

Rhode Island Energy Efficiency Equity Working Group

Rhode Island Energy Efficiency Council

August 20, 2026

3:10-3:30 pm

RI Energy Efficiency Equity Working Group (EWG)

Purpose: The EWG provides Rhode Island Energy with recommendations and solutions *that incorporate and increase equity in the planning, design, and delivery of its Energy Efficiency Programs.*

Composition: The EWG is comprised of representatives from a diverse array of community-based organizations, small businesses, non-profit organizations, CAPs, advocacy groups, customers, municipal and state entities, and other stakeholders.

HOW WE GOT HERE

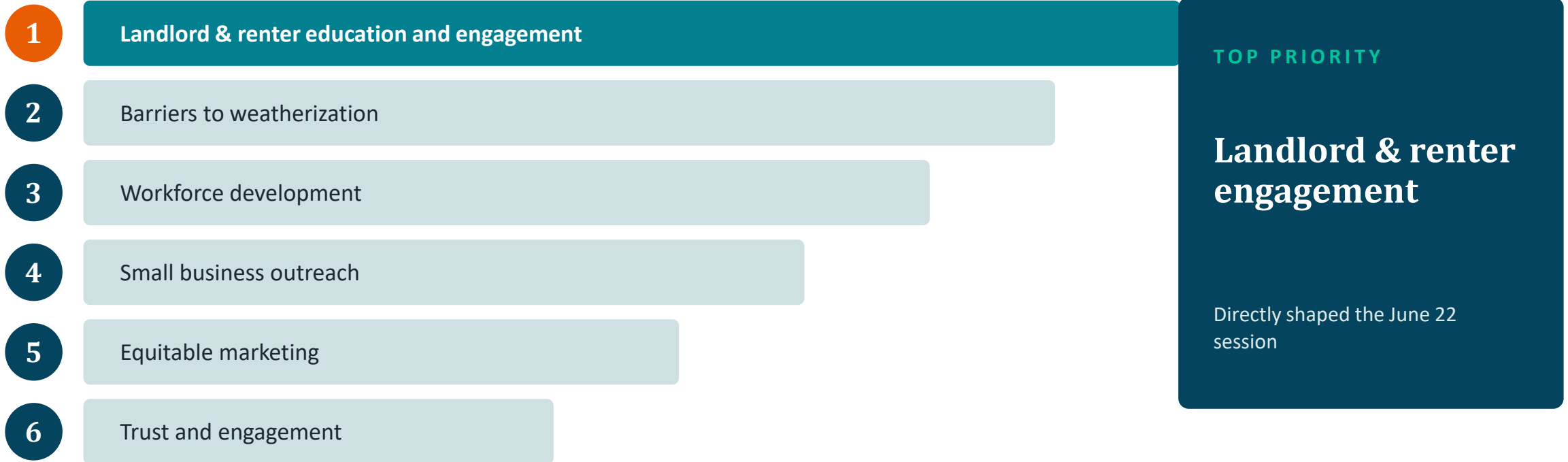
A member-driven process, from prioritization to a finalized plan

Members prioritized the equity topics that mattered most, examined each in depth, brought partner, customer, and member voice, and finalized recommendations for the 2027–2029 Three-Year Plan.



Members set the year's agenda

20 survey responses ranked the equity topics that mattered most. **Landlord & renter engagement** emerged as the top priority — closely followed by barriers to weatherization — and shaped the meeting calendar that followed.



2026 MEETING CALENDAR

Seven sessions, member-prioritized topics

March 2

Priority-setting & Language Access

Members prioritized the year's topics; examined barriers LOTE residents face across the customer journey.

March 30

Pre-Weatherization Barriers

Health & safety conditions (knob & tube, mold, lead) that defer weatherization, and strategies to resolve them.

May 18

Small Business Outreach

Reaching and supporting small and diverse businesses, including MWBEs, to participate in energy efficiency programs.

June 1

Equity Metrics & Weatherization Workforce

Two years of equity-metric data reviewed; recruiting, training & retaining a diverse workforce.

