



Rhode Island Energy Efficiency Council

Council Member Handbook

VERSION 1.4

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All materials published by the “Energy Efficiency Council” are the work of the “Energy Efficiency and Resource Management Council”.

SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION

This handbook is intended to be a practical resource to support appointed Council members as well as stakeholders, policymakers, students, and members of the public who are interested in learning more about energy efficiency in Rhode Island. Each section provides a concise background and points readers to additional resources for more detailed information. It is designed to serve as a starting point and convenient reference to help readers understand the broader context of Rhode Island's energy efficiency framework, navigate the many acronyms, organizations, and processes involved, and build a stronger understanding of how the state's nationally recognized energy efficiency programs are planned, implemented, and overseen.

1.1) Getting Oriented – Core Concepts at a Glance

The following questions highlight some of the concepts that Council members, stakeholders, and members of the public are most likely to encounter. They provide a high-level overview of Rhode Island's energy efficiency framework and can serve as a useful starting point before exploring the handbook in greater depth.

What is energy efficiency?

Energy efficiency means *using less energy to achieve the same – or better – results*. Unlike conservation, which often requires doing less, efficiency allows us to light our homes, stay warm in winter, cool in summer, and power appliances while using less energy. It helps keep our spaces comfortable, healthy, and affordable – and plays a critical role in addressing climate change. Energy efficiency is also different from renewable energy – like solar and wind power – which generate electricity from sustainable energy resources.

How do Rhode Island's energy efficiency programs work?

Rhode Island Energy, the primary gas and electric utility, administers a wide array of programs that help lower monthly energy bills in homes and businesses using three main tools:

- **Expert Help** – Energy advisors provide no-cost home energy assessments and customized recommendations. They help you understand where your energy goes and what upgrades make the most sense.
- **Rebates and Incentives** – Rebates and incentives lower the upfront cost of upgrades like insulation, heat pumps, lighting, or appliances.
- **Financing Options** – Low-interest loans and on-bill repayment plans help make larger projects possible, from weatherization to full building retrofits.

These programs have significant oversight and must pass cost-effectiveness tests.

How do energy efficiency programs save Rhode Islanders money?

Rhode Island law requires Rhode Island Energy to pursue energy efficiency whenever it costs less to save energy than to produce or buy it. This principle, called **least cost procurement**, makes sure customers always get the lowest-cost energy option.

By prioritizing savings first, Rhode Islanders spend less overall and avoid costly new infrastructure. The effects of energy efficiency in the last decade now cumulatively account for approximately 20% of Rhode Island's electricity needs. The state's consistent investments in energy efficiency have resulted in Rhode Islanders paying half as much for its energy supply than they otherwise would have.

How does energy efficiency help Rhode Island's economy?

Energy efficiency doesn't just save money – it creates jobs and keeps energy dollars local. Efficiency upgrades support local contractors, electricians, engineers, and building professionals. Lower energy bills give residents and businesses more money to spend on other things, boosting the local economy. In 2025, energy efficiency programs in Rhode Island supported 598 full-time equivalent jobs and 620 local companies, and resulted in \$375 million in total benefits to Rhode Islanders.

If energy efficiency saves money, why don't people just do it on their own?

Even when efficiency upgrades make financial sense, most people face real-world barriers:

- It's hard to tell where energy is being wasted.
- People don't always know which upgrades will actually save money.
- Finding contractors and managing projects can take time and effort.
- Upfront costs can be prohibitive without rebates or incentives.

Energy efficiency programs exist to address these barriers, offering no-cost energy assessments, expert assistance, and financial support to make upgrades more practical and affordable.

How are energy efficiency programs funded in Rhode Island?

Energy efficiency is the most cost-effective way to reduce energy use and address climate change. The funds that enable the implementation of the state's efficiency programs are collected from ratepayers via the Systems Benefit Charge (SBC) on electric and gas bills. Thorough and careful evaluation, planning, and oversight ensure the funds support cost-effective energy efficiency that is less than the cost of supply, as required by the Least Cost Procurement law. Sustained and robust funding is critical to ensure all Rhode Islanders continue to benefit from strong efficiency programs for years to come.

Energy rates are already high. Doesn't the Energy Efficiency Program Charge just make my bills higher?

It might seem that way, but in reality *the efficiency charge helps lower your total costs*. Energy efficiency is the cheapest energy resource available. It costs less to save energy than to buy it. Every \$1 invested in energy efficiency returns more than \$2 in benefits to Rhode Islanders, including lower bills, local jobs, and cleaner air. In other words, the small charge on your bill funds programs that reduce what we all pay over time.

A recent study by the American Council for an Energy-Efficient Economy (ACEEE) found that weatherized homes saved an average of \$372 annually on their utility bills ([ACEEE 2025](#)).

What if I'm already energy efficient? Why do I still have to pay the charge?

Energy efficiency is a shared benefit – everyone saves when we all use less energy. When efficiency programs lower the state's total demand for power:

- Electricity prices stay lower for everyone.
- The grid is more reliable and less expensive to maintain.
- Fewer costly power plants and transmission lines are needed.

Even if you've already upgraded your home or business or don't do any upgrades, you still benefit from lower system-wide costs driven by your neighbors' efficiency improvements. By reducing the state's demand for power, we drive down the average price and those savings are passed on to all electric customers. The average residential customer in Rhode Island only pays about \$6 per month towards energy efficiency programs.

Why does my utility care about helping me use less energy? Don't they want to sell as much energy as possible?

That used to be true – utilities once earned more by selling more. But in 2010, Rhode Island changed that model through a policy called decoupling ([R.I.G.L § 39-1-27.7.1](#)). Decoupling separates a utility's profits from the amount of energy it sells. Instead, Rhode Island Energy earns revenue based on maintaining the power grid and helping customers save energy, not for selling more of it.

Rhode Island also offers performance incentives, where Rhode Island Energy can earn a additional revenue if it helps customers save more energy than expected, it. This ensures energy efficiency is a core part of the utility's mission, by:

- Making energy efficiency a source of earnings rather than just a pass-through expense.
- Putting energy savings on par with other utility investments, like new infrastructure.
- Rewarding measurable success in cutting energy waste and costs for Rhode Islanders.

Together, decoupling and performance incentives make it possible – and profitable – for the utility to be a full partner in helping customers save energy and money.

How does energy efficiency help address climate change?

Using less energy means burning fewer fossil fuels. Energy efficiency is one of Rhode Island's most effective climate solutions because it directly reduces carbon emissions while improving comfort, affordability, and reliability. As the state transitions to clean energy and electrified heating, efficiency ensures that every kilowatt-hour goes further.

SECTION 2: WHAT IS ENERGY?

2.1) What Is Energy?

Fundamentally, energy is the ability to do work. Our modern society is dependent on energy for many daily operations, such as lighting, heating, cooling, manufacturing, and transportation. Most of the energy used in the United States comes from non-renewable sources, which cannot easily be replenished. Renewable sources of energy, those that can be replenished, are less prolific but have growing markets (Figure 2.1) ([EIA 2024\(a\)](#)).

Rhode Island

End-use energy consumption 2024, estimates

End-use consumption by source, excluding losses

155.4 trillion British thermal units
(percent of total for all sources)



Coal
0.0
(0.0%)



Natural gas
40.7
(26.2%)



Petroleum
86.2
(55.5%)



Renewable energy
3.2
(2.1%)



Electricity
25.3
(16.3%)



Figure 2.1. Rhode Island End-use Energy Consumption

Source: [United States - U.S. Energy Information Administration \(EIA\)](#)

2.2) How Is Energy Measured?

All forms of energy can be measured. Common types of energy and their units of measure include:

- Electricity: kilowatt hours (kWh), megawatt hours (MWh)
- Natural gas: 100 cubic feet (Ccf), therms, decatherms
- Liquid petroleum or biofuels: barrels (bbl) or gallons (one barrel = 42 gallons)
- Coal: tons, metric tons

2.3) How Is Energy Produced?

Since energy can neither be created nor destroyed, all human engineered energy has been converted from one form to another. Energy is transformed differently depending on the energy source and the

technology being used. For example, natural gas, oil, and coal can be burned to produce heat directly or to spin turbines with magnets that generate electricity. Wind turbines and solar photovoltaics (PV) harness energy from the wind and sun to produce electricity. Heat from solar thermal technology can be used directly to heat water or ventilation air.

More information: [Laws of energy - U.S. Energy Information Administration \(EIA\)](#)

2.4) How Is Energy Delivered?

2.4.1) Electricity Transmission and Distribution

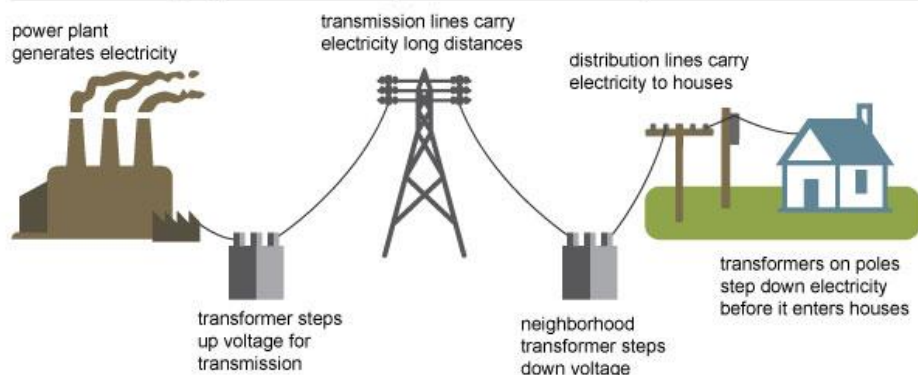
In the United States, electricity is primarily generated from fossil fuel power plants and transmitted across a vast grid of substations, transformers, and power lines. *Transmission* lines carry high-voltage electricity long distances to the areas where it will be used. Once it reaches a local substation, a transformer lowers the voltage, so it is safer for use in homes and businesses and sends it through *distribution* lines to the end-user (Figure 2.2). Transmission systems are managed by Regional Transmission Organizations (RTOs), which also have the responsibility of working with power generators to ensure that enough electricity is available to meet demand at all times ([EIA 2024\(b\)](#)). Distribution systems are managed more locally by electric distribution companies, also known as utility companies.

New England's power grid is managed by ISO New England. Within Rhode Island, the majority of the electric distribution system is managed by Rhode Island Energy, the state's primary utility company ([OER 2022\(a\)](#)).

The Sale of the Utility

In May of 2022, National Grid sold its ownership of the Narragansett Electric Company to PPL Corporation. PPL Corporation now operates Narragansett Electric Company under the name "Rhode Island Energy", which includes both the electric and natural gas distribution systems. National Grid continues to operate in Massachusetts and New York.

Electricity generation, transmission, and distribution



Source: Adapted from National Energy Education Development Project (public domain)

Figure 2.2. Transporting Electric Energy

Source: [Delivery to consumers - U.S. Energy Information Administration \(EIA\)](#)

More information:

- [ISO/RTO Council](#)
- [ISO New England](#)
- [RI Office of Energy Resources](#)

2.4.2) Natural Gas and Delivered Fuels

After natural gas is extracted and processed, it must be transported to end users like power plants for electric generation or homes and businesses for heating. Like the delivery of electricity, the delivery of natural gas involves first piping the fuel through wide-diameter *transmission* pipelines across long distances. When the natural gas arrives in the area where it will be used, it is received by smaller diameter *distribution* pipes, also known as mains and service lines, that connect directly to the end-use facility ([EIA 2024\(c\)](#)). Because natural gas is not native to New England, it is piped in from production areas in the Appalachian region, the Gulf Coast, and Canada. Rhode Island Energy, Rhode Island's only natural gas distribution company, manages the retail delivery of gas to end users in the state ([OER 2022\(b\)](#)).

Natural gas production and delivery

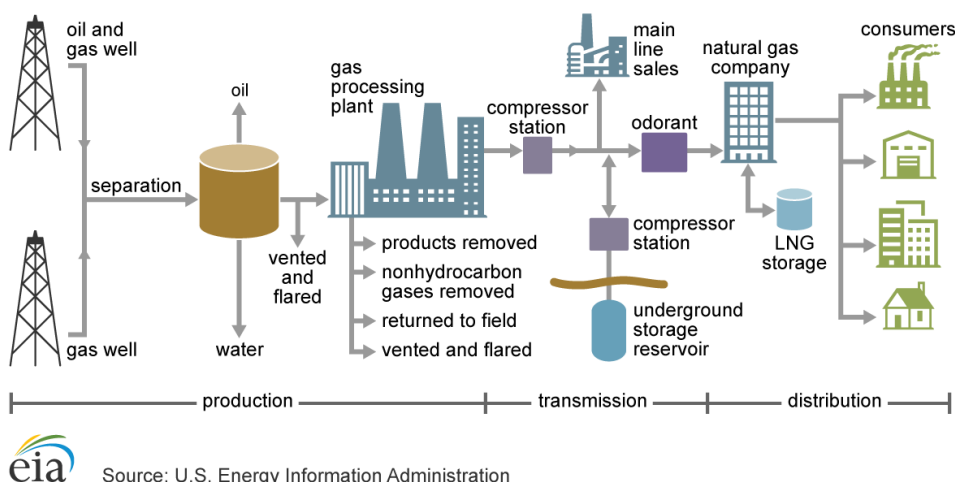


Figure 2.3. Transporting Natural Gas

Source: [Delivery and storage of natural gas - U.S. Energy Information Administration \(EIA\)](#)

Petroleum-based fuels have a similar story. After the crude oil has been collected from wells in a production field, pipelines, barges, trains, or trucks transport it to refineries or ports for shipment on oil tankers to other countries ([EIA 2023\(d\)](#)). Almost all of the transportation and heating fuel consumed in Rhode Island, eastern Connecticut, and parts of Massachusetts are supplied via marine shipments through the Port of Providence and other marine import terminals in East Providence and Tiverton ([EIA 2026\(e\)](#)). Most of the product arriving at the terminals is subsequently trucked to end users. Because Rhode Island does not regulate retail sales of heating oil and propane, sales are managed primarily by local delivered fuel dealers ([OER 2022\(c\)](#)).

