

2026 Rhode Island Energy Efficiency Equity Working Group Report

Prepared by Green & Healthy Homes Initiative-Rhode Island

For inclusion in
Rhode Island Energy's 2027 Plan

July 2026



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August 18, 2026

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RE: 2026 Rhode Island Energy Efficiency Equity Working Group Report

Dear Ms. Li:

On behalf of the Green & Healthy Homes Initiative-Rhode Island (GHHI-RI), please find attached the 2026 Rhode Island Energy Efficiency Equity Working Group (EWG) Report for inclusion with The Company's 2027 plan. We thank The Company for the opportunity to continue this work, and we are grateful to the Rhode Island Office of Energy Resources, EWG members, and partner organizations for their engagement, candid feedback, and partnership throughout the year.

This year marked two important milestones. With two full years of data in hand, the group is moving from understanding baselines to discerning trends among key equity related metrics, most notably the rise in the income-eligible audit-to-weatherization conversion rate from roughly 30% to 52% and increased participation by renters and residents of Environmental Justice communities in the EnergyWise program. The second development is the move from discussion to active collaboration as EWG members and partner organizations have started working directly to develop solutions, including and especially efforts to support and advance GHHI-RI's Whole House + Electrification Pilot. Notably, this initiative grew out of an earlier EWG recommendation to address health and safety hazards in homes that result in the deferral of significant numbers of low-income households from weatherization programs in Rhode Island.

Rhode Island's energy costs remain high, and the burden falls most heavily on the households least able to absorb it. Prioritizing equity in energy efficiency programming directs investment where it is most needed and generates significant returns in health, safety, affordability, and resilience for limited-income communities most in need of these services.

We are confident this report will be a useful tool for The Company, RI OER, the advocacy community, the Public Utilities Commission, and others working toward more equitable energy efficiency outcomes in Rhode Island, and we look forward to continuing this important work together.

Sincerely,

Signed by:

Ruth Ann Norton
President & CEO

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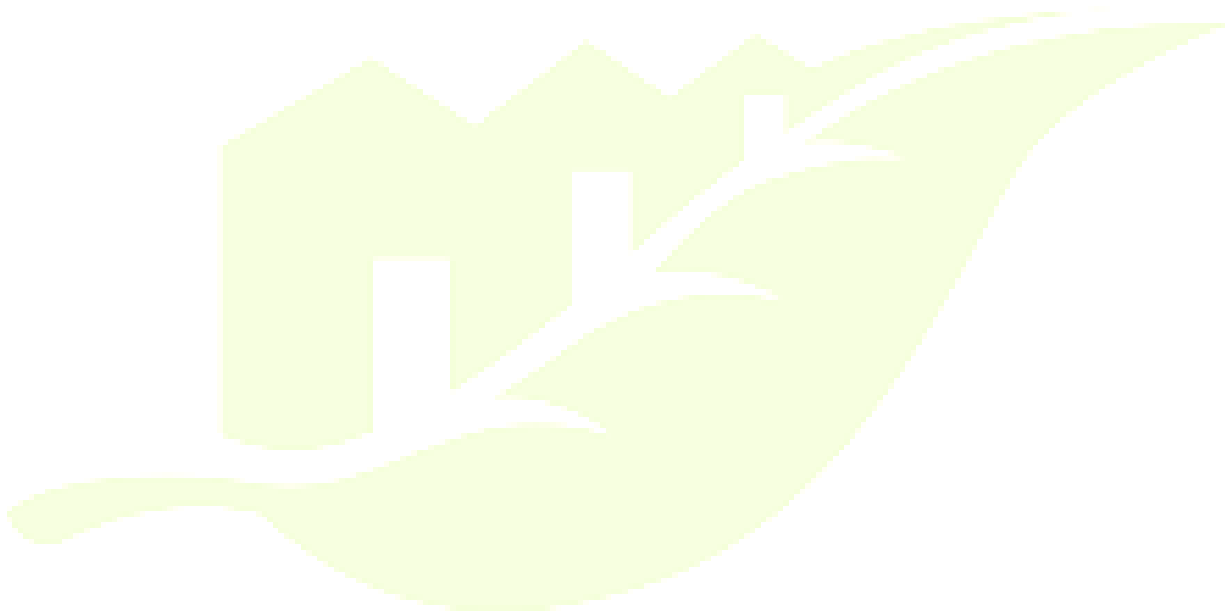
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Building on its commitment under the 2021–2023 Energy Efficiency Program Plan, Rhode Island Energy (The Company) continued its partnership with the Green & Healthy Homes Initiative (GHHI) in 2026 to facilitate the Rhode Island Energy Efficiency Equity Working Group (EWG). The EWG brings together representatives from state agencies, community-based organizations, advocacy groups, housing and health partners, and local subject matter experts to develop actionable recommendations that shape the planning, design, and delivery of Rhode Island's energy efficiency programs, so the Company can more effectively reach and serve historically underserved and under-resourced communities. This work is especially urgent given the high cost of energy in Rhode Island and the shared need to limit the impacts of climate change while ensuring the benefits of the clean energy transition reach everyone.

This year marked a distinct shift from identifying challenges toward moving to action. Across five thematic meetings from March through June 2026, members examined concrete, on-the-ground efforts, including GHHI-RI's and CAPP's collaboration on the Whole House + Electrification Pilot, Rhode Island Energy's small business and landlord outreach, the Providence Housing Authority's Housing Choice Voucher program, among others, and worked to connect, scale, and translate them into recommendations the Company can act on. Two developments framed the year: the arrival of a second full year of equity metric data, which allowed the group to begin discerning trends rather than simply establishing baselines; and Rhode Island Energy's move from an annual to a three-year (2027–2029) planning cycle, which creates space for the deeper, data-informed, multi-year work over time.

The table below summarizes the equity issues examined in 2026 and the suggested actions that emerged. Detailed discussion, examples of collaboration, emerging or promising local practices, and the full set of suggested actions for each topic appear in the body of the report.

2026 RI EWG Equity Issues & Suggested Actions

Energy Efficiency Equity Metrics: With two years of data in hand, the focus is shifting from baselines to trends. Suggested actions include continuing to disaggregate metrics by geography, customer type, and program track; carefully tracking pre-weatherization barriers and resolved deferrals; connecting outreach activities to metric outcomes; further developing workforce-diversity metrics, including tracking and reporting bilingual workforce capacity; continuing to develop equity related metrics during the new triennium; using data to establish targets; and incorporating equity metrics into the Company's Performance Incentive Mechanism (PIM) framework.

Improving Language Access: A Rhode Island–specific Language Access Needs Assessment of the Income Eligible Single-Family Program is mapping where language barriers arise across the customer journey. Suggested actions included incorporating direct customer voice into the assessment, strengthening the customer-service "warm handoff" between Rhode Island Energy and CAP agencies, providing end-to-end professional interpretation (not just translated documents), keeping materials at accessible literacy levels, and continuing to resource trusted community partners, while extending support beyond Spanish to Portuguese, Chinese, Khmer, Haitian Creole, and other languages across programs.

2026 RI EWG Equity Issues & Suggested Actions

Pre-Weatherization Barriers: Health and safety hazards remain a leading cause of weatherization deferrals. Suggested actions include raising or adding flexibility to health and safety spending caps, addressing reimbursement timing and cash flow for vendors and CAP agencies, sustaining, and expanding the braided-funding barrier-resolution model demonstrated by GHHI-RI's Whole House + Electrification Pilot, and deepening tracking of deferral rates, reasons, and resolutions by program type and CAP agency.

Small Business Outreach: Reaching small and diverse businesses, especially MWBEs and those in Environmental Justice communities, depends on trusted messengers and better measurement. Suggested actions include strengthening small business metrics to establish participation rates, framing case studies around financial returns rather than measures alone, growing and diversifying the outreach database, additional utilization of referral incentives, deepening partnerships with business associations, and ensuring language access across the small business customer journey.

Weatherization Workforce: A shortage of specialty contractors is directly driving deferrals. Suggested actions include coordinated, multi-agency contractor recruitment; braiding HUD and weatherization funds to build specialty- and MWBE-contractor capacity; reducing the up-front cost and time burdens that discourage training among contractors; adding specialty certifications to existing weatherization crews; facilitating cross-agency contractor sharing; revisiting competitive-bidding constraints where the pool is thin; and finalizing and reporting workforce-diversity metrics.

Landlord Recruitment & the Housing Choice Voucher Program: The year's top member priority, landlord and renter engagement, culminated in a concrete alignment with the Providence Housing Authority. Suggested actions include establishing a formal PHA–Rhode Island Energy referral pathway for voucher landlords, targeting Housing Quality Standards failures with weatherization and Whole House services, coordinating with municipal lead programs, framing landlord incentives around property value and unit preservation, and exploring dedicated funding to support Section 8 landlord participation. Explore similar collaboration with Rhode Island Housing and other Housing Choice Voucher administrators in the state.

Building on Past Recommendations. The RI EWG urges Rhode Island Energy to remain committed to advancing the core recommendations from previous years, particularly on multifamily housing, language access, pre-weatherization barrier funding, and the development, continued refinement, and tracking of equity metrics to ensure continuity, accountability, and long-term impact. Throughout this report, the individual topic sections note where the 2026 suggested actions align with and build upon recommendations from prior years. The full set of 2024 and 2025 RI EWG recommendations is included in the Appendix, so that recommendations which cannot be prioritized in the near term remain documented and can be revisited during the next triennial planning cycle.

INTRODUCTION

BACKGROUND

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

The EWG has given impacted communities, and the organizations that serve them, an ongoing and structured opportunity to collaborate and provide input and feedback on the planning and delivery of The Company's energy efficiency programs, with a specific focus on equity. In 2026, as in the previous year, each meeting agenda was built around a specific theme, such as Language Access or Pre-Weatherization Barriers, which allowed for deeper, more solution-focused discussions tied directly to member priorities identified during the first meeting of the year. Each meeting sought to highlight specific efforts or activities to seed conversation and to catalyze thinking about new activities and opportunities to improve equity related outcomes among EWG members.

The Company has contracted with the Green & Healthy Homes Initiative (GHHI) annually since 2021 to facilitate the EWG. GHHI is a national non-profit organization dedicated to addressing the housing-based causes of lead poisoning, asthma, injury, and energy inefficiency by creating homes that are healthy, safe, and resilient. By delivering a standard of excellence through merit-based, data-driven solutions, GHHI aims to eradicate the negative health impacts of unhealthy housing for children, seniors, and families, so that everyone has the opportunity to live, learn, work, and play in homes that support their health and well-being.

EWG RECRUITMENT AND PARTICIPATION

This year GHHI and The Company continued recruiting organizations from across Rhode Island, including those with deep experience serving limited-income households, Black and Brown communities, and other under-resourced populations disproportionately impacted by energy burdens, and were particularly pleased to welcome the Providence Housing Authority as an active participant in the EWG this year.

Both GHHI and The Company sought to include voices not traditionally heard in energy efficiency proceedings, including individual renters, small landlords, and others who have participated directly in Rhode Island Energy's weatherization and energy efficiency-funded services. To that end, in July 2026 GHHI hosted a Whole House Participant Customer Listening Group with current Whole House + Electrification participants, both homeowners and landlords, to hear directly about their experience of the program, from initial outreach through pre weatherization barrier resolution, weatherization, and project completion. Their feedback reinforced many of the suggested activities in this report, including and especially the val-

ue of trusted, community-based outreach and clear communication throughout the client journey; a fuller summary appears in the Supplemental Sources of Input section, with notes included in the appendices.

EWG MEETING TIMELINE AND TOPICS

At the first meeting of the year, members identified and prioritized the equity topics most important to them through a survey, and those priorities set the agenda for the meetings that followed. Of the 20 survey responses received, renter and landlord education and engagement emerged as the top priority, aligning closely with existing Rhode Island Energy efforts and shaping the topics addressed over the course of the year. The table below summarizes the 2026 meeting schedule and the topic addressed at each session.