June 22

Landlord Recruitment & HCV Program

Engaging landlords and connecting efficiency offerings to the Providence Housing Authority's voucher program.

Jul 27 & Aug 17

Draft Review, Feedback, and Finalization

Members reviewed the draft report and submitted feedback, which was incorporated to finalize the report.

Plus: a July Whole House participant listening session and an EWG member survey provided additional customer and member input.

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EQUITY METRICS

Two years of data — from baselines to trends

● KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Disaggregate metrics by geography, customer type & program track; move Multifamily to a units-based view.
2. Track & report pre-weatherization barriers — including resolved deferrals and reason-for-deferral (SIR / previously-weatherized).
3. Connect outreach activities to metric outcomes (e.g., landlord sessions → renter engagement).
4. Finalize workforce-diversity metric with the supply chain team.
5. Continue to develop equity related metrics thru triennium.
6. Use data to establish targets.
7. Incorporate equity metrics into Performance Incentive Mechanism (PIM).

● 2027-2029 Potential Strategies

- Internal tracking system enhancements around audits and PWB deferrals
- Participation rates where applicable
- Referral codes for outreach activities
- Addition of workforce diversity metric

Language Access Needs Assessment — mapping the customer journey

● KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Incorporate direct customer voice into the assessment.
2. Strengthen the customer-service “warm handoff” with CAP agencies.
3. Ensure end-to-end professional language support — not just translated documents.
4. Keep materials & communication at accessible literacy levels.
5. Clearly communicate privacy & documentation protections to build trust.
6. Expand access through extended hours & navigation support.
7. Continue to leverage & resource trusted community partners.
8. Track & report bilingual workforce capacity as an equity indicator.
9. Use assessment findings to inform the three-year plan & disaggregated metrics.

● 2027-2029 Potential Strategies

- 2026 RI Energy Residential Income Eligible Program (IESF) Language Access Study Report
- Develop language access plan for IESF program
- Standardize collection of customers’ needed language
- Outreach through trusted community partners
- Glossary of technical terms for EE workforce
- Culturally inclusive visual program guides or videos in English, Spanish, and Portuguese

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PRE-WEATHERIZATION BARRIERS

Health & safety hazards remain the leading cause of deferrals

● KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

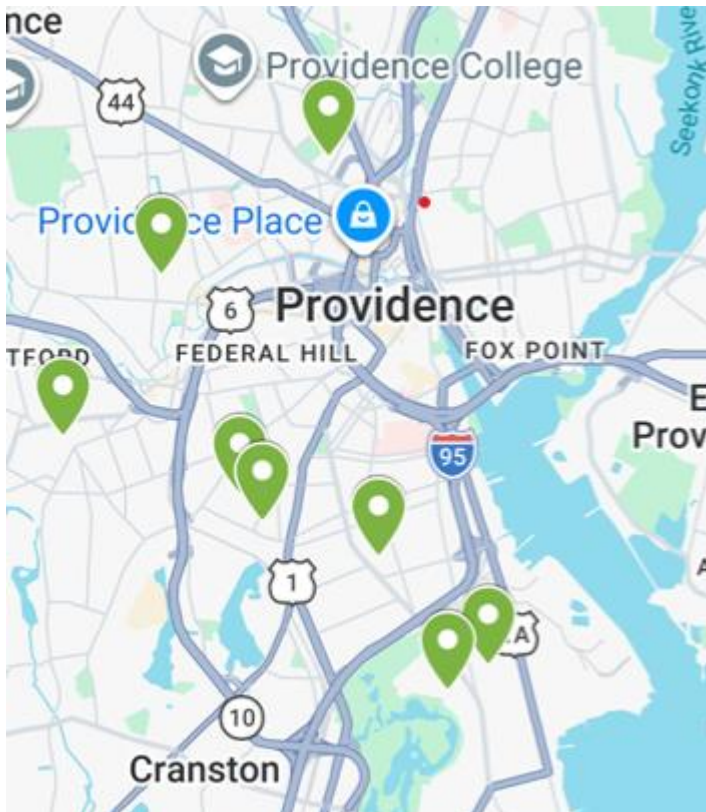
1. Raise or add flexibility to Wx health & safety spending caps.
2. Address reimbursement timing & cash flow for vendors and CAP agencies.
3. Sustain & expand the braided-funding, barrier-resolution model of the Whole House + Electrification Pilot.
4. Deepen tracking and reporting on pre weatherization barriers.
5. Grow the electrical & specialty-trade vendor pipeline (e.g., CAPP's CHIP) to better address deferrals.
6. Coordinate with the Whole-Home Repairs Legislative Commission.
7. Continue integrating electrification and HEAR measures into barrier resolution efforts.