2.5) How Do Rhode Islanders Use Energy?

Rhode Island relies on energy for three major purposes: end use electric consumption, thermal energy demand, and transportation applications. The state's energy consumption is split fairly evenly among those three main areas of energy use; however, different sources supply demand in each sector. The electric sector is highly dependent on natural gas, whereas the transportation sector is almost entirely dependent on petroleum fuels such as gasoline and distillate fuel (diesel). Both natural gas and petroleum fuels supply thermal energy needs ([DOA 2015](#)).

Rhode Island

End-use energy consumption 2024, estimates

End-use consumption by sector, excluding losses

151.6 trillion British thermal units
(percent of total for all sectors)

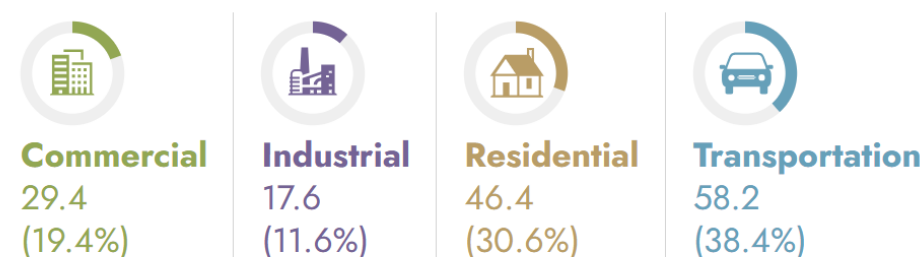


Figure 2.4. Rhode Island Energy Consumption by Sector in 2024

Source: [United States - U.S. Energy Information Administration \(EIA\)](#)

Rhode Island has the lowest energy consumption per capita in the country, in part because the state has minimal manufacturing and industry. The residential and transportation sectors are the largest consumers, with the commercial sector following close behind ([EIA 2024 \(f\)](#)).

2.5.1) Electricity

Electricity used in Rhode Island is an integrated mix from a variety of power plants and distributed renewable energy sources located throughout the region (Figure 2.5) ([RIE 2026](#)). Rhode Island is home to approximately 2 gigawatts (GW) of electric generating capacity, with six power plants over 50 megawatts (MW). Virtually all major generating facilities in the state use natural gas as the primary fuel ([OER 2022\(a\)](#)). In 2024, natural gas-fired

100% Renewable Electricity by 2030

In January 2020, Governor Gina M. Raimondo signed Executive Order 20-01, which set a nation-leading goal to meet 100% of Rhode Island's electricity demand with renewable energy by 2030. Transitioning the electric sector to clean energy is foundational to decarbonizing the Rhode Island economy.

Sources of Electricity for Rhode Island Energy Consumers

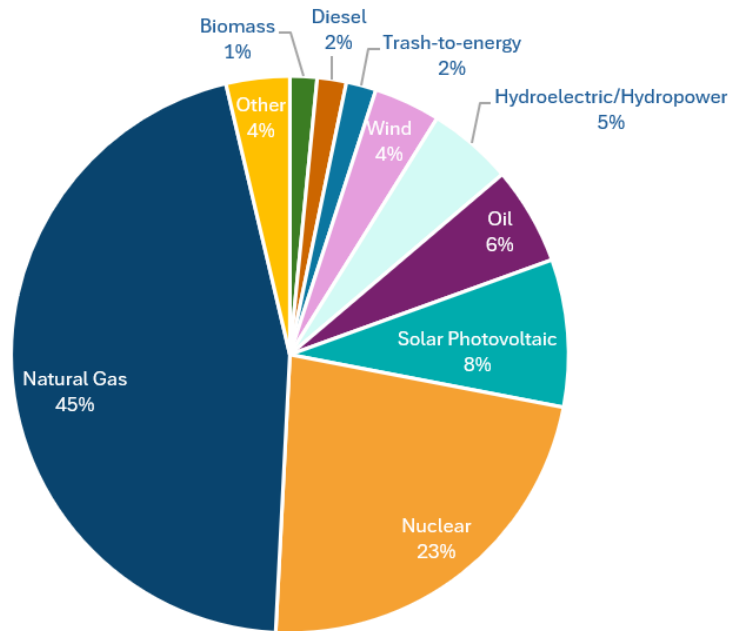


Figure 2.5. Sources of Electricity in Rhode Island
Source: [Rhode Island Power Disclosure Label](#)

power plants accounted for approximately 87 percent of in-state generation capacity ([EIA 2026\(e\)](#)). Many small, distributed renewable energy systems also exist in Rhode Island.

As of the first quarter of 2026, the state has counted approximately 1,408 MW of clean energy generation capacity – 784 MW from solar, 430 MW from offshore wind, 148 MW from onshore wind, 35 MW from landfill gas/anaerobic digestion, and 11 MW is small hydroelectric power. With the addition of the 400 MW Revolution Wind project, approximately 85 percent of Rhode Island's current clean energy portfolio is comprised of in-state renewables or projects scheduled for adjacent federal waters ([OER 2026\(d\)](#)).

Rhode Island: Home of the first U.S. offshore wind farm

In 2016, the first offshore wind farm in the United States began operating off the coast of Block Island. The five turbines have a combined capacity of 30 megawatts and provided almost 2% of the state's net generation in 2024.

2.5.2) Heating

In addition to being used for electricity, natural gas is also used directly as a source of heat for about half of Rhode Island's households. Another third of Rhode Islanders use fuel oil as the primary energy source for heating their homes, which is much higher than the national average. The remaining Rhode Island households heat with electricity, propane, wood, and other sources ([EIA 2026\(e\)](#)). A 2019 Executive Order directed the Office of Energy Resources and the Division of Public Utilities and Carriers to coordinate on a Heating Sector Transformation Initiative. The goal of the effort is to advance cleaner, more affordable, and more reliable heating options for all Rhode Islanders ([Brattle 2020](#)).

2.5.3) Transportation

Much of the transportation sector in Rhode Island is fueled by petroleum products such as motor gasoline, which is required to be mixed with ethanol to limit ozone formation ([EIA 2026\(e\)](#)). Accounting for roughly one-third of Rhode Island's greenhouse gas emissions, the transportation sector is a critical focus for decarbonization efforts. Transitioning from fossil fuel-based combustion engines to electric vehicles – while simultaneously decarbonizing our electricity resources – is one key strategy to reducing greenhouse gas emissions from transportation.

In 2021, the Rhode Island General Assembly passed bills H5031 and S0994, which directed the Department of Transportation (RIDOT), the Division of Motor Vehicles (DMV), and the Office of Energy Resources (OER) to “develop, no later than January 1, 2022, a plan for a statewide electric vehicle charging station infrastructure in order to make such electric vehicle charging stations more accessible to the public.” In response, RIDOT, DMV, and OER, along with representatives from the Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management (RIDEM) and Rhode Island Department of Health (RIDOH) developed *Electrifying Transportation: A Strategic Policy Guide for Improving Public Access to Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure in Rhode Island* ([RIDOT 2021](#)).

In 2018, Rhode Island took the first steps toward electrifying the Rhode Island Public Transit Authority's (RIPTA) bus fleet by allocating ~\$10 million from the Volkswagen Clean Air Act Civil Settlement (VW Fund) towards replacing RIPTA older diesel-engine buses with all-electric, zero-emissions buses. Additionally, in 2022 RIPTA published a Climate Action Plan in collaboration with federal, state and local partners as well as with the state's own Climate Action Strategy ([RIPTA 2022](#)).

More information:

- [RIDOT Electrifying Transportation Policy Guide](#)
- [RIPTA Climate Action Plan](#)

2.6) Energy Efficiency and Conservation

Energy efficiency and energy conservation are strategies to reduce the consumption of energy. Both strategies reduce demand which reduces costs for utility ratepayers.

- **Energy conservation** occurs when less energy is used because of a *behavior*, such as turning off the lights or setting back your thermostat.
- **Energy efficiency** is when *technology* is employed that uses less energy to produce the same result. For example, an LED light bulb can produce the same amount of light as an incandescent bulb, but it is significantly more efficient because it requires less energy ([EIA 2025\(g\)](#)).

Maximum energy savings can be achieved when both energy efficiency and energy conservation are used together. There are countless examples of efficiency and conservation measures. Some of the most impactful measures for the residential and commercial sectors are: lighting, insulation, air sealing, heating and cooling systems, thermostats, appliances, water heating, windows, electronics, and transportation ([EIA 2025\(g\)](#)). Energy efficiency programs can help ratepayers identify and implement

efficiency and conservation measures to lower their energy bills. Section 7 covers Rhode Island's energy efficiency programs in more detail.

2.7) Additional Resources

- [What is energy? explained - U.S. Energy Information Administration \(EIA\)](#)
- [Delivery to consumers - U.S. Energy Information Administration \(EIA\)](#)
- [United States - U.S. Energy Information Administration \(EIA\)](#)
- [Alternative Fuels Data Center: Rhode Island Transportation Data for Alternative Fuels and Vehicles](#)
- [100 Percent Renewable Electricity by 2030 | Rhode Island Office of Energy Resources](#)
- [Energy Efficiency | Rhode Island Office of Energy Resources](#)

SECTION 3: FOUNDATIONAL CONCEPTS OF ENERGY EFFICIENCY

3.1) Energy Efficiency as a Resource

In general, two options exist to meet the energy needs of consumers, businesses, and institutions:

1. Using sources of energy supply (from natural gas, petroleum, renewable energy, etc.), or
2. Reducing energy demand (from energy conservation or investments in energy efficiency) ([DOA 2015](#)).

In other words, energy efficiency is capable of displacing energy supply. Because efficiency programs are generally significantly cheaper to implement than acquiring conventional supply (e.g. buying electricity), efficiency is now widely considered not only a resource, but often the “first fuel” of choice. Efficiency programs can also defer expensive upgrades to utility infrastructure, improve system reliability, reduce peak demand, and increase energy security.

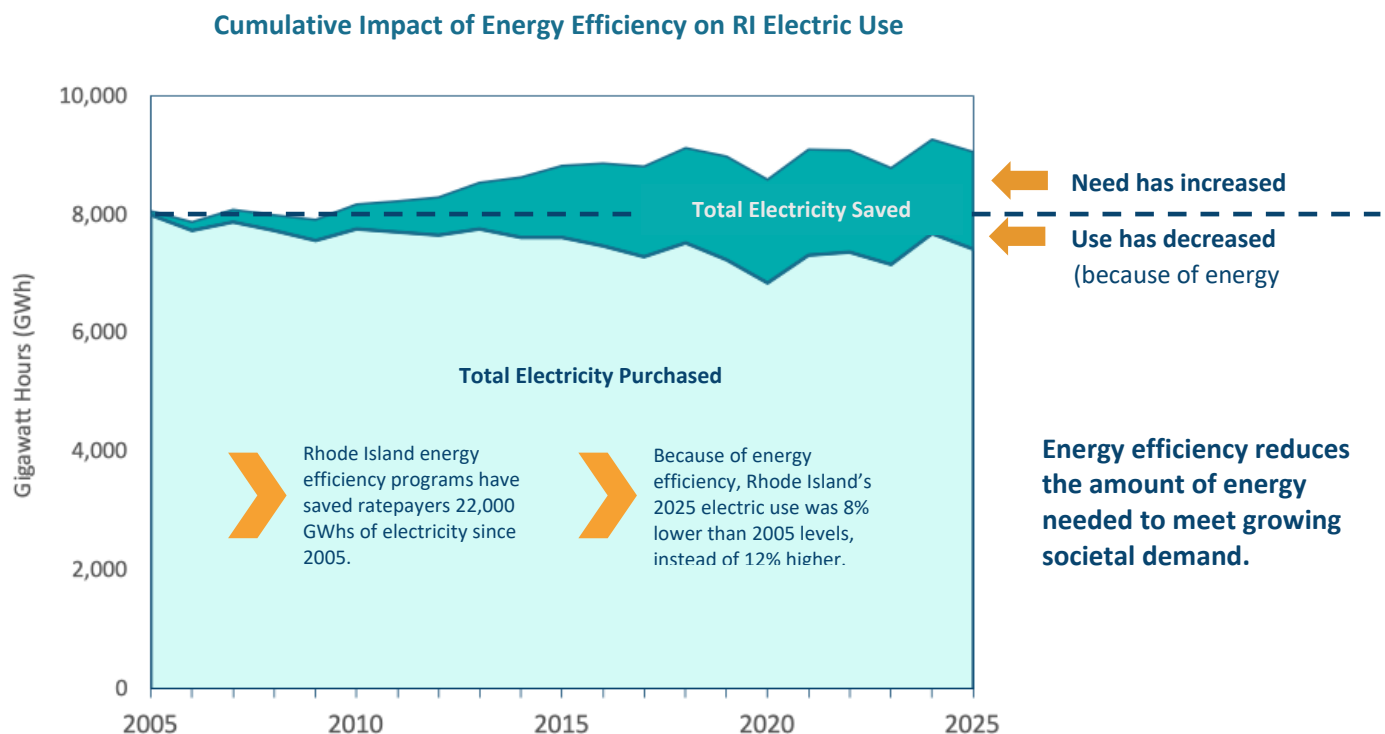


Figure 3.1 Cumulative Impact of Efficiency Investments on RI Electric Supply Requirements (2005-2025)

Source: EEC Annual Report

For example, since 2005, Rhode Island consumers in Rhode Island Energy’s service territory have purchased over 158,000 GWhs of electricity. In that same period, ratepayer funded energy efficiency programs have saved Rhode Island consumers nearly 22,000 GWhs of electricity. The impact of these savings means that instead of Rhode Island’s electric load being 12% higher than it was in 2005, it is actually 8% lower. Additionally, because savings persist over the lifetime of the measures installed, the

cumulative savings realized in 2025 account for over 18% of what the electric load would have been absent the energy efficiency programs (Figure 3.1) ([EERMC 2026](#)).