Month	Topic of Discussion	Description
March 2	Language Access	Prioritizing member topics for the year and examining barriers non-English-speaking residents face in accessing programs, materials, and services.
March 30	Pre-Weatherization Barriers	Health and safety conditions (e.g., knob & tube wiring, mold, lead) that defer or delay weatherization, and strategies to address them.
May 18	Small Business Outreach	Reaching and supporting small and diverse businesses, including MWBEs, to participate in energy efficiency programs.
June 1	Metrics, Weatherization Workforce Challenges and Strategies	Recruiting, training, and retaining a diverse weatherization workforce, alongside a discussion of equity metrics.
June 22	Landlord Recruitment and the Housing Choice Voucher Program	Engaging landlords and connecting energy efficiency offerings to the Providence Housing Authority's Housing Choice Voucher Program.

ENERGY EFFICIENCY EQUITY METRICS

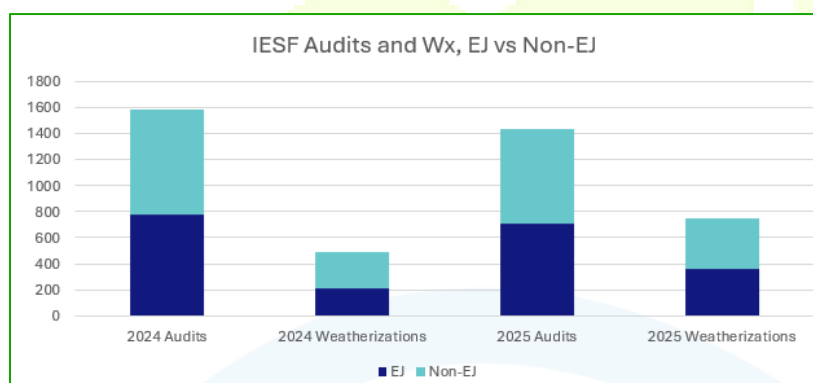
Over the past several years, Rhode Island Energy has worked with the EWG to build out a suite of equity metrics designed to move beyond simple participation counts toward a clearer understanding of who its energy efficiency programs are reaching, where gaps persist, and how residents move through the customer journey from audit to completed weatherization. These metrics were established with the group a couple of years ago and are submitted to the Public Utilities Commission as part of Rhode Island Energy's quarterly and year-end reports. The 2024 reporting year set the baseline for many of them.

This year marked an important milestone. As Brendan Dagher of Rhode Island Energy noted in presenting the 2025 year-end metrics on June 1, the Company now has two full years of equity metric data, which is beginning to make the numbers more meaningful and to allow the group to move from establishing baselines to discerning early trends. Importantly, Rhode Island Energy framed this year as the start of an ongoing effort to understand what the data is telling us - an effort to shift to a three-year planning cycle is expected to support by giving members more time to analyze programmatic trends and connect them to the plan over time.

Several encouraging trends emerged from the 2025 data, alongside a few that warrant closer attention.

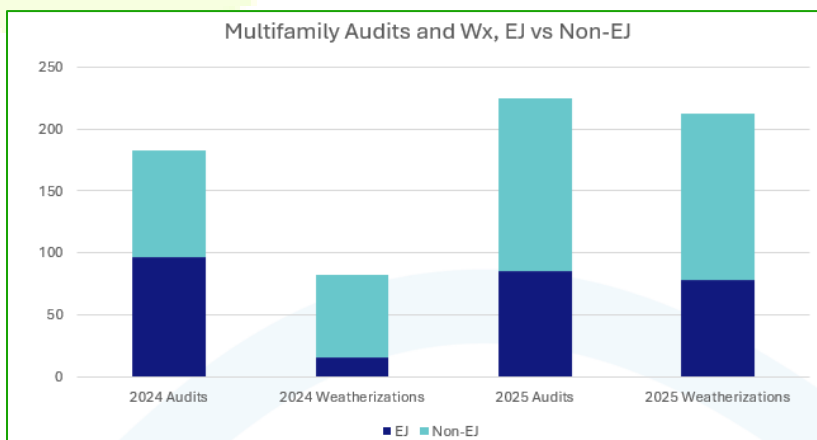
EnergyWise Single Family. Initial data from 2024 and 2025 showed a higher share of both audits and weatherization jobs occurring in Environmental Justice (EJ) communities, and the share of renters participating in audits and weatherization also increased. RI Energy noted that 2024 data is currently under review and that additional details will be provided at a later date. In 2025, of 9,789, total audits 2,664 were in EJ communities and 2,168 involved renters; of 4,374 total weatherization projects, 1,153 were in EJ communities and 908 involved renters.

Income Eligible Single Family. The most notable improvement appeared in the conversion of audits into completed weatherization projects, which rose from roughly 30% in 2024 to 52% in 2025. This gain allowed the program to increase total weatherization projects even as the total number of audits declined,

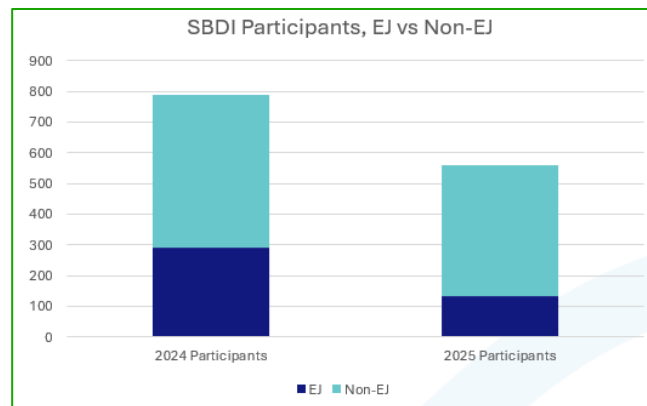


and the share of both audits and weatherization projects in EJ communities increased slightly year over year. In 2025 the program completed 1,438 audits (706 in EJ communities) and 752 weatherization projects (361 in EJ communities).

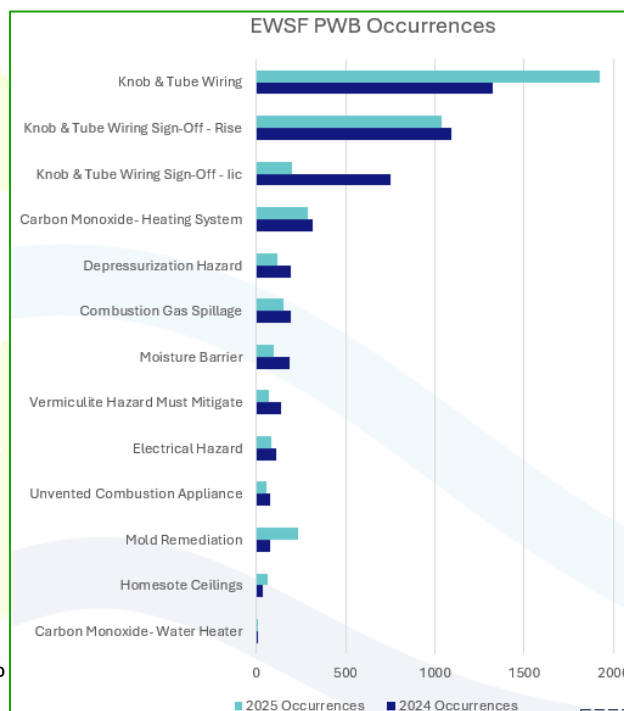
Multifamily. Both total weatherization projects and the weatherization conversion rate increased year over year, with 225 audits and 212 weatherization projects completed in 2025. As in prior discussions, Rhode Island Energy and members reiterated that these figures reflect project or building counts rather than individual units, and that the Company is working to shift toward a units-based view that will give a more accurate picture of true participation and program reach.



Small Business Direct Install. Newly featured in this year's reporting, the data showed that "microbusinesses" (those consuming under 100,000 kWh annually) represented nearly 80% of participants in 2025, up from 76% in 2024. The share of participants located in EJ communities declined from 37% in 2024 to 24% in 2025. Rhode Island Energy indicated it did not do anything markedly different between the two years and attributed the shift largely to the participation mix, while noting that it is still working to understand the trend. The Company is now conducting targeted marketing toward Minority- and Women-Owned Business Enterprises (as shared at the May EWG meeting), which it hopes will increase participation among these businesses going forward.

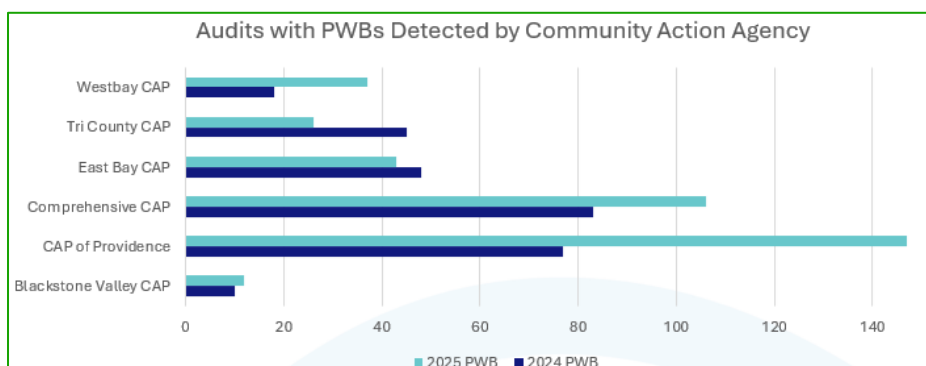


Pre-Weatherization Barriers (PWBs). Consistent with prior years, PWBs remained a central focus of the metrics discussion. In the EnergyWise (market rate) Single Family program, where barriers are tracked by type, knob & tube wiring continued to be by far the most common barrier, though total occurrences decreased slightly year over year, a decline Rhode Island Energy noted may partly reflect the dip in total audits. Members and staff also observed an uptick in mold-related barriers, the cause of which is not yet understood.



In the Income Eligible Single Family program, where deferrals and PWBs are tracked by Community Action Program (CAP) agency, the data showed a striking rise in the deferral rate: roughly 40% of audits were deferred in 2024 compared to about 62% in 2025, with PWBs accounting for 46% of deferrals in 2024 and 42% in 2025. Rhode Island Energy presented this data broken out by CAP agency, directly responding to prior EWG recommendations to disaggregate deferral information by region and agency.

The discussion around this increase was especially instructive, and members offered important context suggesting the increase reflects better data and sharper focus rather than simply worsening conditions:



- Carinel LeGrand credited CLEAResult, whose field staff have been working with the CAPs to clarify what can be billed to pre-weatherization barrier funds and to assess the cost-benefit of including repairs, and credited GHHL's pilot in Providence, which takes on housing repairs for homes that would otherwise be deferred and returns them to the CAPs to complete weatherization.
- Rhode Island Energy noted that the collective attention the group has given PWBs, combined with vendors' improved tracking, likely means the Company is simply capturing more complete data, not that conditions are deteriorating.
- Meredith Plante of CCAP added an important nuance: a meaningful share of deferrals stem not from resolvable barriers but from inadequate savings-to-investment ratios (SIRs), often in homes that were weatherized years ago and now yield only small, non-energy-saving jobs (such as health-and-safety measures) that CLEAResult advises against pursuing. Atticus Makuch of Rhode Island Energy confirmed that these SIR-related and previously weatherized deferrals are counted in the total deferral figure but are not classified as PWBs, since they are not barriers the program can resolve.

Members suggested it would be helpful to track the SIR/cost-effectiveness reason for deferral explicitly, to add context to the deferral data. Rhode Island Energy agreed to explore whether its system of record can capture this on the income-eligible side, where, unlike the market-rate program, PWBs are not currently broken out by type.