● 2027-2029 Potential Strategies

- Guidance to CAPs on consistent and effective use of PWB funds, including external resources
- Engagement of CBOs specializing in home repair services
- Continue to work with CAPs and vendors on timing & cash flow to address deferrals
- Support implementation and expansion of the Whole House + Electrification Pilot

Whole Home + Electrification Program Status

- CAPP 250+ units referred going back to beginning of 2024.
- 60 units are currently in pipeline for RGGI investment.



- 51 RGGI eligible units underway or completed to date:
 - Total Health & Safety Completed: 39 Units
 - Total Units Underway (Pending Contract, Under Contract, In Progress): 12 Units
- For 39 Completed Units (Health & Safety only)
 - Total Spend: \$710,632 (HUD & RGGI)
 - Average Total Spend: \$18,221.33
 - Average RGGI Spend: \$12,305.41
 - Average HUD Spend: \$5,915.93
- RGGI units sent back to CAPP to date for Wx: 39
- RGGI units completed Wx: 21 (with additional units currently undergoing work)
- Electrification: Staff are currently assessing and scoping out first 3 units.

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SMALL BUSINESS OUTREACH

Trusted messengers and better measurement

● KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Add denominators & participation rates (EJ vs. non-EJ, MWBE status) — not just raw counts.
2. Frame case studies around financial returns (savings, ROI), beyond lighting.
3. Grow & diversify the outreach database.
4. Pilot referral incentives.
5. Deepen work through trusted business associations.
6. Sustain and target Main Street campaigns in EJ communities.
7. Ensure language access across the small-business journey.
8. Establish customer advocate role and target support to small/micro businesses.
9. Explore emergent small business measures/needs.

● 2027-2029 Potential Strategies

- Continue Main Street campaigns in Environmental Justice communities
- Pilot referral incentives
- Grow and diversify the small business contact database
- More small business case studies with MWBEs
- Continue outreach through local and statewide business associations (e.g. RI Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, Center for Women & Enterprise)

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WEATHERIZATION WORKFORCE

A specialty-contractor shortage is driving deferrals

● KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Coordinated, multi-agency recruitment ("open house" model on the rolling application).
2. Braid HUD Healthy Homes + skill-building funds to build specialty & MWBE capacity.
3. Reduce up-front cost & time burdens that discourage certification and training.
4. Add specialty certifications to existing weatherization crews to prevent deferrals.
5. Enable cross-agency contractor sharing; revisit bidding constraints where the pool is thin.
6. Finalize & report workforce-diversity metrics.

● 2027-2029 Potential Strategies

- Translation of workforce trainings into Spanish and Portuguese
- Explore building a “concierge program” with partners for certifying contractors
- Support efforts to enable cross-agency contractor sharing

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LANDLORD RECRUITMENT & HCV

Alignment with Housing Choice Voucher Programs

● KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Establish a formal PHA–RI Energy referral pathway for voucher landlords.
2. Target HQS failures with weatherization & Whole House services.
3. Coordinate with municipal lead programs on exterior-clearance barriers.
4. Frame incentives around property value, unit preservation & lower vacancy risk.
5. Explore dedicated funding to support Section 8 landlord participation.
6. Advance renter and multifamily focused incentives
7. Use PHA data to target outreach.