3.2) Energy Efficiency as a Strategy for Demand Side Management

On a fundamental level, a utility company is concerned with two main aspects of energy:

- The supply side – the procurement of energy resources, and
- The demand side – the use of energy resources.

Managing the demand side means encouraging ratepayers to modify their energy use by either using less energy overall or by moving the time of energy use to off-peak times (when energy consumption is lowest) such as nighttime and weekends. The main goal of Demand Side Management (DSM) is to mitigate the need for costly investments in utility infrastructure that might be needed to accommodate rising peak demand.

Energy efficiency programs (including energy conservation) represent one type of DSM, as they offer consumers financial and behavioral incentives to implement energy saving measures in their homes, businesses, and facilities. The result is avoided infrastructure investments, which keeps costs low while still ensuring a steady supply of energy ([EIA 2002](#)).

3.3) Where Demand Side Management Began

In the 1970's, growing concerns over the United States' reliance on foreign oil and the environmental impacts of electric generation led to the development of Demand Side Management (DSM). During the 1980's, public utilities commissions began using least-cost planning principles and offered utilities incentives to establish DSM programs, resulting in rapid growth into the early 1990's ([Eto 1996](#)).

Focus on electric industry restructuring (see Section 4.1.1) in the mid 1990's caused a decline in DSM investments. Growth resumed in the late 1990's as states began creating DSM funding mechanisms, like "public benefits" funds ([DOE 2009](#)). Since then, investments in demand-side resources have steadily increased.

3.4) Additional Resources

- [Electric Utility Demand-Side Management](#)
- [History of Demand Side Management](#)
- [Faster and Cheaper: Demand-Side Solutions for Rapid Load Growth | ACEEE](#)

SECTION 4: UTILITIES REGULATION

4.1) History of Utility Regulation and Energy Efficiency

Utilities historically had two main functions: power generation and power distribution. While power generation can be a competitive, non-monopoly industry (detailed further below), power distribution is a natural monopoly. The monopoly arises because the costs of creating multiple, competing power distribution grids in the same region would be too great compared to possible gains or cost reductions from competition. Public Utilities Commissions, or equivalent bodies, regulate monopolies like utilities to prevent the abuse of monopoly power.

4.1.1) Utility Restructuring and Deregulation

Traditionally, utilities offered both power generation and distribution services, and the costs of power generation and distribution were both included in calculations for cost-based regulation. However, in the 1990s, due to rising costs and the subsequent increasing regulatory burden, some states began a process of restructuring the utility business model by separating the functions of power generation from distribution. Utilities were required to sell off their power generation assets but continued to be responsible for delivering energy to consumers and maintaining the distribution infrastructure (e.g. poles, wires, transformers, substations, etc.).

Relatedly, many states also deregulated the power supply market, allowing for independent, non-utility power producers to sell their power directly to the end-use customer at unregulated rates in an open marketplace. In deregulated states, like Rhode Island, utilities no longer generate power and focus solely on maintaining the power delivery system.

4.1.2) Rate of Return Regulation

Rate of Return (RoR) regulation is a method of compensating private companies, often called legal monopolies, who supply a marketplace with a natural monopoly structure, such as electricity distribution. Because the market is best suited to having a single distribution utility in a given region, it is important for regulators to ensure that consumers are treated fairly while still allowing a reasonable rate of return on investment for the utility.

4.1.3) Cost Based Regulation

A common regulatory model is cost-based regulation, in which a regulator determines how much money a utility must make to recover its costs (plus earn a reasonable return on infrastructure investments) and allows the utility to base its rates on that.¹ On its own, cost-based regulation can incentivize utilities to sell more power because the more energy they sell, the more money they earn. Any amount earned

¹ In cost-based regulation, regulators identify the costs needed to provide adequate, reliable power on well-maintained infrastructure, allow a return on utility infrastructure investments, and divide the sum of the costs, allowed return, and a depreciation allowance by the projected total sale of energy units. For utilities that provide both power generation and distribution, the calculated costs include power generation costs. Regulators determine a set amount for utilities to recover annually on their capital investments (typically 9-10%). This is lower than the average return on equity across all industry, in part because utility investments are seen as less risky than the industry average.

over the set rate of return can be kept as profit. Additionally, they earn more if they invest more in capital upgrades, as the returns are calculated as a percent of capital investments. This provides a strong disincentive for the utility to provide efficiency programs.

4.1.4) Revenue Decoupling

Revenue decoupling is an increasingly common way to regulate how a utility gets paid. It breaks the link between the utility's revenue and the amount of energy it sells, removing the disincentive for the utility to be a full partner in energy efficiency and clean resource investments. Decoupling changes only the way the utility is compensated for its distribution costs. Under decoupling, delivery charges are not based on sales, but rather on how much it costs to run the system and maintain the grid.

Some states, like Rhode Island, have policies which decouple the amount of power sold from the amount of revenue earned by the utility. For example, Rhode Island Energy undergoes an annual review to "true up" the profits earned from selling power and match them to the allowed rate of return. If Rhode Island Energy sells less power than expected, they are allowed to collect additional funds in the future to match the revenue requirement. If they sell more power than expected (as has been the case in recent years), they return money to the ratepayers.

4.1.5) Utility Business Model and Energy Efficiency

A traditional utility business model, when subjected to rate of return (RoR) regulation, incentivizes investment in physical infrastructure and energy sales, because these investments yield increased income (since $\text{income} = \text{investment} * \text{RoR}$). As a result, utilities have historically felt tension between the goals of energy efficiency policies and their fiduciary duty to shareholders. Fortunately, policy solutions to these poorly aligned incentives have proven effective. For example, in Rhode Island, utility companies receive financial incentives for achieving energy efficiency savings targets. This model has largely been able to overcome the tension between rate of return regulation and energy efficiency, in part because the state's efficiency programs are well-run and utility regulators set and enforce appropriate incentives.

4.1.6) Performance Based Regulation

Performance-based regulation (PBR) is an alternative to cost-based regulation. While there are different types, typically PBR attaches utility earnings to the achievement of specific goals or metrics. Rather than utility profit increasing as utility investment increases, utility profit increases as performance improves. For example, a utility is allowed to earn a higher return if it achieves certain performance goals (also known as Performance Incentive Mechanisms or PIMS) like energy efficiency, peak reductions, Distributed Energy Resources integration, or data sharing.

4.2) Utility Structures

Utility companies can have a range of structures, and it is important to understand what the key differences among these are. This section will define and highlight key distinctions among three of the most common structures, Investor-Owned Utilities (IOUs), Publicly Owned Utilities (POUs), and Cooperative Utilities (Coops).

- **Investor Owned Utility** – Privately owned companies, these utilities are typically subject to state regulation, often have portfolios that span multiple fuels (most commonly electricity and natural

gas) and are financed through a combination of shareholder investments and debt. *A key feature of IOUs is their fiduciary duty to shareholders.*

- **Publicly Owned Utility** – These utilities, sometimes referred to as municipal utilities, are owned by a governmental or municipal entity. As a result of this, in contrast to with IOUs, there is a presumption that these utilities are managed with the customers’ interests in mind, because they are part of the public sector and thus vested with the public interest rather than shareholder interests. *A key feature is that these utilities are sometimes exempt from state regulations due to this presumption.*
- **Cooperative Utilities** – Cooperative utilities are owned by their customers. As with other customer-owned businesses, they are typically governed by a board of directors, while day-to-day management falls to employees. Coops are common in rural areas, and *due to their customer-owned structure, the board of directors often provides primary regulatory oversight.*

Rhode Island’s primary utility company, Rhode Island Energy, is a private investor-owned distribution utility company. Pascoag Utility District and Block Island Power Company are both publicly owned by their respective municipalities.

4.3) Additional Resources

- [Utility Regulation and Policy](#)
- [Utility Structures](#)
- [Rate of Return Regulation Explained: Fair Pricing for Monopolies](#)
- [Strategic Energy Management | Northeast Energy Efficiency Partnerships](#)

SECTION 5: ENERGY EFFICIENCY IN RHODE ISLAND

Rhode Island is widely recognized as a leader in the nation for energy efficiency policy, programs, and outcomes. While many factors, including dedicated staff at all levels of energy efficiency policy, programs, and implementation, the regulatory structure in Rhode Island is a key enabler of the state's consistent performance. This section describes the landmark legislation that propelled Rhode Island to the top, provides an overview of the key groups that contribute to energy efficiency efforts, and highlights Rhode Island's recent energy efficiency accomplishments and opportunities for improvement.

5.1) Landmark Legislation

Rhode Island is a deregulated, decoupled state that uses performance-based utility regulation (see Section 3). The utility's profit does not change based on how much energy it delivers to homes and businesses. In fact, if the utility sells more energy than expected, ratepayers receive a credit on their bills at the end of the year. If it sells less, ratepayers receive a surcharge.

Not only does the utility *not* have an incentive to sell more energy, but its investment in energy efficiency is also cheaper than buying energy. Selling less energy also reduces strain on infrastructure, lowers greenhouse gas emissions and air pollution, and fosters economic growth and job creation.

Rhode Island has nearly two decades of concerted energy efficiency efforts under its belt. The following subsections describe the landmark legislation that removed barriers and enabled Rhode Island to effectively invest in energy efficiency.

5.1.1) Rhode Island Utility Restructuring Act (1996)

Prior to 1996, Rhode Island utilities owned both power generation facilities and all the transmission and distribution infrastructure (poles and wires) to get that power to your home or business. When consumers wanted more electricity, the utility profited from both supplying that power *and* delivering it. This business model did not allow for a competitive energy supply market and prevented ratepayers from choosing lower-cost supply alternatives.

In 1996, Rhode Island joined four other New England states in restructuring the utility by effectively unbundling the energy supply and distribution functions of the utility. The utility was required to sell off its power generation assets (e.g. all power plants it had previously owned) but maintain nondiscriminatory access to distribution infrastructure for all retail customers and nonregulated power producers.

Importantly, this legislation also deregulated the power supply market, allowing for power plants to sell their power competitively in an open marketplace. Ratepayers can now choose to purchase power from any of these "third party suppliers". For customers who prefer a default supply of power, the utility purchases power from a mix of suppliers and passes that supply cost directly through to ratepayers. If the cost of default supply (also called "Standard Offer Service") increases, then the cost on the ratepayer's bill will increase, but the utility does not profit from it.

The other key aspect of the Utility Restructuring Act was the creation of the nation's first public benefits fund, known as the Systems for demand-side management and renewable energy resources, which

funded utility investment in energy efficiency (i.e. programs that incentivize energy-saving measures like insulation, air sealing, and higher-efficiency lighting, HVAC systems, and appliances).

More information:

- [Rhode Island Utility Restructuring Act \(1996\) | Rhode Island Office of Energy Resources](#)
- [Third Party Suppliers](#)

5.1.2) Least Cost Procurement (2006)

This groundbreaking statute established a new economic model for efficiency investment in Rhode Island. Officially called the “Comprehensive Energy Conservation, Efficiency and Affordability Act”, it requires electric and natural gas distribution companies to procure energy supply (including energy efficiency) that is the least costly. When considering which supply to purchase, utilities must invest in *all cost-effective efficiency* that is *less than the cost of supply* as well as prudent and reliable.² In this way, Rhode Island treats energy efficiency as equivalent to a power generation resource and its first fuel of choice.

Benefits of Least Cost Procurement:

- Avoided costs of energy supply
- Avoided costs of energy capacity
- Avoided transmission & distribution costs
- Wholesale market price (electricity rates) suppression
- Avoided cost of environmental compliance
- Utility non-energy benefits
- Participant non-energy benefits
- Environmental benefits
- Macro-economic benefits

Costs of Least Cost Procurement:

- Costs of running the energy efficiency program
- Cost of any financial incentives paid to program participants
- Costs the participants pay out-of-pocket

The sum of all benefits must be larger than the sum of all costs for energy efficiency to be considered cost-effective. Not only does the energy efficiency have to be cost-effective, it must also cost less than it would to buy the equivalent amount of actual energy from traditional sources.³ The statute also

² Cost-effective means that the benefits of energy efficiency are greater than the costs of energy efficiency. All benefits and costs are specified in the Rhode Island Test (formerly the Total Resource Cost Test). The cost of power supply is typically around 10 cents per kilowatt-hour (kWh) for homeowners. The cost of energy efficiency is typically around 4 cents per kWh saved. In other words, the cost of saving energy is generally cheaper than the cost to supply that energy. Equivalently, the ratio of benefits to costs (a.k.a. the benefit-cost ratio) must be greater than 1.000.

³ On the electric side, for example, the cost of kWh saved over the lifetime of the investment is averaged across the entire efficiency program portfolio. The cost of supply used for this critical comparison is the price-per-kWh of electricity charged to residential consumers who choose the default Standard Offer Service supply of electricity.

required the utility to begin submitting Annual and Three-Year Energy Efficiency Procurement Plans and established the Energy Efficiency and Resource Management Council to oversee the efficiency programs. As a result of Least Cost Procurement, Rhode Island now leads the country in efficiency investments per capita and realizes hundreds of millions of dollars in benefits to ratepayers every year.

More information:

- [Comprehensive Energy Conservation, Efficiency and Affordability Act of 2006](#)
- [Least-Cost Procurement \(2006\) | Rhode Island Office of Energy Resources](#)
- [Least Cost Procurement Standards](#)

5.1.3) Revenue Decoupling (2010)

After the Utility Restructuring Act and Least Cost Procurement removed critical barriers for utility investment in energy efficiency, the Revenue Decoupling Act of 2010 ([R.I.G.L. § 39-1-27.7.1](#)) severed the final link between utility profits and sales volume. Before 2010, the utility profited on how much power it delivered to homes and businesses. Delivering more power meant higher profits, even though the utility did not profit on supplying that power (since Restructuring in 1996).