Workforce Diversity Metric. Margie Lynch reminded the group that Rhode Island Energy had committed to a workforce diversity equity metric that remains in development. Rhode Island Energy confirmed the metric is still on its radar and continues to be worked on with the Company's supply chain team.

Key Observations

Beyond the specific figures, the June 1 discussion reinforced a theme that has run through the EWG's engagement on metrics: the numbers alone are not the point. Understanding who is being reached, what obstacles stand in their way, and why the data moves the way it does is what makes the metrics actionable. The value of a second year of comparable data was evident throughout, it was precisely the year-over-year comparisons that surfaced the most useful insights, from the encouraging jump in Income Eligible conversion rates, to the decline in EJ small-business participation, to the deferral-rate increase that, on closer examination, appears to reflect better tracking and targeted intervention rather than deteriorating conditions. As Rhode Island Energy emphasized, the coming year will bring more trend analysis now that the Company has meaningful longitudinal data, and the three-year planning horizon should create space for the deeper, data-informed discussions members have been calling for.

Suggested Actions and Related Past Recommendations

Building on this progress, the EWG's suggested actions on equity metrics carry forward and refine recommendations from prior years:

1. **Disaggregate equity metrics for deeper insight (2024, 2025):** Continue breaking down the data by geography (e.g., rural vs. urban), customer type (e.g., renter vs. homeowner and other demographics), and program track (e.g., market rate vs. income eligible, single family vs. multifamily), and advance the shift to reporting total individual units, rather than only project or building counts, for the Multifamily program.
2. **Continue to track and report on pre-weatherization barriers (2024, 2025):** Track deferrals that are later resolved and returned to weatherization, by barrier type, program type and by CAP and/or region. In addition, as raised at the June 1 meeting, explore capturing the reason for defer-

ral, including SIR/cost-effectiveness and previously weatherized status on the income-eligible side, so that the distinction between resolvable PWBs and non-resolvable deferrals is clear in the data. Establish a framework for capturing the individual health, safety, and comfort benefits of remediating pre-weatherization barriers.

3. **Connect outreach activities to metric outcomes:** Continue building toward the ability to link specific outreach efforts, such as the landlord listening sessions, to movement in participation metrics (e.g., renter engagement), a connection Rhode Island Energy has identified as a goal but has not yet realized.
4. **Finalize and add tracking and reporting on workforce diversity (2024, 2025):** Rhode Island Energy has not yet finalized workforce development metrics and will continue working with the PPL supply chain team to determine what is feasible, with an update to the group anticipated at a future meeting.
5. **Continue to develop equity related metrics during the new Triennium:** As the Company continues to build its data collection and analysis capacity, Add key equity related metrics to the existing set to deepen understanding among EWG members and Company staff of issues, challenges, opportunities, and progress towards outcomes. Examples include EWG suggestions for tracking language access, small business participation rates by key geographies and distribution of funding by key geographies and funding types.
6. **Use data to Establish Targets:** Work to set quantitative targets for equity metrics, or at least standards for directional trends, such as an increase in quantity by percentage. If a trend is heading in the opposite direction, consider a trigger to require course correction
7. **Incorporate Equity Metrics into The Company's Performance Incentive Mechanism (PIM) Framework.** Develop a specific timeline to incorporate equity metrics into Rhode Island Energy's PIM mechanism , both non-binding then binding and ensure both positive and negative PIMs.

MEETING SUMMARIES, SUGGESTED ACTIONS, COLLABORATION, AND PROMISING PRACTICES

PRIORITY TOPICS AND LANGUAGE ACCESS: MARCH 2, 2026

MEETING SUMMARY

EWG PURPOSE, SCOPE UPDATES, AND YEAR PRIORITIES

The first meeting of the year opened with a refresher on the purpose of the Equity Working Group (EWG) and two framing updates that shaped the work ahead. First, GHHI-RI noted an addition to this year's scope: GHHI-RI will plan at least one customer engagement and listening session with its clients, drawing on the households it is helping to resolve pre-weatherization barriers, so their firsthand experiences can inform both the group's work and the plan Rhode Island Energy (the Company) ultimately submits. Second, Rhode Island Energy shared that it anticipates moving from an annual to a three-year energy efficiency planning horizon, with a three-year plan expected to be submitted in the fall and covering program years 2027–2029. Members were encouraged to think about equity strategies and metrics in that longer, more strategic frame, considering how efforts grow and can be evaluated over multiple years rather than resetting each planning cycle.

Members then completed a live poll to prioritize focus areas for the year. Twenty survey responses were received, with landlord and renter education and engagement emerging as the most requested topic, followed closely by barriers to weatherization, workforce development, small business outreach, equitable marketing, and trust and engagement. These results were used to shape the meeting calendar and agendas for the remainder of the year.

LANGUAGE ACCESS NEEDS ASSESSMENT

The core of the meeting was a deep dive on language access. Kathryne Cleary of Guidehouse and Ann Clarke of Rhode Island Energy presented an overview of a Language Access Needs Assessment underway for the Company and focused on the Income Eligible Single-Family (IESF) Program. The study is designed to understand the experiences, barriers, and pain points of customers who speak a language other than English (LOTE) and to develop a customer journey map identifying where barriers arise across three phases: pre-participation (marketing and outreach), intake and enrollment, and participation (contractors in the home). Research questions include which resources are currently available to LOTE customers, how current implementation plans address or fail to address, language access, which languages are most in need of additional resources, and what improvements could increase participation. The assessment focuses on Spanish, the most widely spoken language among the LOTE population, while also reviewing materials available in other languages such as Portuguese, Mandarin, and Cantonese to identify gaps. Methods include a review of program materials and prior research, roughly twelve interviews with program implementation staff across two CAPs (intake and administrative staff, auditors, and installation contractors), and development of the journey map and recommendations. The study was expected to be completed by July 2026 so its findings could inform the upcoming planning process.

GHHI-RI's Anabel Espinal, the organization's bilingual Client Intake Specialist and Health Educator, grounded the discussion in direct experience serving primarily Spanish-speaking clients in Providence, describing several recurring barriers:

- Program applications, eligibility requirements, and supporting documentation are frequently written in English, often technical English, leading families to rely on children or other relatives to translate complex information, which can produce misunderstandings and incomplete applications.
- Customer service lines can become a dead end when no Spanish-speaking representative is available.
- Older and less tech-savvy clients struggle with online applications and would benefit from hands-on navigation support.
- Trust in sharing documentation is a real concern for immigrant and limited-English households.
- Out-of-pocket costs for repairs needed to clear pre-weatherization barriers keeps some families from participating altogether.

EWG members raised the importance of hearing directly from customers or the groups that represent them, not only implementation staff, to capture firsthand experience of language barriers. Rhode Island Energy acknowledged budget and participant-identification constraints on the study itself but pointed to future listening sessions as avenues for that direct input. A practical, recurring theme was the customer service “handoff”: Dayanarah Baez from the Community Action Partnership of Providence (CAPP) described clients who call Rhode Island Energy’s main line and are redirected without background or a warm handoff, causing families to get lost in between. Members suggested better educating Company representatives on available programs and referral pathways, and providing CAP agencies with advance notice and background before referrals arrive to facilitate warm handoffs. On a positive note, the group confirmed that nearly all of CAPP’s energy auditors are bilingual, and that bilingual capacity is deliberately

prioritized in hiring, so translation at the in-home assessment stage is generally strong; the breakdown tends to occur earlier, at the first point of contact.

Members then broke into small groups to discuss two questions: what barriers LOTE households experience in accessing the IESF weatherization and energy efficiency services, and what feedback they had for Rhode Island Energy to make the assessment as useful as possible. Report-outs surfaced themes including the value of trusted community settings for information exchange, the need to keep materials and presentations at accessible literacy levels rather than overly technical, the importance of extended office hours to accommodate people working multiple jobs or late shifts, and the benefit of a navigator or “handholding” role to guide families through complex, multi-program processes. The meeting closed with two announcements: Rhode Island was selected by ACEEE for technical assistance (with the City of Central Falls and the nonprofit Children’s Friend) to pilot an energy navigator program focused on renter participation, building on prior University of Rhode Island work; and GHHI-RI’s Whole House + Electrification effort is officially underway.

To help contextualize the assessment’s Spanish-first focus and identify where additional language resources may be warranted, the table below summarizes the most commonly spoken non-English languages in Rhode Island using U.S. Census Bureau data. It reports each language’s total speakers (age 5 and over) and the number who speak English less than “very well”, the standard measure of Limited English Proficiency (LEP), which indicates where interpretation and translation needs are likely greatest. Statewide, roughly 236,340 residents speak a language other than English at home, of whom about 89,645 (approximately 38%) are LEP.

#	Language	Total speakers (5+)	% of non-English	LEP speakers	% of all LEP	LEP rate within lang.
1	Spanish	135,886	57.5%	57,257	63.9%	42%
2	Portuguese	29,314	12.4%	10,787	12.0%	37%
3	Haitian	9,259	3.9%	3,030	3.4%	33%
4	French (incl. Cajun)	8,352	3.5%	1,700	1.9%	20%
5	Chinese (incl. Mandarin, Cantonese)	7,218	3.1%	3,343	3.7%	46%
6	Italian	4,439	1.9%	1,025	1.1%	23%
7	Yoruba, Twi, Igbo, or other languages of Western Africa	4,297	1.8%	1,326	1.5%	31%
8	Khmer	4,288	1.8%	1,969	2.2%	46%
	Top 8 subtotal	203,053	85.9%	80,437	89.7%	
	All non-English speakers (5+)	236,340	100%	89,645	100%	

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey (ACS) 2023 5-Year Estimates, Table B16001 (Language Spoken at Home by Ability to Speak English for the Population 5 Years and Over). “LEP speakers” are those who speak English less than “very well.” “% of non-English” is each language’s share of all Rhode Islanders age 5+ who speak a language other than English at home; “% of all LEP” is each language’s share of all LEP speakers statewide; “LEP rate within language” is the share of that language’s speakers who are LEP. Note: the totals reflect all non-English languages, not only the eight shown. Estimates for ranks 6–8 (Italian, Western African languages, and Khmer) fall within one another’s margins of error, so their ordering should be treated as approximate.

EMERGING COLLABORATION AND PROMISING PRACTICES

Several promising practices and points of collaboration emerged from the discussion:

- Rhode Island–specific Language Access Needs Assessment.** Rather than relying on studies from other states, Rhode Island Energy commissioned a tailored assessment (via Guidehouse and E Source) of language barriers within its Income Eligible Single-Family Program, building on comprehensive work previously done in Massachusetts but scoped specifically to Rhode Island customers and program realities. Its customer journey map approach, mapping barriers by phase from marketing through in-home participation, will give the Company a structured, actionable tool for targeting improvements.
- Linking the Assessment to GHHI-RI Listening Sessions.** In response to member feedback that the study should capture direct customer voice, GHHI-RI and Rhode Island Energy identified a concrete opportunity to collaborate: GHHI-RI can convene households it is already serving, those deferred from weatherization for pre-weatherization barriers, into a focus group. This offers a way to layer qualitative, firsthand input onto a study otherwise limited to implementation-staff interviews. (GHHI-RI convened this session in July 2026; see the “Whole House Participant Customer Listening Group” write-up under Supplemental Sources of Input later in this report.)
- Leveraging existing bilingual auditor capacity.** CAPP confirmed that nearly all of its energy auditors are bilingual and that bilingual capacity is prioritized in hiring, with a bilingual pre-assessment conducted before the in-home visit. This is a strong existing practice worth documenting and sustaining as a model for other programs serving LOTE populations. The efficacy of this approach by CAPP was confirmed by participants during the Whole House listening session. (see the “Whole House Customer Listening Group” write-up under Supplemental Sources of Input later in this report).
- Reaching residents through trusted community settings and partners.** Members highlighted the power of working through organizations that residents already trust and interact with daily, including CAP agencies, community-based organizations, public libraries, adult education and ESL classrooms, and nonprofits such as Progreso Latino in Central Falls. One member described how educators are often open to brief (15-minute) in-class presentations to already-engaged multilingual learners, illustrating how outreach can meet residents where they already are rather than asking them to come to a designated meeting. The efficacy of this approach was confirmed by participants during the Whole House listening session. (see the “Whole House Customer Listening Group” write-up under Supplemental Sources of Input later in this report).
- The GHHI-RI–CAPP “barrier resolution” relationship as a trust and engagement asset.** GHHI-RI noted that because its role is to resolve the barriers that caused a household’s deferral and return them to the weatherization program, families are eager and excited to engage, creating a natural, trust-rich opening to involve them in listening sessions and problem-solving. This trust dynamic was affirmed during GHHI-RI’s Whole House listening session, where participants described CAPP and GHHI-RI as trustworthy partners (see the “Whole House Customer Listening Group” write-up under Supplemental Sources of Input later in this report).
- ACEEE Energy Equity for Renters technical assistance.** Rhode Island’s selection for ACEEE technical assistance, partnering with the City of Central Falls and Children’s Friend to pilot an energy

navigator program for renters, building on prior URI Cooperative Extension community engagement, brings national-level expertise to bear on many of the same language and cultural access issues the EWG is examining, with Rhode Island Energy as a core partner.