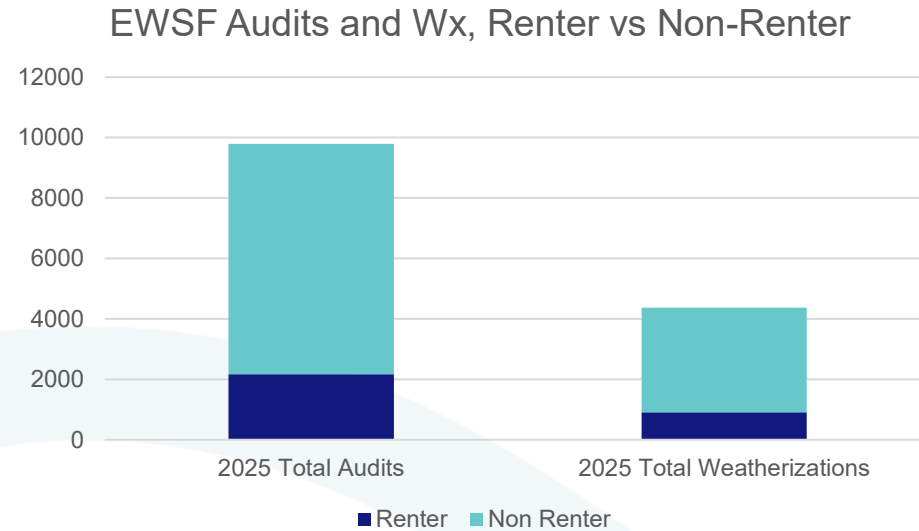
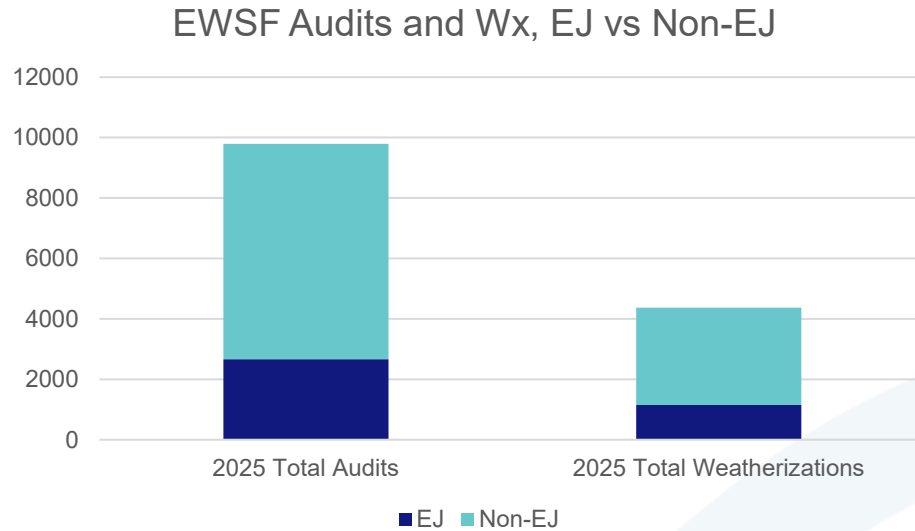
● 2027-2029 Potential Strategies

- Develop referral pathways with housing authorities for voucher landlords
- Working with lead vendor on expansion and refinement of landlord outreach sessions
- Renter- and multifamily-focused incentive offerings
- ACEEE-Central falls technical assistance for renters effort

Discussion and Feedback

Appendix

EnergyWise Single Family



- Data indicates 2025 saw higher share of audits and weatherization jobs in EJ communities
- Share of renters participating in audits and weatherization also increased in 2025