Least Cost Procurement mandated that utilities invest in energy efficiency, which inherently decreased sales volume and, therefore, profits. Decoupling resolved this tension by tying the size of the distribution charge to the actual costs of maintaining the distribution system (the utility's revenue requirement), rather than the amount of energy sold.⁴

Furthermore, the utility has an opportunity to earn a performance-based incentive based on meeting energy savings targets each year (see Section 3.2.3 *Performance Based Regulation*). As a result, Rhode Island utilities are no longer financially disadvantaged when customers use less energy and have an opportunity to earn performance incentives for achieving energy savings targets.⁵

More information: [Revenue Decoupling Act of 2010](#)

5.1.4) Act on Climate (2021) and Climate Action Strategy (2026)

In response to a global economic shift towards clean energy, Gov. Dan McKee signed the 2021 Act on Climate (often referred to as "the Act"). This legislation was meant to update the state's previous comprehensive climate legislation, 2014's Resilient Rhode Island Act. The 2014 Act established the state's first GHG reduction targets and created the Executive Climate Change Coordinating Council (EC4) but lacked enforceable mandates and formal mechanisms for accountability. The 2021 legislation addressed these issues by changing RI's emissions targets into mandatory obligations and requiring the

⁴ Utilities must justify these costs in a rate proceeding before the Rhode Island Public Utilities Commission. If the utility over-collects, customers receive a credit on their bills; if the utility under-collects, customers pay a surcharge.

⁵ Under revenue decoupling, rates may increase when energy sales decline because fixed distribution costs are recovered over fewer units of energy sold. However, customers generally pay less overall because they use less energy, and long-term infrastructure savings from energy efficiency can help reduce future rates.

EC4 to develop and share a Climate Action Strategy to meet the obligations. The 2021 Act established the following emissions mandates which are currently in effect.

Emissions Mandates:

- 45% below 1990 levels by 2030
- 80% below 1990 levels by 2040
- Net-zero emissions by 2050

The plan to achieve these mandates, a Climate Action Strategy (CAS) was published in 2025 and is required to be updated every five years. The document details the necessary strategies, programs, and actions to meet the above targets. The CAS makes clear that without sustained and expanded efficiency progress, especially in buildings, Rhode Island cannot remain on track for 2030 nor build the foundation needed for deeper reductions through 2040 and 2050. Consistent and ambitious action on energy efficiency is among the most reliable tools Rhode Island must stabilize costs, reduce emissions, and uphold its commitments under the Act on Climate. In addition to the EC4, the 2021 Act on Climate also establishes the EC4 Advisory Board and the EC4 Science and Technical Advisory Board (STAB) to assist the council with their work.

More information:

- [2021 Act on Climate \(R.I.G.L. § 42-6.2\):](#)
- [2025 Climate Action Strategy | Climate Change](#)

5.1.5) Future of Gas Docket

As outlined above, the 2021 Act on Climate requires the state to achieve net-zero emissions by mid-century. In line with this mandate, the Rhode Island Public Utilities Commission (PUC) opened Docket 22-01-NG to determine the role of Rhode Island’s regulated gas distribution business in the transition to net-zero emissions. The docket also directs Rhode Island Energy (RIE) to employ a third-party analysis to identify and assess gas emission reduction options, for which RIE chose Energy and Environmental Economics (E3).

E3 created and modeled various decarbonization scenarios that comply with the Act and summarized them in a Final Technical Report. The report details six core scenarios ranging from full electrification of gas-based systems to continued use of gas in pursuance of decarbonization. All scenarios meet the Act on Climate’s mandates as outlined in the above section, and all scenarios require a significant transformation of the role and/or use of the gas distribution system.

More information:

- [PUC Docket 22-01-NG](#)
- [Final Technical Report](#)

5.2) Utility Performance Incentive Structure

Rhode Island Energy can earn a performance incentive for successfully delivering energy efficiency programs that generate net prioritized benefits—the value of program benefits after eligible costs are considered. The size of the incentive is negotiated annually by customer sector and is based on how actual performance compares with planned performance.

The Company must achieve at least 75% of its planned net prioritized benefits within a sector before earning any incentive. Incentive earnings then increase with performance, up to a maximum of 125% of the negotiated incentive amount. For the residential and income-eligible sectors, Service Quality Adjustments (SQAs) can reduce incentive earnings if program service or spending falls below established targets.

Rhode Island has one of the lowest utility performance incentives in the country despite consistently achieving among the nation's highest energy savings. The incentive is designed to encourage strong utility performance and investment in energy efficiency, with benefits to Rhode Island customers that far exceed the cost of both the programs and the incentive itself ([EERMC 2026](#)).

Rhode Island has used shareholder performance incentives for electric and natural gas energy efficiency programs since 2005 and 2007, respectively.

More information: [5076-NGrid-Ord24225-\(9-21-2021\).pdf](#)

5.3) Role of the System Benefits Charge

The 2006 Comprehensive Energy Conservation, Efficiency, and Reliability Act established Rhode Island's System Benefits Charge (SBC), which is a small fee assessed on electricity and gas customers' bills. Across all ratepayers in the state, this small charge per kilowatt-hour or per therm accumulates to a significant amount and is the primary source of funding for the state's energy efficiency programs like free home energy audits and incentives for energy-saving measures. Funding for energy efficiency programs also comes from the Forward Capacity Market (see Section 5.4 *Capacity Auction Reforms*).

Thorough and careful evaluation, planning, and oversight ensure the funds support cost-effective energy efficiency that is less than the cost of supply, as required by the Least Cost Procurement law. Energy efficiency is the most cost-effective way to reduce energy use and address climate change in Rhode Island. Sustained and robust efficiency funding is important to ensuring Rhode Islanders continue to benefit from strong efficiency programs for years to come.

More information: [Data & Publications - Energy Efficiency Council](#)

Why is it called the *System Benefits Charge*?

Energy efficiency reduces the amount of energy that the utility must distribute. Less distribution decreases strain on the energy infrastructure system. This reduction in strain is considered a benefit to the system. The charge for energy efficiency investment, therefore, is simultaneously a charge to fund system benefits.

5.4) Capacity Auction Reforms

ISO New England administered a Forward Capacity Market (FCM) for 18 years, using annual auctions to secure commitments from energy resources for three years. The FCM reflected the market and system conditions at the time of auctions, such as the concentration of peak loads/reliability risks in summer months and the prominence of natural gas-fired resources with more predictable development timelines than some other resource types. Resources (mostly power plants) compete in the auctions to supply capacity in exchange for a market-priced capacity payment. Energy efficiency is one such resource for which the utility can receive payment for capacity reductions.⁶ When Rhode Island Energy receives a payment, it re-invests those funds in more energy efficiency (and therefore in future FCM revenues).

In 2023, ISO New England led stakeholder discussions considering a move to a prompt and/or seasonal capacity market with accreditation reforms to ensure power system reliability and cost-efficiency as New England's resource mix evolves. ISO New England is proposing Capacity Auction Reforms (CAR) for this transition, which includes two primary components to be in place for the Capacity Commitment Period (CCP) scheduled to start on June 1, 2028 ([ISO-NE 2026](#)):

- Prompt/Deactivation (CAR-PD): The capacity auction takes place shortly before the CCP, reflecting more up-to-date information about projected supply and demand. Additionally, retirement decisions are decoupled from the capacity auction, balancing reliability considerations with efficiency under the new deactivation notification process. CAR-PD was accepted by the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission ([Docket No. ER26-925-000](#)) on March 30, 2026.
- Seasonal/Accreditation (CAR-SA): The CCP would shift from an annual to seasonal structure to best address distinct winter and summer reliability challenges and seasonal variations in resource performance. CAR-SA is expected to be filed in quarter four of 2026.

Several implications exist for energy efficiency and demand-side management (DSM) programs:

- Prompt capacity auctions will be held closer to the CCP, which will reduce uncertainty in forecasting but create more uncertainty in future capacity revenues that DSM program administrators can expect
- Distinct summer and winter capacity values reflecting different seasonal energy needs, meaning measures which primarily reduce peak demand in the summer (e.g., efficient cooling systems) will produce less capacity value in the winter
- Capacity revenues will be affected by marginal reliability impact of DSM resources on the ISO-NE grid during high-risk reliability periods
- New DSM resources will be able to participate more quickly in capacity auctions given the reduced lead time of a prompt/seasonal market than a forward capacity market

⁶ Because the FCM is subject to market forces its revenues vary from year to year depending on demand for increased capacity.

More information:

- [Forward Capacity Market](#)
- [Capacity Auction Reforms Key Project](#)

5.5) Entities, Agencies & Organizations

Several entities are instrumental in ensuring that Rhode Island’s energy efficiency programs perform at their best and adhere to the law of Least Cost Procurement.

5.5.1) Energy Utilities

In 2022, National Grid Rhode Island sold the Narragansett Electric Company to Pennsylvania Power and Light (PPL) which is now conducting business in the state as Rhode Island Energy (RIE). Rhode Island Energy is the primary utility in Rhode Island, as it serves 99% of electric and gas customers. The Pascoag Utility District serves a portion of Burrillville and Block Island Power Company serves New Shoreham. Because Rhode Island Energy is the primary utility in the state, it is often referred to as “the utility” or “the Company”. Rhode Island Energy is also the primary energy efficiency program administrator in Rhode Island, maintaining a wide portfolio of successful programs.

More information: [Rhode Island Energy](#)

5.5.2) Energy Efficiency Council (EEC)

The Rhode Island Energy Efficiency and Resource Management Council (EERMC), known more commonly as the Energy Efficiency Council (EEC) or just “the Council”, provides oversight of Rhode Island's ratepayer funded energy efficiency programs and structured stakeholder participation. The Council includes fifteen appointed members that represent small and large businesses, non-profit organizations, market rate and low-income homeowners and renters, municipalities, governments and environmental science and policy. The Council’s mission is to monitor the state’s energy efficiency programs to maximize cost-effective energy savings for all Rhode Islanders through comprehensive stakeholder representation and expert technical evaluation. The Council also supports the state’s climate mandates and works to empower all Rhode Islanders to receive the full benefits of energy efficiency.

More information: See Section 6 and [Home - Energy Efficiency Council](#)

5.5.3) Public Utilities Commission (PUC)

The Rhode Island Public Utilities Commission (PUC) is a quasi-judicial body that regulates Rhode Island utilities. In addition to regulating electric distribution and pipeline public utilities, the PUC also has jurisdiction over gas, water, railroad, ferry boats, telephone, and telegraph. The PUC has three Commissioners appointed by the Governor to six-year terms with the advice and consent of the Senate. The Commissioners hold public hearings on rates, tariffs, and charges by the utility, among other items. Its role in energy efficiency involves approving utilities’ Energy Efficiency and System Reliability Procurement Plans (including the System Benefits Charge), Three-Year Energy Savings Targets, and Least Cost Procurement Standards.

In 2025, approximately 80 stakeholders participated in seven meetings to help inform the 2026 Annual Energy Efficiency Plan. Discussions emphasized improving transparency and accountability, strengthening representation from community-based organizations and residents, and expanding the tracking and public reporting of equity-related outcomes. These priorities informed the Equity Working Group's recommendations for the 2026 Plan ([RIE 2025](#)).

More information: [About the Commission](#) | [RIPUC](#)

5.5.4) Division of Public Utilities & Carriers (DPUC)

The Rhode Island Division of Public Utilities and Carriers (DPUC or “Division”) is the regulatory arm that represents the ratepayer in rate cases and filings with the Public Utilities Commission. The Division is a settling party to Energy Efficiency and System Reliability Procurement Plans and participates in the Energy Efficiency Technical Working Group.

More information: [About the Division](#) | [RIPUC](#)

5.5.5) Office of Energy Resources (OER)

The Rhode Island Office of Energy Resources (OER) is the lead state agency on energy policy and programs. OER works closely with private and public stakeholders to increase the reliability and security of the state’s energy supply, reduce energy costs and mitigate price volatility, and improve environmental quality. OER operates at the nexus of the many ongoing efforts to transform the Ocean State energy system. Its role in energy efficiency includes working closely with the Council and its consultant team to review Energy Efficiency and System Reliability Procurement Plans.

More information: [Welcome](#) | [Rhode Island Office of Energy Resources](#)

5.5.6) Energy Efficiency Technical Working Group (TWG)

The Energy Efficiency Technical Working Group (formerly known as the Demand Collaborative) is a group of energy efficiency stakeholders that meets monthly to inform the development, implementation, and evaluation of Rhode Island Energy’s energy efficiency and system reliability procurement plans. Rhode Island Energy has facilitated the Collaborative since 1991 to foster transparency and collaboration among stakeholder entities before the plans are filed with the PUC each year.

5.5.7) Energy Equity Working Group (EWG)

Since 2021, Rhode Island Energy has convened an Equity Working Group (EWG), facilitated by the Green & Healthy Homes Initiative, to help ensure its energy efficiency programs equitably serve all Rhode Islanders. The group includes community organizations, advocates, government representatives, and other stakeholders who provide input on program planning, design, delivery, and evaluation. The EEC consultant team participates on the Council's behalf and shares insights with Council members.