SUGGESTED ACTIONS AND RELATED PAST RECOMMENDATIONS

The following suggested actions emerged from this discussion, several of which reinforce and build on recommendations from prior EWG years:

- 1. Incorporate direct customer voice into the Language Access Assessment.** Supplement the study's implementation-staff interviews with firsthand input from LOTE customers and the organizations that represent them through GHHI-RI-convened listening sessions of deferred households and other listening sessions and design that engagement to meet customers where they are (e.g., partnering with Community Action agencies and community groups to host focus groups or brief surveys).
- 2. Strengthen the customer service "warm handoff" between Rhode Island Energy and CAP agencies.** Educate Company customer service representatives on the full menu of available programs and correct referral pathways so callers are not simply told to "contact the CAP agency," and establish a warm handoff that gives CAP weatherization staff advance notice and background on a family's needs before the referral arrives, reducing the number of clients lost between the two organizations.
- 3. Ensure end-to-end, professional language support, not just translated documents.** Provide professional interpreting services (avoiding reliance on children or relatives to translate), Spanish-capable customer service lines, and navigation help for online applications, particularly for older or less tech-savvy residents. This echoes prior EWG recommendations to translate all materials, applications, and deferral forms into multiple languages and to provide real-time interpretation at meetings and outreach events, and to extend language support beyond Spanish (e.g., Portuguese, Khmer, Creole, Chinese). (Builds on prior EWG recommendations: 2024, 2025.)
- 4. Keep materials and communication at accessible literacy levels.** Ensure outreach materials and presentations are written in plain, non-technical language appropriate to the audience's literacy level, complementing prior recommendations to create simple, multilingual explainer materials and FAQs outlining steps to participate, timelines, incentive amounts, and common barriers. (Builds on prior EWG recommendations: 2025.)
- 5. Clearly communicate privacy and documentation protections to build trust.** Proactively explain how customer information and documentation will be used and protected, and deliver that message through trusted community partners, to address the documentation-related trust concerns that limit participation among immigrant and limited-English households.
- 6. Expand access through extended hours and navigation support.** Offer later or more flexible office and phone hours, with in-language coverage during those hours, to accommodate residents working multiple jobs or late shifts, and pilot a navigator role (aligned with the ACEEE-supported energy navigator pilot in Central Falls) to guide families through complex, multi-program processes.
- 7. Continue to leverage and resource trusted community partners.** Deepen partnerships with CAP agencies, libraries, ESL and adult-education programs, faith-based networks, and immigrant-serving nonprofits to conduct outreach and translation where residents already gather. This reinforces prior EWG recommendations to strengthen partnerships with trusted local organizations (modeled on the

Massachusetts Community First Partnership) and to expand in-person presence in trusted community settings with bilingual staff. (Builds on prior EWG recommendations: 2024, 2025.)

- 8. Track and report bilingual workforce capacity as an equity indicator.** Consider tracking and reporting the share of auditors and key touchpoint staff who are bilingual (and in which languages) to confirm capacity matches the languages of the customers being served, consistent with prior recommendations to expand multilingual contractor training and establish clear, disaggregated workforce metrics. (Builds on prior EWG recommendations: 2025.)
- 9. Use assessment findings to inform the three-year plan and disaggregated metrics.** Ensure the completed Language Access Assessment's recommendations feed directly into the 2027–2029 planning cycle for the IESF program and other programs, and continue prior recommendations to disaggregate equity metrics (including by language) and to report on outreach outcomes so language access progress can be measured over the multi-year horizon. (Builds on prior EWG recommendations: 2025.)

PRE-WEATHERIZATION BARRIERS: MARCH 30, 2026

MEETING SUMMARY

TOPIC DEEP DIVE: PRE-WEATHERIZATION BARRIERS

The core of the meeting was a deep dive on pre-weatherization barriers (PWBs), the health and safety hazards and home-repair needs that cause a household to be deferred from the Weatherization Assistance Program (WAP) before energy efficiency work can safely proceed. Two presenters anchored the discussion: David Banno, President & CEO of the Community Action Partnership of Providence (CAPP), and Bryan Evans, Program Manager for GHHI-RI's Whole House + Electrification Pilot, with additional context from RI OER on a statewide "Whole House" legislative study commission.

David Banno framed the challenge from the CAP agency's vantage point, identifying the primary drivers of WAP deferrals: a shortage of electrical vendors, knob and tube (K&T) wiring, and limited bidding among available contractors. To address the electrical vendor bottleneck directly, CAPP launched Community Home Improvement of Providence (CHIP), a for-profit subsidiary with a non-profit mission, established to function initially as an electrical vendor. Before standing CHIP up, CAPP consulted its weatherization vendors to confirm they did not view the arrangement as a conflict; vendors were supportive of the approach and of having electrical work completed in advance of weatherization. CHIP is structured to break even rather than generate profit. CAPP has braided in a congressional appropriation to fund knob and tube work, expanded its teams to meet demand (two crews in place with hopes of adding a third), and is considering adding a plumbing crew to work on boilers. CHIP also serves as a vendor as part of GHHI-RI's Whole House + Electrification Pilot.

Bryan Evans then presented GHHI-RI's Providence Whole House + Electrification Pilot, which targets low-income Providence households deferred from CAPP's weatherization program due to health and safety hazards. The pilot's objective is to remediate 45 units and return them to CAPP for weatherization, with 6 of those units also receiving electrification or electrification-readiness measures. The effort is funded through the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative (RGGI) and HUD's Healthy Homes Production Grant Program, with additional administrative support from the Rhode Island Foundation. Deferral reasons being addressed include knob and tube wiring, pest infestation, hoarding and clutter, oil tank leaks, chimney and roof repairs, frayed or damaged asbestos, and mold remediation. Evans reported that client engage-

ment has been strong, largely because clients understand the need to resolve these barriers and return to weatherization. Notably, CAPP is braiding in RI OER's Home Electrification & Appliance Rebate (HEAR) incentives alongside weatherization measures once a unit re-enters the pipeline.

The Pilot is growing as CAPP has referred to 250+ units going back to the beginning of 2024, of which 68 deferrals have been enrolled in GHHI-RI services to date and 45 are in the pipeline for RGGI funding. Of the 22 RGGI-eligible units underway since the December start, health and safety work had been completed on 5 units and was in progress on another 17. Across those 22 completed or in-progress units, total spend was approximately \$431,000 (roughly \$19,600 per unit on average, blending RGGI and HUD funds). Evans shared two case studies to illustrate the model: a three-unit property owned by a resident homeowner-landlord, deferred due to live knob and tube wiring, out-of-code electrical panels, mold, frayed asbestos, radiators in disrepair, and lead-based paint hazards, remediated at a total cost of roughly \$88,800; and the home of an elderly homeowner left without heat for weeks by a severely leaking oil tank, where the immediate crisis was resolved and the HEAR Program is addressing knob and tube wiring to clear the path to full weatherization.

Steven Chybowski of RI OER described the Whole-Home Repairs Program Legislative Commission, formally, the Special Legislative Commission to Study and Provide Recommendations for the Creation of a Whole-Home Repairs Program, a body composed of state legislators and agency representatives examining the current affordable housing shortage alongside housing preservation needs and strategies. The Commission is developing a final report with findings drawn from discussions with current service providers and recommendations to prioritize and fund this work going forward. GHHI-RI had presented its Whole House pilot to the Commission.

DISCUSSION

The discussion focused on the structural and financial obstacles that constrain how quickly deferrals can be resolved at scale. Members discussed current efforts to address deferrals caused by spending caps on health and safety measures, noting that raising those caps where possible would help. A related and recurring theme was reimbursement: the state program's reimbursement rate and payment timeframe can create serious cash-flow challenges, to the point that some of CAPP's vendors cannot start new jobs while waiting on payment for completed work. Carinel LeGrand of Rhode Island Energy shared that she had raised the payment issue with CLEAResult and with the state Weatherization Assistance Program office contact.

CAPP has deferred roughly 250 units over two years, while GHHI-RI has thus far addressed health and safety measures in about 25 units to return them for weatherization using HUD and/or RGGI funding. Members observed that the Legislative Commission is exploring statewide scaling needs and financial sustainability, and that the current pilots represent a valuable opportunity to track cost and procurement issues to support future planning for deferral prevention.

EMERGING COLLABORATION AND PROMISING PRACTICES

Several promising practices and collaborations emerged from the discussion:

- **GHHI-RI and CAPP Collaboration to address PWBs.** The central promising practice is the coordinated hand-off between CAPP and GHHI-RI: households deferred from CAPP's Weatherization Assistance Program for health and safety hazards are referred to GHHI-RI's Whole House + Electrification Pilot, which remediates the deferral reason and returns the unit to CAPP so weatherization can

proceed. This creates a clear, trackable pathway out of the deferral queue rather than leaving deferred households stalled indefinitely, and clients have engaged readily because they understand the connection between resolving the barrier and completing weatherization.

- **Standing up a mission-driven electrical vendor (CHIP) to break a supply bottleneck.** Rather than accept the shortage of electrical vendors as a fixed constraint, CAPP created Community Home Improvement of Providence (CHIP), a for-profit subsidiary with a non-profit mission designed to break even, to perform the electrical and knob and tube work that so often drives deferrals. CHIP also serves as a key vendor for GHHI-RI Whole House projects, extending its value across both organizations.
- **Braiding and layering multiple funding sources.** The pilot demonstrates valuable funding coordination, combining RGGI and HUD Healthy Homes Production Grant funds for health and safety barrier remediation, CAPP's congressional appropriation to address PWB's, and RI OER's HEAR incentives braided in alongside weatherization once units return to the pipeline. This layered approach stretches limited weatherization dollars and addresses hazards that no single funding stream would cover on its own. This work advances and helps realize prior EWG recommendations to strategically align, braid, and leverage Healthy Homes, Lead Hazard Control, and other funding to address pre-weatherization deferrals.
- **Developing pilot program outcome evaluation for funding and policy development.** Members recognized that the current pilots are an opportunity to track cost, procurement, and deferral-resolution data that can inform future planning for deferral prevention. The detailed unit-level cost tracking already underway (average per-unit spend, funding-source breakdowns, and categorized deferral reasons) provides an evidence base the Company and its partners can use to plan for scaling.
- **Aligning with the Whole-Home Repairs Program Legislative Commission.** The statewide Commission, bringing together legislators and agency representatives to examine housing preservation and financial sustainability, creates an opening to connect the EWG's and GHHI-RI's on-the-ground learnings to a state-level policy and funding conversation, and creates an opportunity for EWG members to advocate together to ensure that promising local practices can be prioritized and funded at scale to address PWBs.

