
and/or URI?*



THE
UNIVERSITY
OF RHODE ISLAND
COOPERATIVE
EXTENSION





Efficient Housing for All

Roadmap to Weatherization - A Guide for Community Workers and Ambassadors

This fact sheet is intended to be used in tandem with the *Roadmap to Weatherization* to provide information to Rhode Island residents and community-based workers about home energy efficiency, in-home energy assessments through the Weatherization Assistance Program (WAP) and other venues, and help answer questions about the process.

WHAT IS WEATHERIZATION FOR ENERGY EFFICIENCY?

- Energy efficiency means using less energy to perform the same tasks.
- Energy efficiency in the home is achieved through weatherization, which helps to maintain a comfortable indoor temperature and reduce energy use consistently.
- Examples of weatherization include proper insulation, installing storm windows and doors, weatherstripping, installing smart thermostats and energy efficient appliances, etc.
- Energy efficiency is different from energy conservation, which is more about changing our behavior to use less energy. See the differences in the table below.

Examples of Energy Conservation	Examples of Energy Efficiency
Turning your refrigerator temperature up	Installing a high-efficiency fridge
Turning off lights when you're not in the room	Upgrading to LED lights
Only running full loads in your dishwasher	Installing an energy efficient dishwasher
Setting the thermostat to a higher temperature in the summer, and a cooler temperature in the winter	Upgrading to energy efficient HVAC, use proper insulation, and upgrade windows and doors

A - WHY WEATHERIZE YOUR HOME?

- Energy efficiency means using less energy to perform the same tasks, like heating and cooling your home.
- A1 - Weatherizing your home will lower your bill**
 - By using less energy, you reduce monthly costs. Proper insulation, efficient heating systems, and air sealing prevent energy waste and help you save money.
 - If everyone in your neighborhood weatherized their homes, then the amount of energy everyone uses would go down, meaning the demand for energy would also go down, reducing how much everyone pays for energy.
- A2 - Lowers your family's contribution to greenhouse gases**
 - Using less energy reduces greenhouse gas emissions, helping Rhode Island combat climate change while improving the quality of life for its residents.
- A3 - Creates a healthier and more comfortable home environment for your family**
 - Energy upgrades reduce drafts, regulate temperature and improve indoor air quality. They can also control moisture to prevent mold growth and allergens.
 - Low income residents are more likely to live in energy inefficient and unhealthy homes than high income residents, meaning they are also more likely to experience temperature related illness, asthma, and cancer due to poor insulation, poor ventilation, and exposure to contaminants.
 - For more information about the health benefits of weatherization, click this link.

2026 RI Energy Efficiency Community Education Proposal

OUTPUTS

Training, Tools and Credential Development

- > Training Workbook
- > RI Home Weatherization Roadmap
- > CHWARI Education Credential

Program Marketing:

- > In-home Energy Assessment opportunity incentives
- > Social media content
- > Yard sign/sticker
- > (1) PIER lecture

BUDGET

ACTIVITY	LEAD	COST
1. Training, Tools and Credential Development	URI staff salary & fringe for training content development and facilitation, refreshments and instructor stipends	\$55,000 ▾
	URI staff salary & fringe for tool content development and URI Environmental Data Center consultant to build digital story map development	
	URI staff salary & fringe for employer partner coordination and credentialing consultant to develop skills matrix and evaluation plan	
4. Program Marketing	2026 Energy Literacy Fellow hourly to develop social media content, liaise with social media influencer, manage a yard sign and decal design contest, coordinate one PIER lecture; refreshments for lecture and incentive payments for in-home energy assessment opportunity participants	\$20,000
Indirect Costs	<i>Need to confirm state agency rate of 25%</i>	\$25,000
TOTAL:		\$100,000

PLUGGED INTO ENERGY RESEARCH

LECTURE SERIES



2025 Plugged into Energy Research lecture series - DRAFT

Lecture C:

Transformational Change in Energy Efficiency Program Participation

Wednesday, December 3, 2025 | 6:00 - 7:00 p.m. | URI Higgins Welcome Center, Kingston

Target Audience: General Public

Purpose: To highlight current engagement activities geared towards increasing participation in energy efficiency programs in RI and facilitate conversation around how to fill gaps in engagement. Proposed engagement activities for 2026 may be included - TBD!

TIME	TOPIC	POTENTIAL SPEAKERS
6:00 p.m.	Welcome and thank you from URI and the EEC	Kevin Drumm, URI CoopExt
6:10 p.m.	The Situation: Low Program Participation Despite Payoffs	Nina Lima, URI CoopExt
6:25 p.m.	Current Engagement Activities in RI: What, Who and Why? Efficient Housing for All Community of Practice RI Energy Landlord Information Sessions RI Energy Equity Working Group	Kate Hardesty, URI CoopExt Kate Felder, RI Energy Bryan Evans, GHFI
7:00 p.m.	Adjourn; Schedule your Energy Assessment today!	RI Energy Customer Advocate?