More information: [2025 Rhode Island Energy Efficiency Equity Working Group Report](#)

5.5.8) Boards & Councils

ENTITY	RESPONSIBILITIES
<u>Energy Facility Siting Board</u>	Licenses and permits the siting, construction, or alteration of major energy facilities in Rhode Island
<u>Energy Efficiency Council</u>	Oversees the development and implementation of Rhode Island's system reliability and energy efficiency investments according to Least-Cost Procurement
<u>Distributed Generation Board</u>	Oversees the development and implementation of Rhode Island's Renewable Energy Growth Program
<u>Executive Climate Change Coordinating Council</u>	Develop and tracks the implementation of a plan to achieve greenhouse gas emissions reductions below 1990 levels of: 10 percent by 2020; 45 percent by 2035; and 80 percent by 2050

5.5.9) State Agencies

AGENCY	RESPONSIBILITIES
<u>Building Code Commission</u>	Establishes minimum requirements for protecting public health, safety, and welfare in the built environment, and administers implementation of the Rhode Island Green Building Act
<u>Coastal Resources Management Council</u>	Oversees marine spatial planning through the implementation of the Ocean Special Area Management Plan (SAMP) and permits offshore wind energy systems
<u>Commerce RI</u>	Administers the State's Renewable Energy Fund, which provides grants and loans for renewable energy projects with the potential to make electricity in a cleaner, more sustainable manner, while stimulating job growth in the green technology and energy sectors of Rhode Island's economy
<u>Department of Environmental Management</u>	Preserves the quality of Rhode Island's environment by implementing laws related to clean air, clean water, and other areas of environmental protection
<u>Department of Human Services</u>	Oversees low-income heating assistance and energy efficiency programs, including the Weatherization Assistance Program and LIHEAP, which are available through local Community Action Programs
<u>Department of Transportation</u>	Designs, constructs, and maintains the state's surface transportation system, including roadways, bridges, rail stations, and bike and pedestrian paths
<u>Division of Planning</u>	Creates long-range policy plans for land use, energy, transportation, and natural resources in Rhode Island
<u>Division of Public Utilities and Carriers</u>	Operates in concert with the PUC and supervises all laws relating to providers electric and natural gas service -
<u>Office of Energy Resources</u>	Develops and administers energy policy and programs designed to promote energy efficiency, renewable energy, alternative fuels, and energy assurance in Rhode Island

<u>Public Utilities Commission</u>	Regulates electric and gas distribution companies in Rhode Island and reviews and approves implementation of major energy efficiency and renewable energy policies
<u>RI Infrastructure Bank</u>	Administers the Efficient Buildings Fund (EBF) and residential and commercial Property Assessed Clean Energy (PACE) programs
<u>RI Public Transit Authority</u>	Operates public transit services throughout Rhode Island

SECTION 6: RHODE ISLAND ENERGY EFFICIENCY COUNCIL

6.1) What is the EEC?

The Energy Efficiency Council (EEC), formally known as the Energy Efficiency and Resource Management Council, was established in 2006 under amendments to the Rhode Island Energy Resources Act ([R.I.G.L. § 42-140.1](#)) to provide structured stakeholder participation and oversight of energy efficiency procurement. The Council includes members that represent small and large business, non-profit organizations, market rate and low-income homeowners and renters, municipalities, governments and environmental science and policy. The EEC is responsible for ensuring maximum benefits to all Rhode Island ratepayers through energy efficiency.

Rhode Island is among the leading energy efficiency jurisdictions in North America. The presence of a council consisting of stakeholders focused on energy efficiency policy planning is a key driver of Rhode Island's success. The strength of the Council comes from the fact that diverse, key stakeholders representing all types of Rhode Island interests work together to make decisions from a common set of facts to implement the legislative mandate to acquire all cost-effective efficiency resources.

In 2023, the Council undertook a rebranding initiative with the goal of enhancing the Council's relatability and recognition, paving the way for broader outreach. While legally its full name remains the "Energy Efficiency and Resource Management Council", for public facing purposes the entity streamlined its name to the "Energy Efficiency Council". It also refreshed its website so users can more easily access energy efficiency program information and designed a new logo symbolizing reduced energy use and the shift away from fossil fuels.

6.2) Purposes

Per its enabling legislation, the Council has four main purposes:

- "Evaluate and make recommendations, including, but not limited to, plans and programs, with regard to the optimization of energy efficiency, energy conservation, energy resource development; and the development of a plan for least-cost procurement for Rhode Island;
- Provide consistent, comprehensive, informed and publicly accountable stakeholder involvement in energy efficiency, energy conservation, and energy resource management;
- Monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of programs to achieve energy efficiency, energy conservation, and diversification of energy resources; and
- Promote public understanding of energy issues and of ways in which energy efficiency, energy conservation, and energy resource diversification and management can be effectuated."

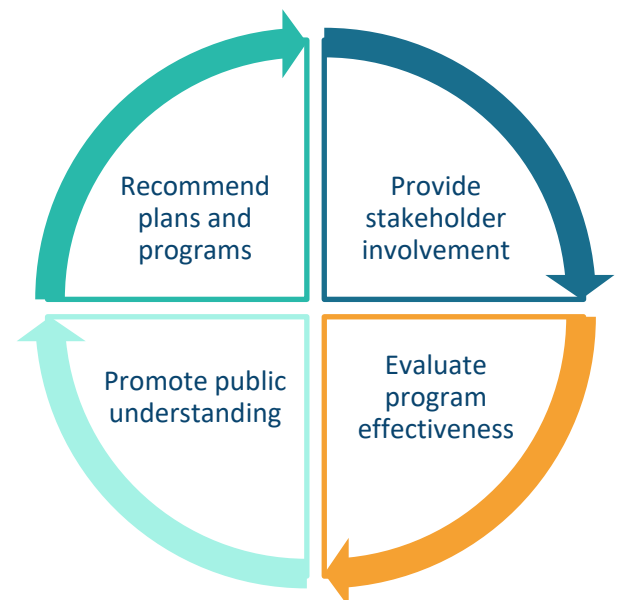


Figure 6.1: Purposes of the RI EEC

6.3) Key Stakeholders

To fulfill its mandates, the EEC maintains important working relationships with key entities, including Rhode Island Energy, the Office of Energy Resources, the Division of Public Utilities and Carriers, and the Public Utilities Commission. Council meetings also serve as a forum for public and private stakeholders, such as non-profit organizations, industrial users, institutions, businesses, and municipalities, to engage in the energy efficiency process by sharing their unique perspectives, challenges, and suggestions. A diverse array of voices at the table ensures that energy efficiency policy and programs continue to serve all Rhode Islanders and address evolving needs. Stakeholders are encouraged to attend meetings and/or submit public comment to the Council at [Public Meetings - Energy Efficiency Council](#).

6.4) Meetings

As a quasi-governmental entity, the EEC must adhere to the stipulations of the Rhode Island Open Meetings Act and the Access to Public Records Act. The Council must provide written notice of regularly scheduled meetings at the beginning of each calendar year. In addition, the date, time, location, and agenda for each Council meetings must be posted to the Rhode Island Secretary of State website at least 48 hours prior to each meeting. Written meeting minutes must be maintained and made public at the next regularly scheduled meeting or within 35 days. These procedures ensure that decision-making is transparent and that all stakeholders can participate in their government.

More information: [Open Government | Rhode Island Attorney General's Office](#)

6.5) EEC Membership

6.5.1) Seats & Appointments

New members of the EEC are nominated by the Governor, with the Senate's advice and consent. Each member represents the perspectives and interests of their sector, functioning as a liaison between stakeholders and the efficiency policy and planning process ([R.I.G.L. § 42-140.1-4](#)). Sectors include:

- Energy regulation and law
- Large commercial/industrial
- Small commercial/industrial
- Residential
- Low-income
- Environmental issues pertaining to energy
- Energy design and codes
- Energy efficiency education and employment tracking
- Municipal
- Large nonprofit institutional
- Small nonprofit

These 11 seats make up the voting members. The remaining 4 seats are ex-officio, non-voting members, including:

- A representative from an electric distribution entity
- A representative from a gas distribution entity
- A representative from a fuel oil or heating fuel industry
- The commissioner of the Rhode Island Office of Energy Resources

Once a new member has been selected by the Governor and approved by the Senate, they are officially appointed to the EEC by the General Assembly.

6.5.2) Council Member Responsibilities

Once appointed, an EEC member commits to:

- Serve a 5-year term
- Attend at least 8 out of the 12 meetings each year
- Review meeting materials in advance and come prepared to actively participate in discussions
- Serve on Council committees or working groups as needed
- Serve as a liaison between the Council and the constituency they represent, bringing stakeholder perspectives to the Council and communicating Council activities and decisions back to their constituents
- Comply with applicable ethics, open meetings, and conflict-of-interest requirements

6.6) Officers

6.6.1) Chair

The Chair of the EEC, which must be a voting member, is appointed by the Governor and presides at all meetings when they are present. In addition to reporting on what was discussed at Executive Committee meetings, the Chair facilitates discussion, calls for votes, and ensures that the agenda is followed. When needed, the Chair can create ad-hoc sub-committees and appoint EEC members to them.

6.6.2) Vice Chair

Also appointed by the Governor, the Vice Chair of the EEC performs the Chair's duties whenever they are not present and can also be given additional duties and powers from the Chair when necessary.

6.6.3) Executive Director

The Commissioner of the Rhode Island Office of Energy Resources serves as the Executive Director of the EEC. The Executive Director and their staff keep the EEC up to date on local and national energy landscape including energy efficiency and renewable energy. The Executive Director and staff are also responsible for EEC administrative duties such as ensuring meetings meet open meeting regulations, maintaining official meeting minutes, drafting annual reports, and making all public EEC documents available online.

6.7) Consultant Team

In accordance with its enabling legislation, the EEC enlists the help of technical consultants to assist with its responsibilities. The Consultant Team serves the EEC as a project manager, ensuring that the Council meets its objectives and required duties each year and providing technical support wherever issues may arise. A Consultant Team work-plan is completed and submitted to the Council for review and approval on an annual basis. Consultant Team members include expertise with energy efficiency policy, data and analysis, project management, residential and commercial sector program development, regulation, financing, and evaluation, measurement, & verification. The Consultant Team's contract is rebid on a triennial basis.

6.8) Legal Counsel

As directed by its enabling legislation, the EEC retains legal counsel, which:

- Advises the EEC on all legal matters;
- Provides legal interpretations of legislative mandates pertaining to the EEC; and
- Represents the EEC at regulatory proceedings conducted by the Public Utilities Commission.

6.9) Committees

By vote of the Council, the EEC may create committees to address specific issues or tasks within the Council's powers and duties. Like EEC meetings, committee meetings must be open to the public, and the majority of the committee membership constitutes a quorum.

6.9.1) Executive Committee

The EEC Executive Committee (also casually referred as "ExComm") meets monthly and consists of the Chair, Vice Chair, Executive Director, and any other members designated by the Council. While non-EEC members may attend these open meetings, only voting EEC members are permitted to vote in Executive Committee decisions. The Executive Committee's general duties include:

- Reviewing the performance of EEC members;
- Identifying educational opportunities for new and current EEC members;
- New member recruitment; and
- Developing EEC meeting agendas and budget recommendations.

6.9.2) Education Committee

The EEC Education Committee was established to support one of the EEC's core legislated purposes to "Promote public understanding of energy issues and of ways in which energy efficiency, energy conservation, and energy resources diversification and management can be effectuated." Consisting of 2-4 EEC members, the Consultant Team, the Office of Energy Resources, and Rhode Island Energy, the group meets regularly (monthly or more as needed) to identify, evaluate, and oversee efforts and expenditures related to public education and

communications. The group recommends pertinent budget allocations for approval by the full Council and provides regular progress reports.

More information: <https://eec.ri.gov/events-education/>

6.10) Annual Report

The EEC is required to submit an Annual Report to the Rhode Island General Assembly “regarding the activities of the council, its assessment of energy issues, the status of system reliability, energy efficiency and conservation procurement, and its recommendations regarding any improvements which might be necessary or desirable” ([R.I.G.L. § 42-140.1-5](#)). The report also summarizes information on the performance of energy efficiency programs and relevant initiatives.

More information: [Data & Publications - Energy Efficiency Council](#)



6.11) By-Laws

While the creation of the EEC is defined in the legislation, the specific rules that the Council must adhere to are outlined in the by-laws. The by-laws, originally adopted in February of 2015, explain the council’s purposes, powers, and duties, its membership composition, the roles of officers and committees, and meeting procedures.

More information: [By-Laws of the RIEERMC](#)

6.12) Additional Resources

- [Home - Energy Efficiency Council](#)
- [EEC Enabling Legislation](#)
- [Open Government | Rhode Island Attorney General's Office](#)

SECTION 7: ENERGY EFFICIENCY PLANNING

Rhode Island's energy efficiency activities work in three-year cycles that include setting energy savings targets; developing three-year plans; evaluating again; and then using the evaluation results to inform the next cycle.

7.1) Least Cost Procurement Standards

The foundation of the energy efficiency planning process is the Least Cost Procurement Standards, which lay out a clear structure and process for achieving the goals of least cost procurement and define the roles and responsibilities for the different program administration and oversight entities. The Standards:

- Set deadlines for annual and triennial efficiency plans
- Require that the plans include certain components, including strategies for procuring all cost-effective efficiency and providing the utility with the opportunity to earn a performance incentive
- Require that the plans include information on program costs and benefits, energy savings goals, funding sources, and monitoring and evaluation plans
- Define an active role for the EERMC in providing assistance to develop the energy efficiency plans and ensure that the state's ratepayers "get excellent value from the EE Procurement Plan being implemented on their behalf
- Are periodically reviewed and updated

More information: [Least Cost Procurement Standards](#)

7.2) Rhode Island Benefit Cost Test

An important component of the Standards is cost-effectiveness testing. Because Least Cost Procurement requires the benefits of all utility investments in energy efficiency to be greater than the costs to implement them, a benefit-cost analysis is required. In the past, Rhode Island used the Total Resource Cost Test. In 2017, the state developed own state-specific test that provides a more holistic view of energy efficiency by accounting for additional benefits and costs. Rhode Island's test accounts for avoided costs of compliance with emissions regulations, participant health benefits and environmental benefits from reduced emissions. It also accounts for non-energy costs and benefits associated with economic well-being, comfort, health and safety, other fuels, water savings, the social cost of carbon not embedded in energy market prices, economic development, and energy security from reduced use of fuel oil ([National Grid 2017](#)).