SUGGESTED ACTIONS AND RELATED PAST RECOMMENDATIONS

The following suggested actions emerged from the March 30 discussion, several of which reinforce and build on recommendations from prior EWG years:

1. **Raise or provide flexibility on health and safety spending caps.** Revisit the spending caps on health and safety measures that currently force deferrals, and raise them where possible so that more units can have their barriers resolved without exhausting available funds. This directly addresses a constraint members identified as limiting how many deferred households can be returned to weatherization.
2. **Address reimbursement timing and cash flow for vendors and CAP agencies.** Work with the state WAP office and program implementers to improve the reimbursement rate and shorten the 60-day payment timeframe, which currently strands vendors who cannot begin new jobs while awaiting payment. Reducing this cash-flow bottleneck would directly increase the pace at which deferrals can be resolved. (Builds on prior EWG recommendations: 2025.)
3. **Continue to support implementation and expansion of the Whole House + Electrification Pilot to strategically align, braid and coordinate Healthy Housing, Regional Green House Gas Initiative, and other funding to address deferrals.** Sustain and expand the layered-funding model

demonstrated by GHHI-RI's Whole House Pilot, aligning funding opportunities such as HUD's Lead Hazard Reduction and Healthy Homes Production programs, RGGI, and HEAR incentives, so that hazards like mold, knob and tube wiring, asbestos, oil tank leaks, and inoperable heating systems can be remediated ahead of weatherization. Use the evidence generated by the current pilots, per-unit costs, procurement lessons, and the units still in the queue, to plan proactively for scaling beyond the pilot's 45 units, so that the gap between the volume of deferrals and the capacity to resolve them narrows over time rather than widening. (Builds on prior EWG recommendations: 2024, 2025.)

- 4. Deepen initial tracking and reporting on pre weatherization barriers and deferrals as an equity metric.** Rhode Island Energy is now tracking deferral data, and the pilots are generating detailed unit-level data on cost, procurement, and deferral resolution. Build on both to develop consistent tracking of deferral rates, deferral reasons, and deferrals that later result in completed weatherization (i.e., resolved barriers), disaggregated by program type and by CAP agency or region. Members noted the pilots are an opportunity to capture cost and procurement data to support deferral-prevention planning; formalizing an interim reporting tool would allow comparison between the Income Eligible and Market Rate programs. (Builds on prior EWG recommendations: 2025.)
- 5. Invest in and grow the electrical and specialty-trade vendor pipeline.** Support models like CHIP that expand electrical, knob and tube, and boiler/plumbing capacity to relieve the vendor shortages and job stagnation that drive deferrals, including CAPP's plans to add crews and consider a dedicated plumbing crew for boilers. Coordinating this with weatherization workforce development ensures the specialized trades needed to clear pre-weatherization barriers are available where deferrals are concentrated. (See the Weatherization Workforce section later in this report, where this recommendation is also reflected.)
- 6. Coordinate with the Whole-Home Repairs Program Legislative Commission on shared barriers and solutions.** Share the EWG's and GHHI-RI's learnings, cost data, and promising practices with the Commission as it develops its recommendations, and use that channel to advocate for prioritizing and funding deferral-resolution work statewide. (Builds on prior EWG recommendations: 2025.)
- 7. Continue integrating electrification and HEAR measures into the barrier-resolution pathway.** Sustain the practice of braiding electrification and electrification-readiness measures, including HEAR incentives, into units as they move from deferral through remediation to weatherization, so that health, safety, energy efficiency, and electrification goals are advanced together rather than in separate, disconnected efforts.

SMALL BUSINESS OUTREACH: MAY 18, 2026

MEETING SUMMARY

TOPIC DEEP DIVE: RHODE ISLAND ENERGY'S SMALL BUSINESS OUTREACH EFFORTS

Leigh Edie presented an overview of the range of strategies the Company has deployed over the past year to reach small businesses, with an emphasis on MWBEs and businesses in Environmental Justice (EJ) communities. Central to the approach is partnering with trusted organizations that already engage with these businesses to build relationships. A key example is the Company's partnership with the Rhode Island Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, through which the team co-created a video, available in both Spanish and English, which gives minority business owners an approachable view of what to expect during an energy assessment, helping remove language and informational barriers to participation. The

Chamber also advertises the small business program in its bilingual bi-monthly newsletter. Program resources, including these videos, are housed at RIEnergy.com/Small-Business.

To extend the reach of partner organizations, the Company launched a monthly newsletter designed specifically for organizations that support women- and minority-owned businesses, along with a resource website where partners can download small business energy efficiency materials in multiple languages to share within their own networks. The Company also produces a small business newsletter that reaches approximately 26,000 small business customers each month, featuring program information, energy efficiency articles, case studies, testimonials, and quotes from community members and local officials, as well as an invitation for businesses to be featured in the program spotlight.

Leigh described several recent and emerging outreach tactics: a new testimonial video produced in partnership with Down City Design; a social media partnership with Uncle Tony's Pizza & Pasta in East Providence, offering a free pizza to East Providence businesses that completed a no-cost assessment and signed a contract during an Earth Day promotion; a shift away from stock photography toward real customer advertising (featuring the South County Art Association); and a Women-Owned Business Enterprise (WBE) video featuring McGuinness Media & Marketing, a certified women-owned business. On the horizon, the Company is developing a partnership with the Center for Women & Enterprise (CWE) and exploring work with the Rhode Island Builders Association (RIBA) to involve a minority contractor in a small business project. Leigh reported that in 2025 the small business program completed 561 projects, of which 135 participants were from EJ communities, and that roughly 80% of projects came from "micro" small businesses consuming less than 100,000 kWh. The Company planned to kick off Main Street campaigns in three EJ communities, combining direct mail, email, social media, and on-the-ground canvassing by RISE.

DISCUSSION

Members engaged actively in discussion of how to strengthen and measure the Company's outreach. Adrian Caesar observed that several of the online case studies emphasize lighting, and that, given the market's movement away from LED incentives, it may be worth highlighting other measures; he also encouraged framing case studies around energy cost savings and financial metrics (such as annual energy cost savings and return on investment) to better resonate with small business owners, who think in terms of cash flow. Adrian and others pressed on measurement, suggesting the Company track participation rates among small businesses in both EJ and non-EJ communities to understand saturation over time, and add a denominator to the consumption-bin figures already reported so that actual participation rates by geography can be calculated. Leigh acknowledged that it is difficult to attribute enrollment gains to specific marketing efforts given data and tracking limitations, though she believes the efforts are bringing more women- and minority-owned businesses into the program.

A recurring theme was the power of word-of-mouth and trusted intermediaries. Peter Gill Case asked whether staff "pound the pavement" in a community after a successful project, noting that word-of-mouth is the best way to reach these businesses and that the goal is to make participation "contagious." Mark Siegal explained that this is the aim of the Company's Main Street effort, which uses newsletters, videos, and social media to drive audit requests, and asked the group for additional channels to help grow the outreach and contact database from roughly 25,000 to 50,000 businesses, with a focus on MWBEs. Members suggested referral incentives such as gift cards to encourage current participants to refer others. Mark noted the difficulty of obtaining a usable statewide list of MWBE contractors, the list on the Department of Administration (DOA) website contains only about 700 businesses, and Bert Cooper and Emily

Koo pointed to the City of Providence's MWBE data (potentially accessible through the City's Office of Sustainability) and Grace Diaz as a contact for Providence outreach. Adrian noted that there are close to 50,000 small businesses in the state, underscoring the room to grow. The discussion also touched on the value of financial storytelling (showing before-and-after bills and ROI), the Company's on-bill financing option (allowing customers to pay their contribution interest-free over roughly two years, matched to projected savings), refrigerant leakage (with the Company looking to bring on refrigeration firms as part of its 2026–2027 business-focused programs), and the value of working through business associations such as the RI Black Business Association, RI Manufacturers Association, RI Hospitality Association, and partners like the Quonset Development Corporation.

EMERGING COLLABORATION AND PROMISING PRACTICES

Several promising practices and potential points of collaboration emerged from the discussion:

- **Partnering with trusted, culturally specific business organizations.** The Company's collaboration with the Rhode Island Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, co-creating a bilingual assessment explainer video and advertising the program in the Chamber's bilingual newsletter, illustrates how working through organizations that MWBEs already trust can lower language and informational barriers. The developing partnerships with the Center for Women & Enterprise (CWE) and the RI Black Business Association extend this trusted-messenger model to additional segments of the small business community.
- **A multilingual partner resource hub.** The Company's dedicated resource website and monthly newsletter for organizations that serve women- and minority-owned businesses, offering downloadable, multi-language materials, equip partner organizations to extend the program's reach within their own networks, a scalable "train-the-messenger" approach.
- **Real-customer storytelling in place of stock imagery.** The shift toward featuring actual participants (South County Art Association, Down City Design, and the McGuinness Media & Marketing WBE video) humanizes the program and reflects prior EWG recommendations to feature community-based storytelling and diverse lived experiences, including small business owners.
- **Main Street campaigns targeting Environmental Justice communities.** The planned Main Street campaigns in three EJ communities, combining direct mail, email, social media, and in-person canvassing, operationalize the Company's desire to make participation "go viral" in a given community and align with prior recommendations to expand targeted outreach in underserved areas such as Providence, Central Falls, and Pawtucket.
- **Creative, incentive-based local partnerships.** The Earth Day social media partnership with Uncle Tony's Pizza & Pasta demonstrates a low-cost, locally rooted way to generate buzz and assessments in a specific community, and points toward the referral-incentive ideas (e.g., gift cards) members encouraged the Company to pilot.
- **Leveraging intermediary and municipal MWBE data.** The Company's efforts to access MWBE contractor lists through the State, the City of Providence's Office of Sustainability, and named contacts (e.g., Grace Diaz) reflect an emerging, collaborative approach to overcoming the absence of a reliable statewide MWBE database.
- **On-bill financing to address cash-flow barriers.** The Company's interest-free on-bill financing option, structured so the payback period is matched to projected energy savings, directly addresses the cash-flow concerns that members emphasize are central to small business decision making.

SUGGESTED ACTIONS AND RELATED PAST RECOMMENDATIONS

The following suggested actions emerged from the May 18 discussion and member survey input, several of which reinforce and build on recommendations from prior EWG years:

- 1. Add denominators and participation rates to small business metrics.** Move beyond reporting raw participant counts and consumption bins to report location-based participation rates and savings per participant (as a percentage of consumption), disaggregated by EJ vs. non-EJ community and by MWBE status, and tracked over time. As members noted, because small business accounts rarely participate repeatedly and the programs ultimately serve buildings, location participation rate is a more meaningful measure of saturation and equity than participant totals alone. (Builds on prior EWG recommendations: 2024, 2025; reinforced by EWG member survey input.)
- 2. Frame case studies around financial metrics, not just measures.** Emphasize annual energy cost savings, before-and-after bill comparisons, customer contribution, and return on investment in case studies and marketing, information that resonates with small business owners who think in terms of cash flow, and refresh case studies to highlight measures beyond lighting as the market moves away from LED incentives. Give businesses simple tools to track their own energy use and savings.
- 3. Grow and diversify the small business contact database toward 50,000 businesses.** Continue building the outreach list, with a specific focus on MWBEs, by layering in additional channels and networks. This includes pursuing MWBE data through the City of Providence's Office of Sustainability and other municipalities to compensate for the limited statewide list, and overlaying small business outreach with other trusted networks (e.g., Health Equity Zones) to accelerate word-of-mouth.
- 4. Pilot referral incentives to make participation "contagious."** Consider referral incentives such as gift cards for current participants who refer new businesses, and continue "pounding the pavement" in communities following successful projects, recognizing that word-of-mouth from a satisfied peer is among the most effective ways to reach small businesses. Use other business owners to help spread the word.
- 5. Deepen outreach through trusted business associations and community messengers.** Continue and expand work through intermediaries such as the RI Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, RI Black Business Association, Center for Women & Enterprise, RI Manufacturers Association, and RI Hospitality Association, and dedicate a portion of the marketing budget to personalized, in-language outreach through trusted messengers (e.g., radio, social media, and community-based organizations) rather than relying solely on paid advertising. This reinforces prior recommendations to strengthen partnerships with trusted local organizations and expand in-person presence in trusted community settings. (Builds on prior EWG recommendations: 2024, 2025; reinforced by EWG member survey input.)
- 6. Sustain and target Main Street campaigns in Environmental Justice communities.** Continue the Main Street model of coordinated direct mail, email, social media, and on-the-ground canvassing in EJ communities, and track participation outcomes by community so the Company can measure saturation and refine targeting over time.
- 7. Ensure language access across the small business customer journey.** Extend end-to-end, in-language support, beyond translated documents, to small business outreach and enrollment for limited-English business owners. (Builds on prior EWG recommendations: 2024, 2025; reinforced by EWG member survey input.)