2024 data under review; YoY comparison not currently available for EWSF

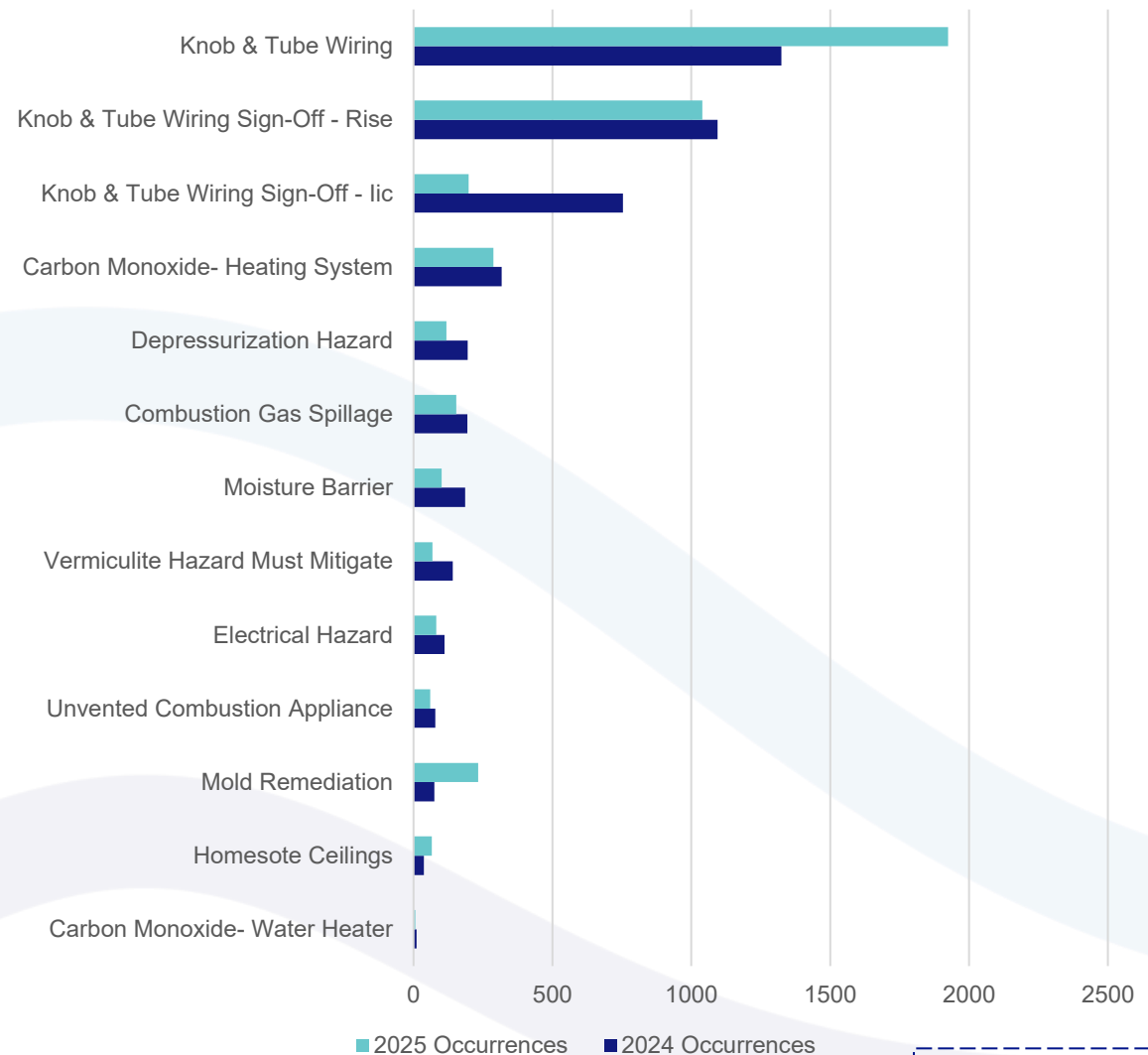
Pre Weatherization Barriers: EWSF



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- Knob & tube is still the most common barrier
- Slight decrease in total occurrences year over year
 - 4,340 in 2025 vs 4,520 in 2024*
- Uptick in mold-related barriers