More information: [Overview of RI Test](#)

7.3) Energy Savings Targets

Every three years, the EEC is required to develop targets for annual electric and natural gas reductions as a result of energy efficiency programs administered by Rhode Island Energy. The targets support the development of Rhode Island Energy's triennial and annual energy efficiency program plans by to give

the utility guidance on potentially available cost-effective efficiency resources in the state. The EEC and its consultant team conduct in-depth analysis, research, and stakeholder engagement to establish achievable, cost-effective levels of energy efficiency to inform proposed energy savings targets. Then the targets are submitted to the PUC for final approval. The targets developed by the EEC under R.I.G.L. § 39-1-27.7.1(e)(4) and (f) are not subject to the cost-effectiveness standard, because as high-level estimates, the purpose of the targets is simply to guide the development of those plans.

More information: [Recommended Targets for Energy Efficiency and Active Peak Demand Reduction Savings for 2027-2029](#)

7.4) Energy Efficiency and System Reliability Plans

The Least Cost Procurement Standards require Rhode Island Energy to develop triennial program plans that outline program details as well as spending and savings goals for energy efficiency and system reliability procurement. The EEC's role is to verify that the programs are designed to be cost-effective and deliver energy savings and economic benefits in accordance with the law. Because the Council paying for the energy efficiency investments. The Council aims to have a role in oversight, planning, and evaluation represents each customer segment and support the development and delivery of high-quality programs that are responsive to customers' needs and broad support for energy efficiency.

7.4.1) Three-Year Plans

The Three-Year Plan illustrates how lifetime and annual energy savings set out in the Targets will be achieved through energy efficiency program delivery. It also describes economic and environmental benefits including the development and maintenance of jobs. Sections of the Three-Year Plan include:

- Strategies and Approaches to Planning
- Cost-Effectiveness
- Prudence and Reliability
- Funding Plan and Savings Targets
- Performance Incentive Plan

The Three-Year Plan is subsequently filed with the PUC on September 1st, though the PUC does not have to rule on it.

7.4.2) Three-Year Binding Plans

Three-Year Plans are settlements among the parties in the Technical Working Group (Collaborative) and must be approved by both the EEC and the PUC. Prior to 2026 Rhode Island Energy developed annual program plans. Rhode Island Energy, with support from the PUC, transitioned from annual plans to a three-year planning framework to increase flexibility to respond to changing market conditions, incorporation of lessons learned, and continuation of improving programs while maintaining clear accountability and oversight. The three-year planning framework also allows Rhode Island Energy to shift capacity from planning to delivery. The 2027-2029 Energy Efficiency Plan was the first binding three-year plan which established binding multi-year budgets and savings targets, while reducing the need to repeatedly develop and seek approval for annual plans. The Commission is to consider the EEC's evaluation and approval of the distribution utility's plan in issuing its order of approval of the Plan. Primary sections of the three-year plan include:

- Final Funding Plan and Budget Amounts, Cost-Effectiveness, and Goals
- Program Descriptions
- Monitoring and Evaluation Plan
- Reporting Requirements
- Performance Incentive Plan
- Defined Pathways for Mid-term Modifications

Key factors that inform the three-year plan include:

- Energy Savings Targets
- Rhode Island Benefit Cost Test
- Program evaluations and pilots
- Evolving markets
- New and/or improved technologies
- State policy objectives

Portfolios are *required* to be cost-effective and programs *should* be cost-effective. Three-year plans are due on June 1st and PUC hearings to review them are held.

7.4.3) System Reliability Plans

Rhode Island Energy is also responsible for drafting and filing System Reliability Procurement (SRP) Plans triennially along with Energy Efficiency Plans. Rhode Island Energy works closely with the EEC, the consultant team, OER, and the Technical Working Group to develop robust SRP Plans. Guidelines for SRP Plans are described in Chapter 2 of the Least-Cost Procurement Standards. The SRP Standards set forth guidelines for the incorporation of energy efficiency, distributed generation, demand response, and other energy technologies (collectively referred to as non-wires alternatives (NWA) and non-pipes alternatives (NPA)) into utility planning.

7.5) Program Implementation

Program implementation runs on a calendar year, January through December. Throughout the year, Rhode Island Energy, the EEC's consultant team, and the Office of Energy Resources meet monthly to review program progress, identify any program issues, assure programs are moving along in a timely fashion, and discuss strategies to continually improve programs.

7.6) Program Reporting

Per the Least Cost Procurement Standards, Rhode Island Energy, in consultation with the EEC, is required to report quarterly and annually on the benefits of the energy efficiency efforts implemented, with particular focus on energy cost savings and program participation levels across all sectors.

7.7) Additional Resources

- [Least Cost Procurement Standards](#)

- [Rhode Island Test](#)
- [Recommended Targets for Energy Efficiency and Active Peak Demand Reduction Savings for 2027-2029](#)

SECTION 8: ENERGY EFFICIENCY PROGRAMS IN RHODE ISLAND

In Rhode Island, energy efficiency programs are offered by the state's regulated distribution utilities. The major investor-owned utility operating in the state, Rhode Island Energy, offers a comprehensive slate of programs that work together to produce significant energy savings. Hearings are held once a year before the Rhode Island Public Utilities Commission to review program plans. A collaborative of stakeholders reviews these plans and makes recommendations to the RI PUC on the programs. Program costs and performance metrics are reported annually.

8.1) Key Terms

- **Measure** – Any intervention implemented to reduce the energy consumption of a facility (e.g. installing more efficient lighting)
- **Project** – The set of measures implemented at a given facility
- **Program** – Closely related delivery activities (e.g. providing rebates, offering financing, educating customers) targeted to a specific energy use sector (e.g. residential, commercial, industrial) to promote the implementation of energy efficiency measures
- **Portfolio** – The complete collection of energy efficiency programs managed by a program administrator
- **Program Administrator** – An entity, often but not always a utility, that manages energy efficiency programs

8.2) How Do Rhode Island's Energy Efficiency Programs Work?

RI's comprehensive energy efficiency programs are designed to overcome most of these impediments through three primary tools:

Technical assistance and information: Guidance from energy efficiency professionals can make energy efficiency improvements more understandable, accessible, and easily implemented by homeowners and businesspeople. Experts help consumers work through the available information about upfront costs, how to choose a contractor, quotes and pricing, available incentives, and resulting energy savings. Experts also provide back-end assistance through commissioning and training on the use of new equipment to make sure the customer knows how to operate it as intended.

Financial incentives and rebates: Incentives help by reducing the risk (or perceived risk) of not recouping an energy efficiency investment and by guiding customers to the best options. Energy efficiency incentives reduce the length of the payback period and make the project feasible, even for business customers that must conform to strict payback periods. Financial incentives come in several forms.

For example, a residential customer is eligible to receive a free home energy assessment during which the auditor will install energy efficient lighting and other measures at no cost. The customer may also be eligible to have their home weatherized and pay only 50% of the total project cost.

Sometimes the rebate is already built into the price of the energy efficient product. For example, Rhode Island Energy buys down the price of LED lightbulbs at retailers like Home Depot, Lowes, and local hardware stores so that the sticker price is significantly lower than it otherwise would be. The objective is to design the incentive to the market and fuel type, while simultaneously minimize the costs of saving energy.

Efficiency financing: Access to capital is a barrier to implementing efficiency for some customers, and various forms of financing have been used to cost-effectively address this in many markets. Loans can help homeowners or business owners with efficiency upgrades when access to capital is a problem.

8.3) Energy Efficiency Program Results

Rhode Island Energy’s programs are divided into three core sectors – Commercial and Industrial, Income Eligible, and Residential. Program performance can be measured by comparing percent of budget spent to percent of savings goal achieved. Figure 8.1 illustrates those results by program sector from 2022 through 2026.

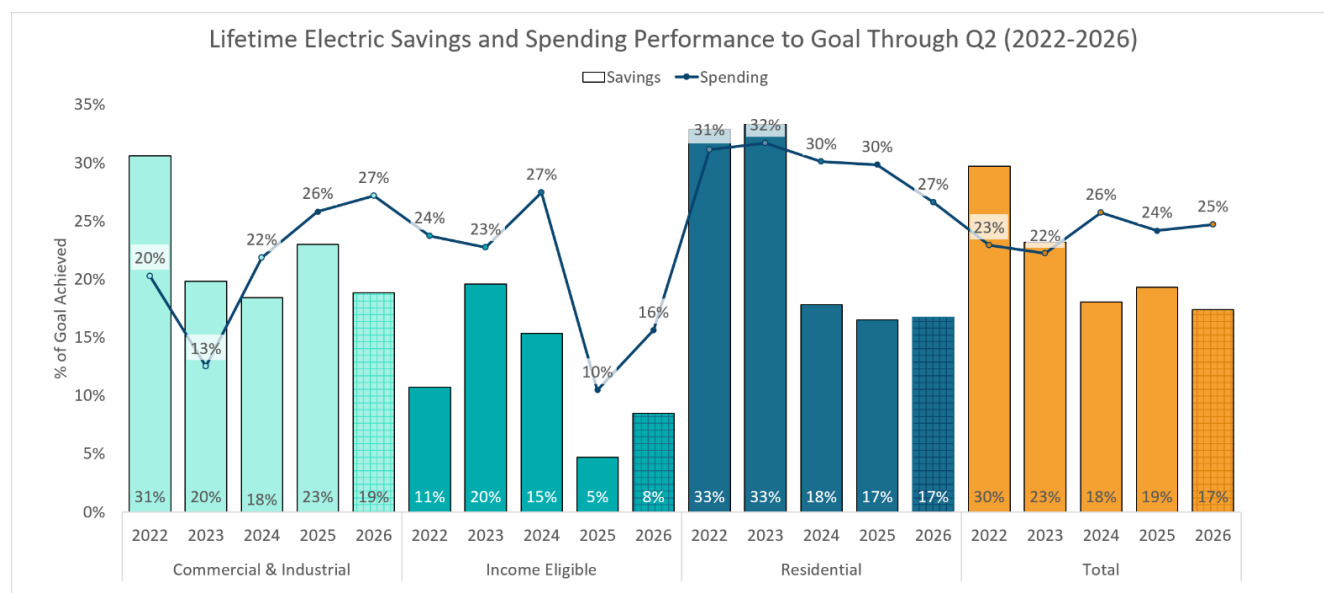


Figure 8.1: Performance of RI Energy Efficiency programs over time by sector

8.3.1) Energy Savings Goals

Since 2009, Rhode Island Energy's ratepayer funded energy efficiency programs have provided over \$6.53 billion in societal benefits, compared to total program costs of about \$2.13 billion. These benefits include less energy needed to be generated and delivered to customers, reduced emissions and associated environmental benefits, and improved reliability of our utility systems. Achievement of the 2026 Plan goals will push the total realized benefits to over \$6.9 billion (Figure 8.2) ([EERMC 2026](#)).

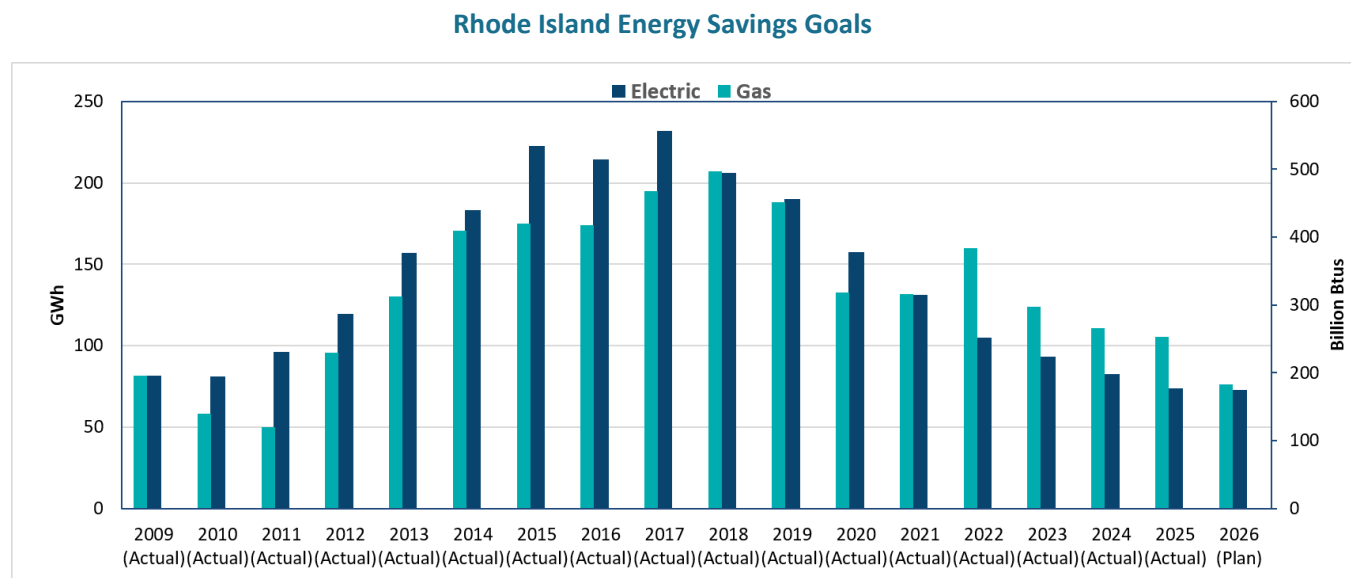


Figure 8.2. Actual Energy Savings (2009-2025) in Rhode Island

8.3.2) Costs Versus Benefits of Energy Efficiency

In addition to enabling nation-leading levels of energy savings, Rhode Island's investments in cost-effective, low-cost energy efficiency are creating jobs and boosting economic activity. Energy efficiency reduces the cost of doing business in Rhode Island and lowers residents' energy bills, leaving them with more disposable income to spend on other goods and services. These two effects lead to job creation and economic growth. Every \$1 million invested in energy efficiency leads to the creation of about 18 job-years of employment, and every \$1 invested is expected to generate \$3.62 in total economic and energy system benefits. ([PUC 2022](#)).