8. Establish a Customer Advocate role and targeted support for small and micro businesses.

Consistent with the 2024 EWG recommendation, implement targeted outreach strategies and create a Customer Advocate role within Rhode Island Energy specifically for small and micro businesses, expanding efforts in underserved communities such as Providence, Central Falls, and Pawtucket. Offer extra hands-on support to businesses that may not yet know these no-cost programs exist. (Builds on prior EWG recommendation: 2024; reinforced by EWG member survey input.)

9. Explore emerging measure needs, including refrigerant leakage. Continue evaluating opportunities to address refrigerant leakage and other emerging small business measures, balancing energy and greenhouse-gas cost-effectiveness, including the Company's stated plan to bring on refrigeration firms as part of its 2026–2027 business-focused programs.

10. Deepen outreach to and engagement with Commercial Property Owners: Building off of past work with Quonset Development Corporation/Port of Davisville, enhance outreach to commercial property owners and explore energy aligned lease clauses to help overcome the split incentive barrier.

WEATHERIZATION WORKFORCE CHALLENGES: JUNE 1, 2026

MEETING SUMMARY

PLAN UPDATES AND 2025 EQUITY METRICS

The June 1 meeting opened with two framing updates from the Company before the workforce deep dive. Brendan Dagher explained that the Company is moving from an annual to a three-year energy efficiency planning cycle. The 2027–2029 Three-Year Plan is to be filed with the Public Utilities Commission (PUC) by September 1, 2026, one month earlier than the historical October 1 annual filing, with subsequent three-year plans filed by June 1. The Company will continue to report year-end performance on May 1 and to report equity metrics annually. Members discussed what the longer horizon means for the EWG itself, including the possibility of shifting to quarterly meetings and whether the group produces an annual report or aligns its reporting with the three-year planning cycle. Margie Lynch noted the challenging circumstances of this transitional year and encouraged the group to consider how EWG discussions can be more directly and specifically linked to the plan; Brendan noted that the longer planning horizon creates time and opportunity to dive more deeply into issues. Brendan then reviewed the 2025 year-end equity metrics, which are covered in the Energy Efficiency Equity Metrics section of this report.

TOPIC DEEP DIVE: WEATHERIZATION WORKFORCE CHALLENGES AND STRATEGIES

Building on the three contractor requests for applications (RFAs), for specialty contractors, HVAC contractors, and weatherization contractors, circulated after the May meeting, Bert Cooper of GHHI-RI introduced Meredith Plante, Weatherization Coordinator at the Comprehensive Community Action Program (CCAP), to describe the workforce challenges her agency is experiencing on the ground.

Merredith's central message was that a shortage of specialty contractors is contributing to weatherization deferrals. CCAP needs more electricians, plumbers, HVAC specialists, and asbestos abatement and mold remediation firms. Because Rhode Island Energy and the state require multiple competitive bids for a job to proceed, a thin contractor pool can stall work even when the weatherization scope is clear and doable. She offered a concrete example: a two-family home where weatherization is ready to move forward but cannot, because there are not enough plumbers to generate the required competing bids, leav-

ing the project, and effectively two units of weatherization, stuck in deferral status. Similar single-bid constraints affect asbestos and vermiculite abatement and mold remediation, where CCAP often has only one qualified contractor in the program, or none.

On the general weatherization contractor pool, Merredith noted that CCAP has a solid core group, but that contractor-level staff turnover is a persistent challenge: agencies lose skilled workers who know the program, and the investment in training a crew chief can walk out the door when that worker leaves for another company or starts their own. Her existing contractors have asked for training in spray foam installation, asbestos removal, and mold remediation, credentials that would let them take on additional and larger jobs and, because they are already in the home for weatherization, streamline workflow and shorten project timelines.

The discussion surfaced several structural barriers to building and retaining the contractor pool. Margarita Robledo of the Rhode Island Builders Association (RIBA) explained that contractors have historically had to invest up front in training, travel, and time away from the jobsite, with reimbursement only after staff pass the relevant certification test, a real disincentive, compounded by the difficulty of retaining highly trained staff. Members also noted the significant insurance contractors must carry, which can be a particular deterrent for small and minority contractors. Margie observed that contractor development is a long-term investment rather than a quick fix.

Members then problem solved around how agencies recruit and how the group might collaborate to grow the pool. Merredith and Dayanarah Baez of CAPP explained that qualified contractors are listed in the statewide Hancock MIS system and are technically available to any agency, but in practice each CAP maintains its own local pool, signs its own contracts, and sustains its own working relationships and not all contractors are willing to work in every community, including the City of Providence. Recruitment to date has been largely informal and word-of-mouth (Merredith described photographing contractors' trucks to get a phone number and cold calling them), with no coordinated, intentional effort. The group discussed reaching back out to inactive contractors still listed in Hancock, having GHHI-RI encourage its own specialty-contractor pool to apply, and tapping the state's list of women- and minority-owned contractors referenced in the May small business discussion. Dayanarah noted there may be skill-building funds within current weatherization grants that could be pooled across agencies to invest in shared certifications. Members coalesced around the idea of a coordinated contractor "open house" and a series of recruitment events, feasible because the state application is a rolling process, paired with someone designated to share resources and shepherd contractors into the program.

EMERGING COLLABORATION AND PROMISING PRACTICES

Several promising practices and opportunities for collaboration emerged from the June 1 discussion:

- **Coordinated, multi-agency contractor recruitment ("open house" model).** Rather than each CAP agency independently hustling to build its own pool, members proposed a coordinated series of contractor recruitment events, an "open house" approach, to raise awareness of the program and the open RFAs. Because the state contractor application is a rolling process, these events can be scheduled throughout the year. Carinel LeGrand of Rhode Island Energy affirmed the concept as a strong one.
- **Pooling skill-building funds across agencies for shared certifications.** Dayanarah Baez noted that current weatherization grants may include skill-building funds that could be allocated to build contractor capacity, and that CAP agencies could pool funding to jointly invest in a group of contractors, an efficient way to build specialized capacity that no single agency could sustain alone.

- **GHHI-RI-led specialty and MWBE contractor training initiative.** Bert Cooper committed to exploring a coordinated training and capacity-building initiative focused on specialty and health-and-safety trades and on minority- and women-owned business enterprises (MWBEs). GHHI-RI will be developing a HUD Healthy Homes Production grant proposal over the summer and identified an opportunity to work with the state's six CAP agencies to braid HUD resources with existing weatherization skill-building funds into a significant contractor training effort, with the explicit goal of moving trained contractors into enrollment with the state weatherization program. Bert committed to reaching out to the CAP agencies to follow up.
- **Leveraging the shared statewide contractor system and re-engaging inactive contractors.** The group recognized the Hancock MIS statewide contractor list as a shared asset and identified a low-cost opportunity to re-engage skilled contractors who remain listed but have become inactive, inviting them back into the program.
- **Cross-organization referral of existing contractor networks.** Members identified concrete ways to feed established networks into the weatherization pipeline: GHHI-RI can encourage its pool of specialty contractors to apply; RIBA, which sees many minority contractors coming through its trainings, can help surface candidates; and the state's list of women- and minority-owned contractors from the May small business discussion can be a recruitment source. Meredith also suggested working with the general-contractor licensing agency to share information on how to join the weatherization program, since many weatherization contractors already hold a general contractor's license.
- **Adding certifications to existing weatherization crews to reduce deferrals.** Because CCAP's weatherization contractors are already in the home, training them to add specialty credentials (spray foam, asbestos removal, mold remediation) was identified as a promising way to both expand the specialty pool and streamline workflow, resolving in a single visit barriers that would otherwise trigger a deferral and a separate procurement.

SUGGESTED ACTIONS AND RELATED PAST RECOMMENDATIONS

The following suggested actions emerged from the June 1 discussion, several of which reinforce and build on recommendations from prior EWG years:

1. **Grow and diversify the contractor pool through coordinated, intentional recruitment.** Move beyond ad hoc, word-of-mouth recruitment by standing up a coordinated, multi-agency contractor recruitment effort, including "open house" events scheduled against the state's rolling application, and by designating staff responsible for sharing resources and guiding contractors through enrollment. Prioritize specialty trades in shortest supply (plumbing, electrical, HVAC, asbestos and vermiculite abatement, and mold remediation) and intentionally recruit minority- and women-owned businesses, drawing on GHHI-RI's specialty pool, RIBA's trainees, inactive contractors still listed in Hancock, and the state's MWBE contractor list. This continues prior recommendations to leverage integrated service-delivery models and partnerships with RIBA, the Residential Construction Workforce Partnership (RCWP), and other workforce organizations to strengthen contractor pipelines. (Builds on prior EWG recommendations: 2024, 2025.)
2. **Braid funding to build specialty and MWBE contractor capacity.** Support the GHHI-RI-led effort to combine a forthcoming HUD Healthy Homes Production grant with existing weatherization skill-building funds and pooled CAP agency contributions to finance a statewide specialty- and MWBE-contractor training initiative, structured to move newly trained and certified contractors into the state weatherization program. Explore the potential to utilize USDOE's Training for Residential Energy Efficiency Contractors as an additional potential funding resource. This advances prior recommendations to prioritize contractors trained through RIBA's Minority Business Accelerator and bilingual

training programs and to leverage integrated service-delivery models. (Builds on prior EWG recommendations: 2025.)

- 3. Reduce the up-front cost and time burdens that discourage contractor training.** Address the disincentives RIBA and others described, up-front payment for training and travel, time away from the jobsite, reimbursement only after a worker passes certification, and difficulty retaining trained staff, by exploring up-front or milestone-based training subsidies, stipends, and reimbursement structures that do not require contractors to carry the full cost themselves. Consider how significant insurance requirements can be eased or supported for small and minority contractors. This complements prior recommendations to improve access to contractor resources and to offer paid training with wraparound supports. (Builds on prior EWG recommendations: 2025.)
- 4. Add specialty certifications to existing weatherization crews to prevent deferrals.** Support certification of current weatherization contractors in high-demand specialty and health-and-safety skills (spray foam, asbestos and vermiculite abatement, mold remediation) so barriers can be resolved during the weatherization visit rather than triggering a separate procurement and deferral. Consistent with EWG member survey input, expand paid training pipelines for local residents entering the weatherization and HVAC trades, partner with vocational schools and community colleges, adopt earn-while-you-learn apprenticeship models, and provide incentives for contractors to hire and retain trainees from underserved communities, drawing on models such as the Massachusetts Clean Energy Center. Explore US DOE's TREC program as a potential funding resource. This continues prior recommendations to expand access to paid internships, apprenticeships, and job shadowing with wraparound supports. (Builds on prior EWG recommendations: 2025.)
- 5. Enable and formalize cross-agency contractor sharing.** Build on the statewide Hancock MIS list to make it easier for CAP agencies to share specialty contractors, particularly for the scarcest trades, so that a single qualified contractor's capacity can be more fully used across agencies and competitive-bidding requirements are easier to satisfy.
- 6. Revisit competitive-bidding constraints where the contractor pool is thin.** Where a required specialty (for example, mold remediation or asbestos abatement) has only one qualified contractor in the program or responding to bids, work with the state and the Company to identify a workable path, such as sole-source justification, cost estimation, flexibility for small purchases, so that projects are not indefinitely deferred solely for lack of a second bid.
- 7. Finalize and report on workforce diversity metrics.** Complete the workforce-development equity metric(s) the Company has committed to developing early in the new triennium, continuing its work with the PPL supply chain team, and implement tracking and public reporting of contractor recruitment, training participation, and retention, disaggregated where possible by race, ethnicity, language, and business size. Consider adding a deferral-reason category that captures projects stalled specifically by contractor or bidding shortages, so the workforce constraint's impact on deferrals can be measured over the three-year horizon. (Builds on prior EWG recommendations: 2024, 2025.)