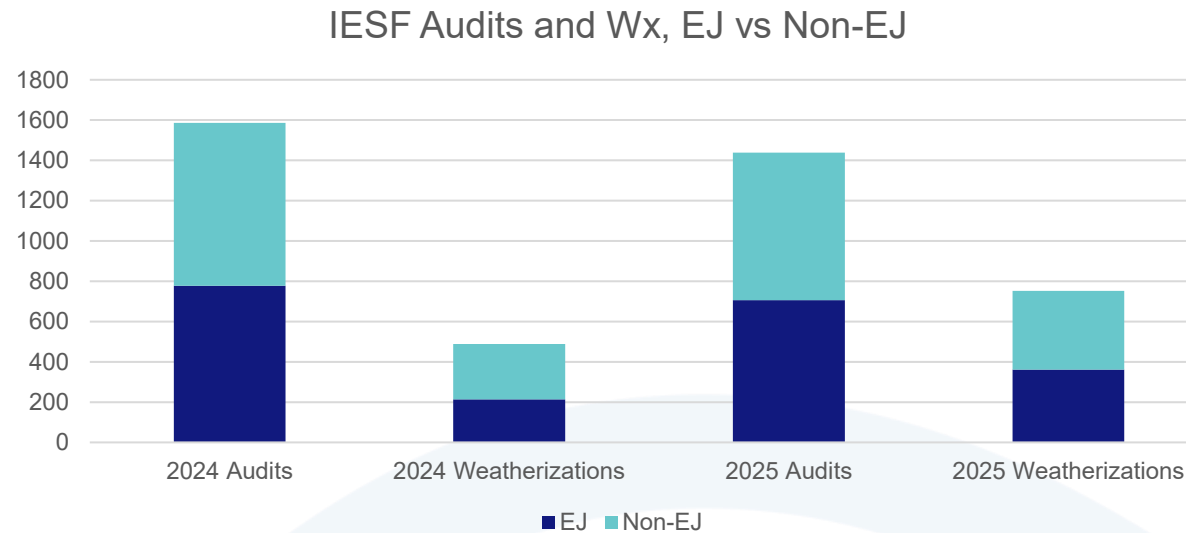
EWSF PWB Occurrences



* "Occurrences" is generally higher than number of audits with PWBs, because many audits reveal more than one barrier.

Source: Lead Vendor

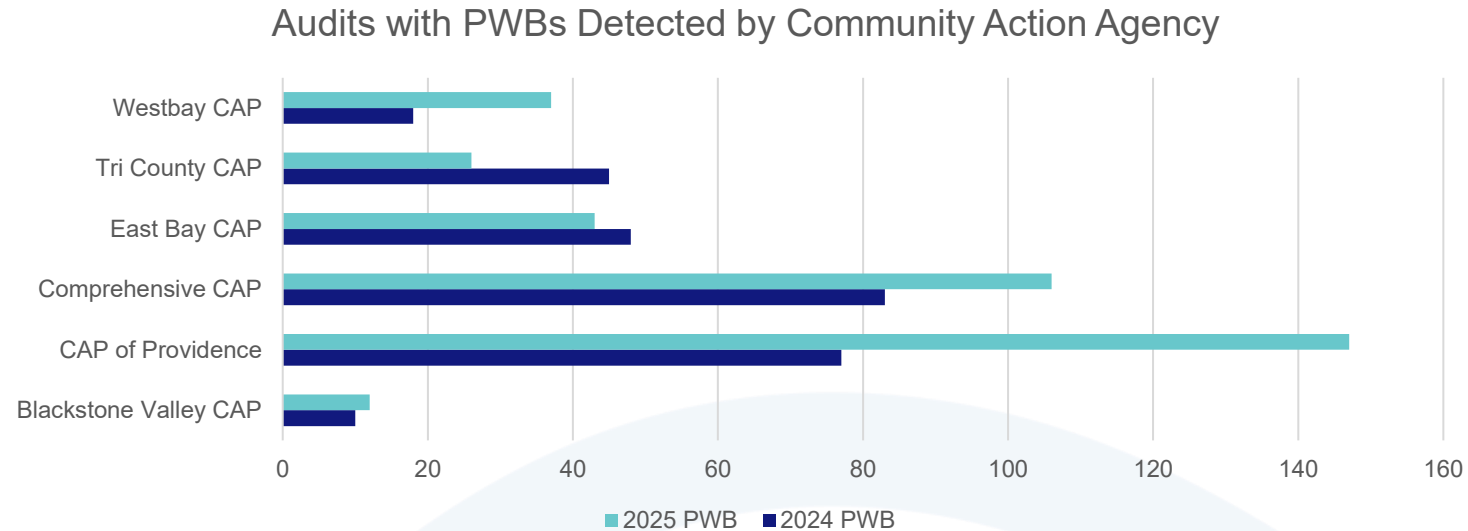
Income Eligible Single Family



- Conversion rate of audits to weatherization projects increased year over year
 - 30% in 2024 vs 52% in 2025
- This allowed for an increase in total weatherizations, despite a decrease in total audits
- Share of audits and weatherization projects in EJ communities also increased slightly year over year