Value of Energy Efficiency Program Benefits Compared to Costs

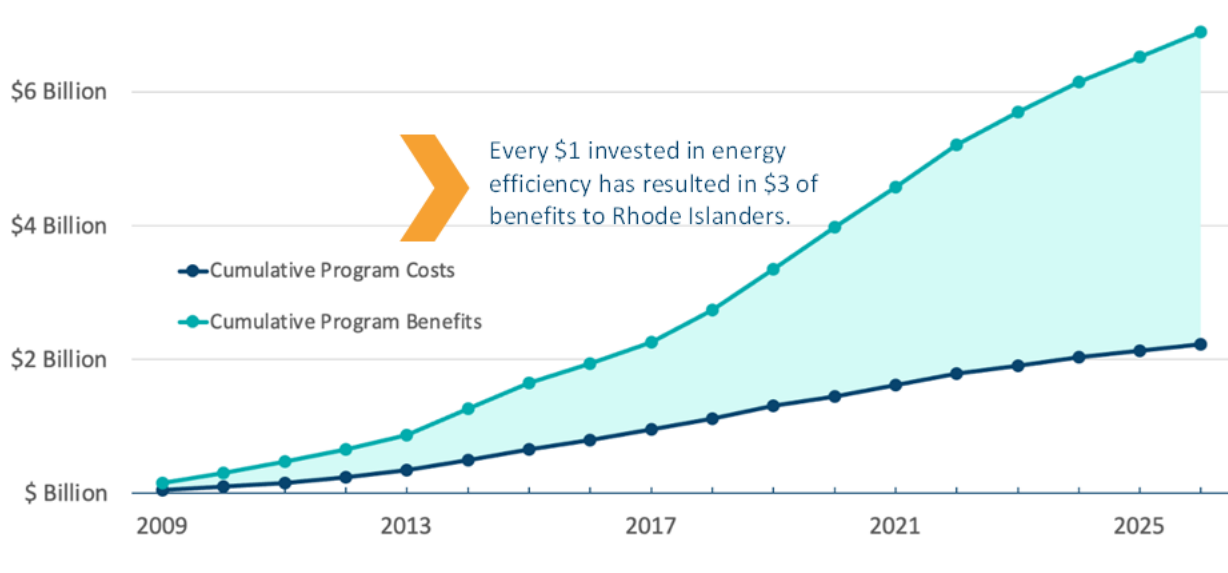


Figure 8.3. Cumulative Value of Energy Efficiency Program Benefits Compared to Program Costs Over Time (2009-2025)
Source: [EERMC Annual Report 2026](#)

8.3.3) ACEEE Scorecard

For over a decade, Rhode Island consistently ranked among the Top 10 states according to the American Council for an Energy Efficient Economy's (ACEEE) State Energy Efficiency Scorecard. In the 2025 report, however, Rhode Island's position dropped from 7th down to 12th following changes to the scoring methodology, including doubling total available points for finer granularity, and increasing emphasis on equity.

Despite the overall drop in rankings, Rhode Island continued to perform strongly in the Utility and Public Benefits Programs category (i.e. the State's ratepayer-funded energy efficiency programs), placing third in the nation. This category aligns most closely with the Council's areas of influence and reflects the strength of the state's long-standing efficiency policies and programs. Rhode Island also received a perfect score in the State Government Initiatives category. While this recognition is notable, the Council is focused on driving continued progress toward deeper, harder-to-reach energy savings.

In a new equity category, Rhode Island achieved the maximum points in all but one of 14 equity metrics and scored a total of 21 out of 22 points, which put the state in third place only behind California and Massachusetts. The only metric where Rhode Island did not receive points was for a lack of policies that support intervenor compensation for communities participating in utility proceedings.

In contrast, Rhode Island lagged in the Building Energy Efficiency Policies category, earning just 10 out of 24 possible points. While Rhode Island lost ground in this category, several states that were previously behind Rhode Island in the overall rankings improved their scores. At the time data was collected, Rhode

Island was using the 2018 International Energy Conservation Code (IECC) standards for its building codes. With the adoption of the 2024 IECC standards, Rhode Island would have received significantly more points in this category and would have retained its Top 10 overall ranking.

The state also missed out on points in the areas of building benchmarking, existing building performance standards, and policies that support fuel-switching. Each of these would help the state achieve its Act on Climate mandates, and these gaps point to clear opportunities for legislative action to modernize building energy management and support a smoother transition to cleaner technologies. While Transportation Policies are not within the Council's oversight responsibilities, it is worth noting that the State did not perform well in this category, earning just 17.5 out of 26 possible points (ACEEE 2025).

More information: [State Energy Efficiency Scorecard](#) | [ACEEE](#)

8.4) Residential Programs

Rhode Island Energy offers comprehensive energy efficiency solutions for all Rhode Island residential customers. The goals of these offerings and services are to educate residents on saving energy and reducing energy bills while improving the comfort in their homes. The energy efficiency solutions concentrate on creating energy efficient homes through education and energy-efficient products; facilitating market transformation for efficient products and zero-energy homes and buildings; and educating Rhode Islanders on energy efficiency.

8.4.1) EnergyWise Single Family Program

The EnergyWise Program provides in-home energy assessments and weatherization services for single-family homes (1-4 units), helping residents understand and reduce their energy use. During visits, energy specialists install devices like advanced power strips and water-saving fixtures and offer tailored recommendations for improving efficiency. Participants receive an Energy Action Plan, access to financial incentives for upgrades (such as insulation, HVAC systems, and smart thermostats), and may qualify for 0% financing through programs like the HEAT Loan. In 2025, the EnergyWise Single Family program achieved electric savings of 18,338 net lifetime MWh (110% of target) and gas savings of 697,269 net lifetime MMBtu (109% of target).

8.4.2) EnergyWise Multifamily Program

The Multifamily program offers comprehensive energy services for multifamily customers (buildings with 5+ dwelling units) including: Energy assessments; Incentives for efficient electricity, natural gas, or delivered fuels equipment including heating, cooling and domestic hot water systems, cooling equipment, thermostats, smart strips, water saving measures, common-area lighting, and eligible air source heat pumps; Weatherization measures including air sealing and insulation where eligible and applicable; Coordination of all services for multifamily properties that participate in the market rate and income eligible multifamily programs. In 2025, the EnergyWise Multifamily program achieved 3,147 net lifetime MWh of electric savings (58% of target) and 31,003 net lifetime MMBtu of gas savings (41% of target).

8.4.3) Residential New Construction

The Residential New Construction (RNC) program offers financial incentives and no-cost education, training and technical support to builders and homeowners to promote the construction of high performing energy-efficient single family, multifamily and income eligible homes. The program helps residential new construction and major renovation projects meet high energy performance standards and provides education and training support to builders, designers, tradespeople, and code officials. In 2025, the Residential New Construction program achieved 19,283 net lifetime MWh of electric savings (144% of target) and 40,043 net lifetime MMBtu of gas savings (55% of target).

8.4.4) Home Energy Reports

The Home Energy Reports (HER) program is a statewide energy efficiency offering that provides benefits for Rhode Island residential customers through the mailing and emailing of customer-specific energy usage reports and insights. While over 300,000 customers receive home energy reports (i.e., the treatment group) by way of direct mail and/or e-mail, all account holders have access to insights into their energy consumption via the web tools located on Rhode Island Energy's website. The program has evolved since 2013 from offering only mailed insights to now being integrated into Rhode Island Energy's website with online assessment tools, sending Non-Advanced Metering Infrastructure (AMI) High Usage Alerts, and utilizing segmentation to target different populations with relevant messaging. In 2025, the Home Energy Reports program achieved 22,026 net lifetime MWh of electric savings (100% of target) and 78,988 net lifetime MMBtu of gas savings (102% of target).

8.4.5) Residential Consumer Products

The Residential Consumer Products (RCP) program offers rebates on ENERGY STAR® appliances and other energy-saving items, with the greatest savings coming from recycling old refrigerators, dehumidifiers, and freezers. Customers can purchase qualifying products in stores, from any online retailer, or through the RI Energy Marketplace—a one-stop shop where rebates are automatically applied at checkout. Most products are DIY-friendly, and while not all are incentivized, all listed items are vetted to help consumers avoid unreliable options. In 2025, the Residential Consumer Products program achieved 14,941 net lifetime MWh of electric savings (92% of target).

8.4.6) Residential High-Efficiency Heating & Hot Water

The High-Efficiency HVAC and Hot Water program offers rebates and contractor services to support the installation of energy-efficient electric and gas equipment, including heat pumps, smart thermostats, efficient water heaters, and more. In addition to customer incentives, the program provides contractor training, quality installation verification, and distributor-level discounts. It is cross promoted through other residential energy programs and helps maintain high standards across the market by sharing best practices and training resources with related initiatives. In 2025, the Residential High Efficiency Heating and Hot Water program achieved 49,383 net lifetime MWh of electric savings (49% of target) and 267,062 net lifetime MMBtu of gas savings (70% of target).

8.4.7) Residential ConnectedSolutions (Active Demand Response)

ConnectedSolutions is National Grid's demand response program that sends control signals to customer owned electric devices to reduce peak energy use and improve power quality on the grid. Consumers

with eligible controllable equipment (e.g. Smart thermostats, batteries, and pool pumps) can enroll to participate in Connected Solutions. All electric consumers are eligible to participate in ConnectedSolutions.

8.5) Income Eligible Programs

8.5.1) Income Eligible Single Family

The Income Eligible Services (IES) Program offers home energy assessments, weatherization services, appliance, and heating system replacements with no customer cost to qualified single-family customers. Customers who qualify for the A-60 rate or for the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) are eligible to receive all services and equipment upgrades at no cost. The IES Program's services are delivered by local Community Action Program (CAP) agencies who coordinate with outside contractors that perform heating system and appliance replacements and weatherization installations with oversight provided by a lead vendor. In 2025, the Income Eligible Single Family Program achieved 13,041 net lifetime MWh of electric savings (28% of target) and 132,186 net lifetime MMBtu of gas savings (109% of target).

8.5.2) Income Eligible Multifamily

The Income Eligible Multifamily Program offers comprehensive energy services for multifamily customers that also meet the criteria for "income eligible", which is defined in Rhode Island Energy's Annual Energy Efficiency Program Plan. These services include energy assessments, incentives for heating and domestic hot water systems, air source heat pumps, cooling equipment, water savings installations and thermostats. Typically, there are no costs to the customer for these services as most income eligible upgrades are covered at 100 percent. In 2025, the Income Eligible Multifamily Program achieved 6,245 net lifetime MWh of electric savings (57% of target) and 126,752 net lifetime MMBtu of gas savings (63% of target).

8.6) Commercial & Industrial (C&I) Programs

Commercial and Industrial (C&I) programs drive the implementation of energy efficiency projects that minimize or reduce energy consumption and help Rhode Island businesses, industries, institutions, and government agencies save on their utility bills. Energy efficiency programs also help C&I customers reduce their operations and maintenance (O&M) costs, meet corporate sustainability goals, improve indoor air quality, and protect the environment by reducing greenhouse gas emissions and other air pollutants. Rhode Island Energy's C&I programs offer incentives, rebates, financing, and technical assistance to customers across the state who want to save money and reduce their building's overall energy consumption footprint.

Rhode Island Energy offers four Commercial and Industrial (C&I) energy efficiency programs. Depending on a customer's energy consumption and demand, they could be eligible to participate in one or more of the following programs.

8.6.1) Large C&I New Construction

The New Construction Program offers financial incentives and technical assistance to customers, design professionals, developers, and vendors to encourage energy efficiency in new construction, major renovation, planned replacement of aging equipment, and replacement of failed equipment projects.

Through the program, design professionals are eligible to receive technical assistance to conduct energy modeling and analysis for new construction projects. Owner's design teams are offered incentives for their time and effort to meet program requirements. The program promotes and incentivizes the installation of high efficiency equipment in existing facilities during remodeling projects or for equipment failure and replacement. Since customers are more likely to install energy-efficient equipment at the time of construction or equipment replacement, the program offers incentives to ensure customers make the investment immediately rather than doing so at a greater cost later. In 2025, the C&I New Construction program achieved 79,215 net lifetime MWh of electric savings (55% of target) and 321,413 net lifetime MMBtu of gas savings (57% of target).

8.6.2) Large Commercial & Industrial Retrofit

All commercial, industrial, and institutional customers are eligible to participate in the Retrofit Program. The program incentivizes the replacement of existing equipment and systems with high efficiency alternatives such as lighting, HVAC systems, motors, thermal envelope measures and custom measures in existing buildings. Technical assistance is offered to customers to help them identify energy-saving opportunities.

The program's Incentives help C&I customers to defray part of the material and labor costs associated with the installation of energy efficiency measures. In addition, Rhode Island Energy offers education and training, such as the Builder Operator Certification training, to support the adoption of energy-efficient equipment and practices. In 2025, the Large C&I Retrofit program achieved 224,993 net lifetime MWh of electric savings (136% of target) and 534,220 net lifetime MMBtu of gas savings (85% of target).

8.6.3) Small Business Direct Install

The Small Business Program is a retrofit offering that provides turn-key efficiency solutions to customers who use less than 1.5 million kWh per year. Through the program, a free on-site energy assessment is performed, and customers receive a customized report detailing recommended energy-efficient improvements.

From local pizzerias to small convenience stores, the Small Business Program serves small businesses of all customer types, buildings, and sizes. The program pays up to 70 percent of installation and equipment costs. Provided funds are available, customers can finance the remaining costs of the project for up to 60 months (typically 24) interest free on their electric bill using the Small Business Revolving Loan Fund. In 2025, the Small Business Direct Install program achieved 28,169 net lifetime MWh of electric savings (53% of target) and 85,590 net lifetime MMBtu of gas savings (73% of target).

8.6.4) Commercial Connected Solutions (Active Demand Response)

The Commercial Connected Solutions or Active Demand Response program is focused on reducing peak electric demand and associated costs for large and small commercial customers. All customers,

regardless of size can participate. The program is technology neutral and provides a customer incentive for verifiable shedding of load in response to a signal or communication from the Company ([National Grid 2021](#)).