For context, the workforce shortage described by CCAP directly compounds the pre-weatherization barrier and deferral trends the Company has reported. The table below summarizes 2025 IESF deferrals and the share attributable to pre-weatherization barriers by CAP agency; specialty-contractor shortages (for example, in plumbing, abatement, and mold remediation) contribute to these deferrals wherever a required repair cannot be competitively bid and completed.

Community Action Agency	Total deferrals	With PWB	PWB share
Blackstone Valley CAP	18	12	67%
CAP of Providence	264	147	56%
Comprehensive CAP	191	106	55%
East Bay CAP	130	43	33%
Tri-County CAP	183	26	14%
Westbay CAP	107	37	35%
Total	893	371	42%

LANDLORD RECRUITMENT AND THE HOUSING CHOICE VOUCHER PROGRAM: JUNE 22, 2026

MEETING SUMMARY

MOVE TO TRIENNIAL PLANNING

Looking ahead to the triennium, GHHI-RI shared initial thinking, developed with the Company, that the EWG would continue to meet at least bi-monthly to review and analyze equity metrics and data (with roughly two years of equity data now available to discern trends), support ongoing metrics and dataset development, develop and advocate for equity-related strategies, and collaborate to advance the implementation of those strategies rather than stopping at recommendations. The group would document its activities in an annual report to the Company and, in the third year, lead a foundational planning exercise to recommend triennial equity goals, targets, strategies, and activities for the next plan. EEC consultant Margie Lynch encouraged the group to be more intentional about connecting its work to the Company's formal planning process and to begin providing structured input earlier so it can inform the first draft of the plan.

TOPIC DEEP DIVE: WEATHERIZATION AND THE HOUSING CHOICE VOUCHER PROGRAM

The core of the meeting was a presentation from Luz Espinal, Director of Leased Housing at the Providence Housing Authority (PHA), joined by colleagues Marina Rollins and Allison Rodriguez, on how the Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) program works, particularly related landlord recruitment and retention. The session was framed around a single issue the EWG has been building toward all year: how can Rhode Island Energy and its partners encourage or incentivize landlords to participate in the Income Eligible Single-Family (IESF) and Multifamily weatherization programs? The topic directly responded to the priority members identified at the start of the year, when landlord and renter education and engagement emerged as the single most requested focus area.

PHA is the largest housing authority in Rhode Island. It owns and manages 2,606 units of public housing across 13 developments in Providence and administers 2,624 Housing Choice Vouchers that allow low-income households to lease in the private rental market, working with roughly 350 landlords. PHA serves nearly 12,000 residents; approximately 70% of families have incomes below 30% of Area Median Income (extremely low income), 22% include a person with a disability, and 15% are elderly. The average gross

family income is about \$17,144. The vast majority of voucher holders rent in the private market rather than in project-based units, making private landlords central to the program's success.

Ms. Espinal explained that HCV landlords carry the same responsibilities under Rhode Island law as any landlord and enter a cooperative business relationship, anchored by the Housing Assistance Payment (HAP) contract, with the housing authority. Families generally contribute 30% of household income toward gross rent (rent plus a utility allowance), capped at 40% at move-in, with PHA covering the balance up to a payment standard. Because the utility allowance factors utility costs into each household's monthly expenses for rent, energy burden is built directly into the program's affordability calculations. Members also noted significant federal headwinds for the program: proposed work requirements, five-year time limits on vouchers, and a persistently low private-market vacancy rate of roughly 2–4% that constrains where voucher holders can lease.

A central part of the presentation concerned Housing Quality Standards (HQS) inspections. Every unit must pass an HQS inspection before a program contract can begin, and units are re-inspected at least annually. Ms. Espinal described the program's 24-hour emergency items and common failures, inoperable or missing smoke and carbon monoxide detectors, fire and electrical hazards, inability to maintain heat or hot water, major plumbing leaks, gas leaks, inoperable toilets, and security risks such as broken locks, alongside frequent 30-day fail items such as peeling paint, broken tile, and flooring or plumbing issues. Landlords are generally given 30 days to correct failures; units that habitually fail are subject to abatement (payments are held until repairs are verified) and potential recapture. PHA reported roughly 15 to 20 units failing inspection on a monthly basis. Ms. Espinal also flagged a recurring practical barrier that delays lease-up: landlords must present a valid, unexpired lead certificate, including exterior lead clearance—before an initial HQS inspection can even be scheduled.

The discussion that followed surfaced a clear, actionable alignment. As CLEAResult's Karen Verrengia observed, roughly half of the common HQS failures are measures the weatherization and efficiency programs can address, and she asked whether PHA could route program referral information to landlords. Ms. Espinal confirmed that while federal rules prevent PHA from sharing landlord contact lists, PHA can readily distribute Rhode Island Energy program information to landlords—including through its quarterly landlord newsletter. GHHI-RI noted that its Whole House pilot, which already resolves the pre-weatherization barriers that cause deferrals (spending an average of roughly \$20,000 per unit on health and safety hazards), could be extended to help landlords resolve HQS failures that fall beyond the scope of weatherization and connect them to efficiency programs, potentially as a condition of participation in the pilot. Members framed this as a "win-win": preserving affordable units, reducing HQS failures and abatements, lowering tenants' energy burden, and giving landlords a concrete incentive to enter and remain in the voucher program.

Members also worked through the incentive structure. Because most PHA units do not include utilities in rent, the direct energy-bill savings from weatherization accrue mainly to tenants, who continue to receive their utility allowance, a strong benefit for residents but a weaker direct incentive for landlords who do not pay utilities. Members identified the landlord-facing value nonetheless: weatherization is an investment that builds equity in the property and increases its value. Participants identified the City of Providence's Lead Hazard Reduction program (serving households up to 80% AMI) as a complementary resource that could address exterior lead and related hazards through referral, opening a partnership pathway for units the weatherization program alone cannot serve. GHHI-RI recalled earlier exploratory conversations about using a large EPA grant to support Section 8 landlords to provide sustainable, affordable housing and suggested that strategy may be worth revisiting as the program evolves into the triennium. PHA agreed to

share its utility-allowance charts (by bedroom and unit type) and its HQS findings list, and to explore generating a list of units with utilities included to help target outreach.

EMERGING COLLABORATION AND PROMISING PRACTICES

Several promising practices and collaborations emerged from the discussion:

- **A concrete PHA–Rhode Island Energy referral pathway for HCV landlords.** PHA confirmed it can distribute Rhode Island Energy weatherization and efficiency program information directly to its landlords, including through its quarterly landlord newsletter, giving the Company a trusted, recurring channel to reach roughly 350 private-market landlords who own units where energy burden and HQS-related repairs are potential concerns. This is an immediately available, low-cost collaboration.
- **Aligning HQS failures with weatherization and Whole House measures.** Because roughly half of common HQS failures overlap with measures the weatherization program can address, and GHHI-RI's Whole House pilot can resolve deeper health-and-safety barriers beyond weatherization's scope, there is a natural, mutually reinforcing fit. Connecting HQS-failing units to weatherization and Whole House services (potentially as a condition of pilot participation) preserves affordable units, reduces abatements for landlords, and lowers energy costs.
- **Leveraging the Whole House pilot to recruit and retain landlords.** GHHI-RI's model of resolving pre-weatherization barriers and returning households to the weatherization program offers a template for adding real value for HCV landlords, resolving costly HQS issues while building property equity, as a strategy to grow the landlord pool participating in both the voucher and weatherization programs.
- **Cross-program coordination with municipal lead programs.** Members identified the City of Providence Lead Hazard Reduction program as a complementary resource for units the weatherization program cannot serve directly (including HUD-subsidized units) or for exterior lead clearance delaying landlord lease-up. Coordinated referrals between PHA, GHHI-RI, weatherization, and the city's lead program could resolve barriers no single program can address alone, while helping the city meet its own demand for lead units.
- **Preserving affordable housing as a shared frame.** Members converged on a framing that unites the Company's equity goals with PHA's mission: weatherizing voucher units simultaneously advances energy equity for extremely low-income tenants, improves housing quality, reduces HQS abatements, and helps preserve scarce affordable units in a market with a 2–4% vacancy rate.

SUGGESTED ACTIONS AND RELATED PAST RECOMMENDATIONS

The following suggested actions emerged from the June 22 discussion and member survey responses, several of which reinforce and build on recommendations from prior EWG years:

1. **Establish a formal PHA–Rhode Island Energy referral pathway for HCV landlords.** Operationalize PHA's offer by embedding Rhode Island Energy program information (IESF, Multifamily, and Whole House) into PHA's quarterly landlord newsletter and landlord communications, and develop simple, landlord-facing materials that explain available weatherization and efficiency offerings, incentives, and how to enroll. This builds on prior recommendations to expand the Company's Landlord Listening Sessions and to reach residents and property owners through trusted, already-engaged channels. Establish similar pathways with RI Housing and other HCV landlords. (Builds on prior EWG recommendations: 2024, 2025.)
2. **Target HQS failures with weatherization and Whole House services.** Develop a coordinated workflow in which HCV units that fail HQS on measures addressable through weatherization (e.g.,

heating system, air sealing, health-and-safety items) are referred into the IESF/Multifamily programs, and units with deeper barriers are connected to the GHHI-RI Whole House pilot, potentially requiring weatherization participation as a condition of barrier-resolution work, mirroring the current deferral-resolution approach. This extends prior recommendations to braid and layer healthy-homes, lead, and weatherization resources to address pre-weatherization barriers. (Builds on prior EWG recommendations: 2024, 2025.)

- 3. Coordinate with municipal lead programs to resolve lead and exterior-clearance barriers.** Formalize referral relationships among PHA, GHHI-RI, the weatherization program, and the City of Providence Lead Hazard Reduction program to address exterior lead clearance and other hazards that delay lease-up or fall outside weatherization's scope to address pre-weatherization barriers. (Builds on prior EWG recommendations: 2024, 2025.)
- 4. Frame landlord incentives around property value, unit preservation, and lower vacancy risk.** In outreach to landlords who do not pay utilities, emphasize the incentives that accrue to them, increased property value and equity, reduced HQS failures and abatements, and, for prospective landlords, lower risk when including utilities, while making clear the substantial energy-burden benefit to tenants. Survey input reinforced educating landlords on long-term cost savings and property-value benefits.
- 5. Explore dedicated funding to support Section 8 landlord participation.** Revisit the previously discussed strategy of using a large EPA (or comparable) grant to support Section 8 landlords in delivering sustainable, affordable housing, and consider how weatherization incentives can be structured to recruit new HCV landlords and retain existing ones as the program moves into the triennium.
- 6. Advance renter- and multifamily-focused incentive offerings.** Consider stronger incentives for rental properties, survey input pointed to Massachusetts's 100% heat-pump incentives for rental properties in certain communities as a model, and continue to prioritize multifamily program access as a standing EWG equity priority. (Builds on prior EWG recommendations: 2024, 2025.)
- 7. Use PHA data to target outreach.** Follow through on PHA's offer to share its utility-allowance charts and HQS findings list and work with PHA to identify units where weatherization will deliver the clearest shared benefit to landlords and tenants.