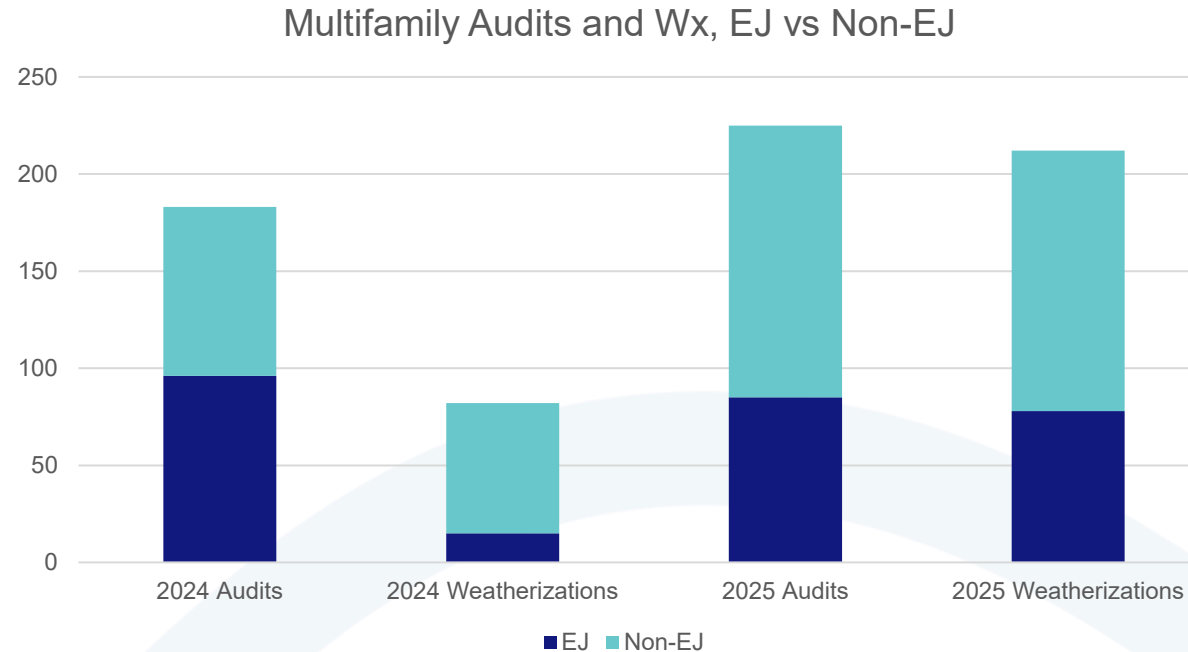
Source: RI Department of Human Services (audits),
Company Tracking System (Wx)

Pre Weatherization Barriers: IESF



- More audits with barriers detected despite fewer total IESF audits
 - 2024: ~ 40% of audits deferred, 46% of deferrals due to PWB
 - 2025: ~ 62% of audits deferred, 42% of deferrals due to PWB
- Chart above depicts deferrals due to PWB by CAP