8.6.5) Commercial & Industrial Multifamily Program

The C&I Multifamily Program provides comprehensive efficiency services for market-rate multifamily customers who reside in buildings with 5+ dwelling units. These coordinated services include energy assessments and incentives for weatherization and the replacement of heating and domestic hot water equipment and systems. The program's services are offered for all types of multifamily properties.

To streamline the delivery of program services, Rhode Island Energy designates a primary point of contact for the multifamily property who will manage and coordinate the services offered. The measures and services are offered through Rhode Island Energy's existing Energy Efficiency Portfolio of C&I programs (C&I Retrofit) and Residential programs (EnergyWise, Income Eligible, Residential New Construction and ENERGY STAR® HVAC). In 2025, the C&I Multifamily program achieved 96,383 net lifetime MMBtu of gas savings (154% of target).

8.6.6) Midstream Initiative

The Midstream Initiative, while not a standalone program, contributes to the savings of the Retrofit and New Construction Programs. These initiatives provide instant discounts to customers on qualified high-efficiency products—such as luminaires, kitchen equipment, water heaters, and HVAC systems—through participating distributors. By offering discounts directly through distributors, Rhode Island Energy removes the need for customers to submit incentive applications, removing a participation barrier. The initiatives also lower the cost of energy-efficient products and encourage distributors to stock and promote these items. Savings and budget for the Midstream Lighting Initiative are included in the Retrofit Program, while the Midstream HVAC and Food Service Initiatives are part of the New Construction Program.

8.7) Other Programs

8.7.1) Clean Heat Rhode Island

In September 2023, the Rhode Island Office of Energy Resources (OER) launched the Clean Heat Rhode Island (CHRI) heat pump incentive program. This program was created through legislation by the Rhode Island General Assembly and Governor McKee as an investment of \$25 million as a part of the State Fiscal Recovery Fund (SFRF) from the American Rescue Plan Act. Through this program, over 4,000 heat pump rebates were provided to residents, small businesses, and nonprofits, spurring the deployment of heat pumps throughout the state. Through these heat pump investments, the Office of Energy Resources estimates that the lifetime Co2e saved from completed projects totals 245,952 tons. All SFRF program funds have been obligated as of January 2025. OER is continuing the program offerings with Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative funds (RGGI) while exploring federal funding opportunities for additional program expansions. Learn more at: [Clean Heat RI | Rhode Island Office of Energy Resources](#)

8.7.2) Lead by Example: State & Municipal

The Lead by Example (LBE) program supports Rhode Island's entire public sector in reducing energy use, cutting fossil fuel consumption, and transitioning to clean, low-carbon energy solutions. Lead by Example efforts are meant to serve as a model for businesses, state agencies, municipalities, organizations, public schools, and communities across the state to work toward a clean, affordable, reliable, and equitable energy future.

The LBE program, originally established by Executive Order 15-17 in 2015 and updated to expand the mandate and set new goals with Executive Order 23-06 (EO 23-06) in 2023, provides important technical, procurement, and financial assistance to the public sector, enabling it to reduce its energy consumption and carbon emissions.

The LBE program developed a number of accelerators to support state agencies, municipalities, and public schools implement a variety of clean energy projects. These accelerators are focused on a specific type of energy equipment – such as LED lighting, building automation systems, EV charging stations, and solar panels – and provide a turnkey solution and funding to quickly design and implement these projects ([EERMC 2026](#)). Additional information about these programs, progress towards the EO 23-06 targets, as well as program applications, can be found on the LBE website at [Lead by Example | Rhode Island Office of Energy Resources](#).

8.7.3) RI Agricultural Energy Program

Recognizing the vital role that farmers play in Rhode Island's economic and environmental framework, OER, in consultation with the Department of Environmental Management (DEM) aims to improve the accessibility of resources for farmers that will offset agricultural electric load through cost-saving energy efficiency measures and on-site renewable energy projects. Historically, farmers make use of older and traditional infrastructure, and often rely heavily on delivered fuels. These challenges have traditionally made agribusiness a hard-to-reach sector for standard energy efficiency and renewable energy programs.

The RI Agricultural Energy Program (RI AgEP) offers Rhode Island agribusinesses incentives for prescriptive energy efficiency measures. Program participants receive a free on-site energy assessment and a report detailing recommended energy-efficient improvements. Farmers or agribusiness owners can then choose to install any number of recommended electric or delivered fuels measures.

The RI Agricultural Energy Program offers financial incentives to farms in Rhode Island of up to \$20,000 for energy efficiency and renewable energy projects. The program has continuously held two funding rounds each year, in spring and fall. In 2025, RI AgEP provided grants to 25 farms for solar and energy efficiency projects. Learn more at: [Energy Efficiency And Renewable Energy Programs For Farms | Rhode Island Office of Energy Resources](#)

8.7.4) Large C&I Revolving Loan Fund

Through the electric large C&I revolving loan fund, Rhode Island Energy offered \$4.62 million through 45 loans in on-bill financing to 43 large commercial customers. At the end of 2025, the fund had a balance of \$9.6 million (including committed 2025 dollars). Through the gas large C&I revolving loan fund, Rhode

Island Energy offered \$0.57 million through 11 loans to 11 large commercial customers. At the end of 2025, the fund had a balance of \$1.06 million (including committed 2025 dollars).

8.7.5) Small Business Revolving Loan Fund

All Small Business Direct Install program participants receive financing to cover 30% of project costs, either over 24 months at 0% interest or a lump sum payment with a 15% discount. Through the small business revolving loan fund, Rhode Island Energy offered \$0.73 million in loans to 306 small business customers. At the end of 2025, the fund had a balance of \$2.67 million.

8.7.6) HEAT Loan

The HEAT loan provides qualified residential customers with 0% financing for upfront costs associated with energy efficiency upgrades. The HEAT loan also spreads the upfront costs over multiple years. The EnergyWise Single Family, Multifamily, and HVAC programs pay the negotiated interest for the customer cost portion of the loan. The Capital Good Fund (the lender of last resort) provides financing to customers with less than perfect credit. There were 471 loans processed in 2025 totaling approximately \$5.1 million in financing towards project costs.

8.7.7) Efficient Buildings Fund (EBF)

Since 2015, Rhode Island Energy, the Rhode Island Office of Energy Resources (OER), and the Rhode Island Infrastructure Bank (RIIB) have been working together to leverage system benefit charge (SBC) funds and drive energy improvements in facilities in cities and towns across Rhode Island.

Since its inception, the EBF has supported 26 projects to municipalities, loaning out over \$75 million dollars to support a variety of energy efficiency and renewable energy projects. These will deliver approximately \$110 million in savings over the lifetime of the installed measures.

8.7.8) Commercial Property Assessed Clean Energy (C-PACE)

Since the program was adopted in Rhode Island in 2015, 44 projects have been completed, totaling over \$250 million in energy efficiency and renewable energy for businesses. Outreach by the Rhode Island Infrastructure Bank and Rhode Island Energy will continue in 2026.

8.8) Federally Funded Programs

8.8.1) Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program

Through federal grants to the household, the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) helps eligible low-income households pay their heating bills. Heating and crisis assistance are the two components of the program. A grant assists a household in meeting heating costs by being paid to either a heating fuel vendor, utility company, or in a few cases directly to the applicant. A grant can also help to resolve home heating crises caused by a heat shut-off due to failure to pay a regulated energy bill, the inability to pay for deliverable fuel, or the failure of a heating system that is not repairable ([DHS\(a\)](#)).

More information: [Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program \(LIHEAP\) | RI Department of Human Services](#)

8.8.2) Weatherization Assistance Program

The Weatherization Assistance Program helps income-eligible households that qualify for LIHEAP reduce heating bills by providing whole house energy efficiency services. Available services include installing insulation and providing health and safety measures such as installing smoke and monoxide detectors, reducing drafts, and providing proper ventilation. Local Community Action Program (CAP) agencies support participants through the application process ([DHS 2026\(b\)](#)). OER is in the process of expanding this program to Moderate-Income households and they are currently working with a CAP agency to pilot the program. Rhode Island will likely be the first state to launch a Moderate-Income WAP.

More information: [Weatherization Assistance Program \(WAP\) | RI Department of Human Services](#)

8.8.3) New England Heat Pump Accelerator

With federal funding provided by the Environmental Protection Agency's Climate Pollution Reduction Grants, the New England Heat Pump Accelerator works with distributors, contractors, policymakers, and community organizations to bring efficient and affordable heating and cooling to New England. The program will expand heat pump adoption through market growth, local innovation, and educational resources in homes across Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, and Rhode Island through December 2029 ([OER 2026\(e\)](#)).

More information: [New England Heat Pump Accelerator | Rhode Island Office of Energy Resources](#)

8.8.4) Infrastructure and Investment Jobs Act

The Infrastructure and Investment Jobs Act (IIJA) and the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) include many energy-related funding opportunities for Rhode Island. Funding is available through formula grants, which are predetermined amounts given to state energy offices, or competitive grants, which are awarded based on the merits of the application ([OER 2026\(f\)](#)).

8.9) Additional Resources

- [Rhode Island Energy Annual Energy Efficiency Plan for 2026 \(RI PUC Docket 25-37-EE\)](#)
- [Rhode Island Office of Energy Resources \(OER\) programs and incentives](#)
- [Rhode Island Energy programs and incentives](#)

SECTION 9: EVALUATION, MEASUREMENT, AND VERIFICATION

9.1) What is EM&V?

Because all of the energy efficiency programs are funded with ratepayer dollars, it is important to ensure that expected energy savings are actually being achieved. To address this question, energy efficiency program administrators across the country employ a now standardized set of analytical methods and processes, known as Evaluation, Measurement and Verification (EM&V), that assess the actual performance of energy efficiency programs.

- **Measurement** includes data collection, monitoring and analysis on existing and new equipment to assess expected costs and energy savings for a particular efficiency project as accurately as possible. For example, a retrofit of lighting fixtures would require recording the number of hours the fixtures are used as well as the measured change in wattage in order to calculate savings.
- **Verification** compares initial measurement data to data collected typically a year after implementation to validate expected savings and ensure that equipment is installed and operating properly.
- **Evaluation** reviews the performance of the entire efficiency program to assess cost-effectiveness and whether it met its objectives and savings goals ([DOE 2014](#)).

9.1.1) Value of EM&V

In addition to ensuring that public spending on efficiency is prudent and cost-effective, EM&V also informs program design improvements, guides future investment decisions, and determines whether utilities receive performance-related incentives or penalties. Forward Capacity Markets use EM&V data to understand the impacts of efficiency programs on peak demand, determine capacity payment amounts to efficiency providers, and establish consistent, minimum requirements for quantifying savings across efficiency activities and jurisdictions. EM&V data also helps states confirm emissions reductions to meet National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS). At the customer level, EM&V can support a company's energy management and financial savings goals ([EPA 2017](#)).

9.1.2) Types of EM&V

- **Impact Evaluation** – Assesses outcomes of the changes attributable to an energy efficiency program. These evaluations answer questions for the first and second objectives described above about the accountability of the benefits and risk management.
- **Process Evaluation** – Assesses program operations to identify and recommend areas of improvement. These evaluations answer questions for the third objective above about program improvement.
- **Market Evaluation** – Assesses broad aspects of the marketplace with respect to energy efficiency. For example, a market effects evaluation characterizes changes in the structure or functioning of the market or the behavior of market participants that resulted from one or more

program efforts. These evaluations help to answer questions for all three objectives ([ACEEE 2017](#)).

9.2) Key Terms

- **Baseline Case** – A model used to represent a system’s energy usage before efficiency measures are implemented
- **Effective Useful Life (EUL)** – How long an efficiency project or measure is expected be operable and saving energy ([EPA 2017](#))
- **Deemed Savings** – The amount of energy saved per unit for a particular efficiency measure, typically determined in advance of installation, based on prior field data collected from a sample of customers ([NRDC 2017](#))

9.3) EM&V in Rhode Island

9.3.1) Accuracy and Accountability

In Rhode Island, utilities are required to file EM&V Plans and Reports, which are reviewed and approved by the Public Utilities Commission (PUC) and the Rhode Island Energy Efficiency Resource Management Council (EERMC). Rhode Island’s Least Cost Procurement Standards require EM&V Plans to address the following points:

- Savings verification, including where appropriate analysis of customer usage
- Verification should also facilitate participation in ISO-NE’s forward capacity market
- Issues of ongoing program design and effectiveness
- Efforts related to market assessment and methodologies to claim savings from market effects, among others
- Regional and other cooperative measurement and evaluation efforts the distribution company is participating in, or plans to participate in
- Longer-term studies, as appropriate, to assess programs over time

9.3.2) The Process

Rhode Island Energy hires independent consulting firms to regularly conduct evaluation studies as part of its measurement and verification process. These evaluations incorporate industry standard methods such as engineering analysis, metering analysis, billing analysis, site visits, surveys, and market studies to document the actual energy savings that particular measures are having. To achieve maximum benefits, it is also important to tailor EM&V protocols to the specific energy efficiency programs being assessed. Every year, the results of the surveys are used to update the benefit-cost calculations during planning.

9.3.3) Technical Reference Manual

Rhode Island’s Technical Reference Manual (TRM) documents the methodologies and assumptions used by Rhode Island Energy to estimate the energy savings, demand reduction, and other resource and non-energy impacts attributable to its electric and gas energy efficiency programs. This reference manual

provides methods, formulas and default assumptions for estimating energy, peak demand and other resource and non-energy impacts from efficiency measures. The TRM is reviewed and updated annually to reflect changes in technology, baselines and evaluation results.

9.4) Additional Resources

- [EM&V Overview](#)
- [Evaluation, Measurement & Verification | ACEEE](#)
- [EM&V for Energy Efficiency Policies and Initiatives](#)
- [Rhode Island Energy's 2026 EM&V Plan](#)
- [Rhode Island Technical Reference Manual](#)
- [Rhode Island Energy Evaluation Studies](#)

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