Multifamily



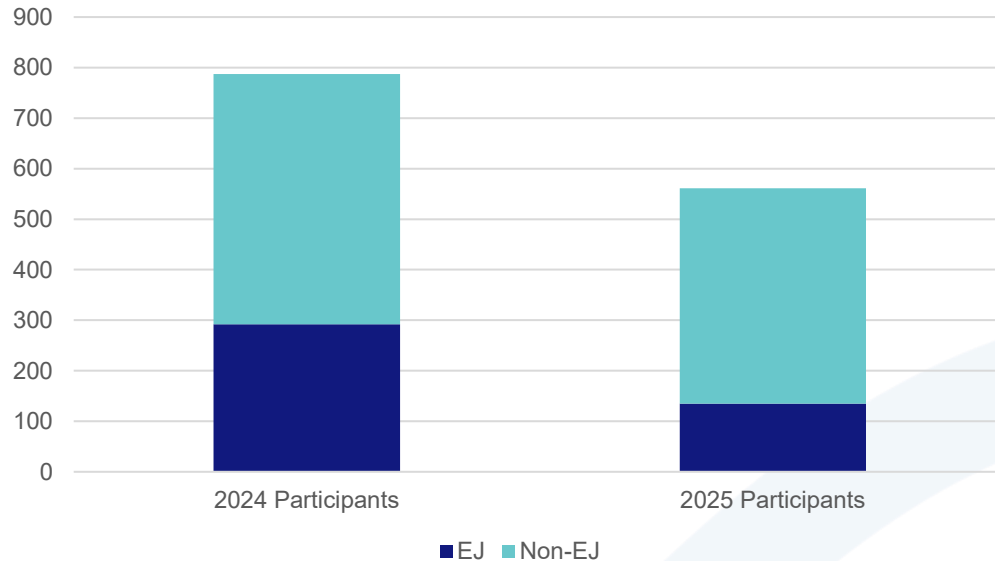
- Data shows higher total weatherizations and wx conversion rate year over year
- Some audits can take time to develop into completed projects
- Data does not represent units; total units view will give a better understanding of true participation

Small Business

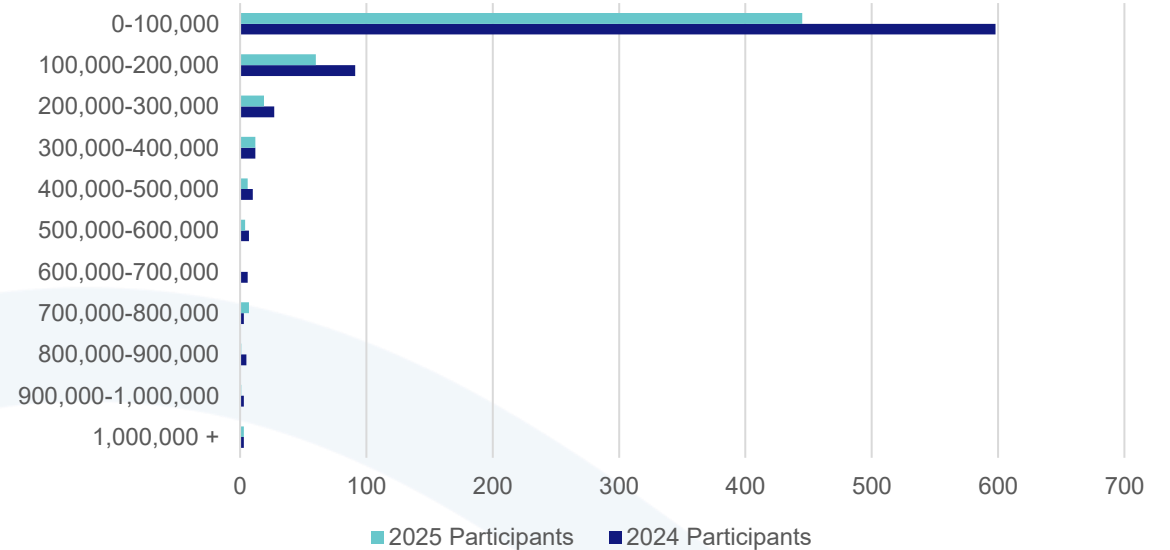


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SBDI Participants, EJ vs Non-EJ



SBDI Participants by Consumption Category



- “Microbusinesses” represent nearly 80% of participants in 2025 (vs 76% in 2024)
- Share of EJ participants decreased year over year (24% in 2025 vs 37% in 2024)
 - Conducting targeted marketing toward MWOBs (shared in May EWG)

Source: Company Tracking System