CONCLUSION & FUTURE DIRECTION

As Rhode Island Energy and the RI Equity Working Group close out another year, 2026 stands out as a year of transition, from establishing baselines to discerning trends, and from identifying equity problems to actively working to solve them. Building on years of foundational work, the group spent this year examining concrete efforts and focusing its energy on how to connect, scale, and sustain them: resolving pre-weatherization barriers through GHHI-RI's Whole House + Electrification Pilot and CAPP's CHIP electrical vendor; reaching small and diverse businesses through trusted messengers; growing and diversifying the weatherization contractor pipeline; deepening the equity metrics that make program performance visible; and opening a promising new pathway to weatherize Housing Choice Voucher units in partnership with the Providence Housing Authority.

The move to a three-year (2027–2029) planning cycle reshapes how the EWG can contribute going forward. Rather than resetting each year, the group intends to work in a longer, more strategic frame, meeting bi-monthly to review and analyze equity metrics and data, support ongoing dataset development, and

develop and advocate for equity strategies through to implementation rather than simply crafting recommendations. To make that work timely, the EWG aims to share recommendations and ideas more directly and closer to real time following each meeting, so that Rhode Island Energy and its partners can respond more quickly, and to connect its input to the Company's formal planning process earlier, so member insight can inform the first draft of the plan rather than arriving after key decisions are made.

Looking ahead, the group intends to begin the next cycle with a deep dive on metrics, using two-plus years of data to deepen its shared understanding of trends, challenges, and opportunities, and to monitor data and trends to track change and surface themes for the next planning cycle. Alongside this data-driven focus, and a commitment to advance past recommendations, members identified several prospective priorities to carry into the triennium, including electrification and electrification readiness in low-income housing, helping residents stay safe in extreme heat and cold, and expanded programming and dedicated funding for pre-weatherization barriers. Rhode Island Energy and the RI EWG remain committed to transparent, data-informed collaboration that keeps equity at the forefront of the state's energy efficiency programs, ensuring their benefits reach the households that stand to gain the most during the coming triennium.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Green & Healthy Homes Initiative (GHHI) extends its sincere gratitude to the many individuals and organizations whose knowledge, time, and candor made this year's Rhode Island Energy Efficiency Equity Working Group (RI EWG) possible. The strength of this report rests on the willingness of practitioners, advocates, agency staff, community partners, and customers to share their experience and to think together about how to deliver energy efficiency and weatherization more equitably across the state.

GUEST PRESENTERS

We are especially grateful to the following presenters, who prepared and delivered content that anchored each meeting's deep-dive discussion. Their generosity in sharing data, program insight, and lessons from the field elevated the working group's understanding of the year's priority topics.

Priority Topics and Language Access: March 2, 2026

- Kathryne Cleary, Guidehouse
- Ann Clarke, Rhode Island Energy

Pre Weatherization Barriers: March 30, 2026

- David Banno, President & CEO, Community Action Partnership of Providence (CAPP)
- Bryan Evans, Program Manager, Green & Healthy Homes Initiative-Rhode Island

Small Business Outreach: May 18, 2026

- Leigh Edie, Rhode Island Energy

Weatherization Workforce Challenges: June 1, 2026

- Merredith Plante, Comprehensive Community Action Program (CCAP)

Landlord Recruitment and the Housing Choice Voucher Program: June 22, 2026

- Luz Espinal, Director of Leased Housing, Providence Housing Authority

WORKING GROUP PARTICIPANTS

We thank the following EWG participants who joined one or more meetings this year. Their questions, expertise, and recommendations shaped the collaborative practices and suggested actions captured throughout this report:

Name	Organization
Adrian Caesar	RI Energy Efficiency Council Consultant Team
Allison Rodriguez	Providence Housing Authority
Angela Li	Rhode Island Energy
Adrian Caesar	NV5
Ann Clarke	Rhode Island Energy
Atticus Makuch	Rhode Island Energy
Brenda Clement	HousingWorks RI
Brendan Dagher	Rhode Island Energy
Brett Feldman	Rhode Island Energy
Carinel LeGrand	Rhode Island Energy
Claire Williams	URI Energy Fellow / NV5
David Banno	Community Action Partnership of Providence (CAPP)
Dayanarah Baez	Community Action Partnership of Providence (CAPP)
Eli Rodriguez	Rhode Island Energy
Emily Koo	Acadia Center
John Valletta	Ocean State Center for Independent Living (OSCIL)
Karen Verrengia	CLEAResult
Kate Hardesty	URI Cooperative Extension
Kathryne Cleary	Guidehouse
Kevin Drumm	URI Cooperative Extension
Leigh Edie	Rhode Island Energy
Lina Bravo	Providence Public Library
Luz Espinal	Providence Housing Authority
Margarita Robledo	Rhode Island Builders Association (RIBA)
Margie Lynch	RI Energy Efficiency Council Consultant Team
Marina Rollins	Providence Housing Authority
Mark Siegal	Rhode Island Energy
Melissa Cruz	City of Providence

Name	Organization
Merredith Plante	Comprehensive Community Action Program (CCAP)
Michelle Eburn	Rhode Island Energy
Peter Gill Case	RI Energy Efficiency Council
Quilcia Moronta	Climate Jobs RI
Rachel Calabro	RI Department of Environmental Management
Rachel Sholly	EWG Member
Savannah Goncalves	RI Office of Energy Resources
Spencer Lawrence	Rhode Island Energy
Steven Chybowski	RI Office of Energy Resources
Toby Ast	Rhode Island Energy
William Keating	Rhode Island Energy
William Owen	RI Office of Energy Resources

Finally, GHHI thanks the staff at Rhode Island Energy for their continued partnership and for their commitment to improving outcomes for the households who stand to benefit most from weatherization and energy efficiency. Their willingness to bring data, program detail, and open questions to the table, and to listen to the working group's feedback, reflects a dedication to equity in the design and delivery of Rhode Island's energy efficiency programs. We look forward to continuing this work together.

APPENDIX

ABOUT GHHI

The Green & Healthy Homes Initiative (GHHI) addresses the housing-based causes of lead poisoning, asthma, injury, and energy inefficiency by creating homes that are healthy, safe, and resilient. By delivering a standard of excellence through merit-based, data-driven solutions, GHHI aims to eradicate the negative health impacts of unhealthy housing for children, seniors, and families to ensure everyone has the opportunity to live, learn, work, and play in homes that support their health and well-being.

SUPPLEMENTAL SOURCES OF INPUT

WHOLE HOUSE PARTICIPANT CUSTOMER LISTENING GROUP

In July 2026, GHHI RI hosted a client listening session designed to gather feedback from current Whole House + Electrification clients on their experience with GHHI's and CAPP's programs, from initial outreach through contractor coordination and project completion. The session moved through first contact and awareness, the deferral experience, navigating the process, and trust, communication, and language, closing with each participant naming a single priority for improvement. The four participants represented both completed and in-progress health and safety barrier remediation and weatherization projects, and

included four clients all of whom were from Providence, RI. Three participants were Dominican and the fourth was Nigerian, and all spoke English.

Most participants initially learned about CAPP's weatherization program through word of mouth—one client referred a close friend who also enrolled, while others connected directly through City Hall while addressing unrelated matters. Across the board, cost savings and energy bill assistance were the primary motivators for enrollment. Participants also valued the program's health and safety benefits available through GHHI, specifically citing radon testing and smoke detector installation as meaningful and educational, and several noted they appreciated having a trustworthy partner in CAPP and GHHI, especially compared to more predatory offers such as door-to-door solar sales. All participants expressed some interest in electrification, though preferences varied between gas and electric appliances, underscoring that client preferences should not be assumed and that education will be central to any future electrification outreach.

Knob & tube wiring emerged as a notable point of confusion. Most participants were unfamiliar with K&T and did not initially understand why it had to be addressed before weatherization could proceed, pointing to an opportunity for clearer, simpler upfront explanation during intake. Feedback on the contractor experience was largely positive, with clients describing contractors as professional, clean, and trustworthy in their homes; one minor scheduling miscommunication was noted and resolved. Participants praised program staff by name and described communication as consistent and reliable, even when a project was temporarily deferred in early 2025 and later resumed in summer 2026, once funding became available. Barriers overall were minimal, with scheduling cited as the main area for improvement, and landlord-tenant coordination reported as manageable.

Asked how weatherization programming and the Whole House Pilot could reach more residents, participants pointed to trusted, community-based channels, local radio in both English and Spanish, community events and festivals such as the Dominican Festival, churches, and voting locations, alongside continued word-of-mouth referrals, and all expressed willingness to serve as program ambassadors. When asked if both CAPP and GHHI are considered trusted community resources, all responded affirmatively.

When asked how services could be improved, participants noted that it would be helpful if providers could have consistent funding, as a number of them had been told they needed to wait until funding was available before services could proceed.

Key Learnings: Cost savings remain the strongest driver of enrollment, and trust is the program's greatest asset. Strong, consistent communication from program staff from both GHHI and CAPP is a key strength, even during project delays. K&T requirements need clearer upfront explanation to reduce client confusion, and future outreach should prioritize trusted community channels and client-to-client referrals.

EWG MEMBER SURVEY

Prior to drafting this report, GHHI-RI issued a survey to EWG members to gather additional input. Respondents included:

- Merredith Plante, CCAP
- Margie Lynch, RI Energy Efficiency Council Consultant Team
- Adrian Caesar, NV5
- Kevin Drumm, URI Cooperative Extension. Note Kevin's responses drew heavily from URI's Efficient Housing for all Community of Practice (EHACoP) Project.

The respondents collectively provided the following input:

Language Access & Serving Non-English Speakers

- Serve Limited-English-Proficiency customers in their preferred language at every step of the customer journey, from marketing through measure installation.
- Expand funding for multilingual intake, outreach, and contractor communication; provide translated forms and paperwork.
- Require cultural competency training for all program staff and contractors.
- Ensure scheduling lines, voicemail messages, and post-HEA follow-up materials are available in-language, not just English.
- Expand translation and interpretation beyond Spanish (e.g., Portuguese) to match languages spoken by RI ratepayers, supported by dedicated bilingual staff.

Pre-Weatherization Barriers

- Secure additional, statewide flexible funding to address health & safety barriers (knob-and-tube, mold, roofing, moisture, foundation issues).
- EHACoP found pre-weatherization barriers to be the single largest reason (32%) participants had not scheduled a Home Energy Assessment.
- Streamline and adopt proactive pre-screening tools to identify barriers earlier and reduce project delays.
- Continued praise for PWB collaboration with GHFI, with a desire to see it expanded.

Small Business Outreach

- Increase targeted education and incentives, especially for minority- and women-owned businesses.
- Offer extra support to businesses unaware of available programs, and give owners tools to track energy use and savings.
- Leverage peer business owners as messengers.

Workforce Development

- Expand paid, “earn-while-you-learn” apprenticeship pipelines for local residents entering weatherization and HVAC trades.
- Partner with vocational schools, community colleges, and community training programs and incentivize contractors to hire and retain trainees from underserved communities.
- Referenced models worth adopting: MassCEC workforce programs and a long-term Energy Navigator model training trusted community-based workers.
- Complete the committed workforce development metric.

Equity Metrics

- Add a language access metric at minimum, and complete the committed workforce metric.
- Report location participation rates and savings per participant (as a % of consumption) across dimensions, tracked over time, rather than only participant counts and Justice40 vs. non-Justice40 bins (noting programs serve buildings, not repeat accounts).
- Establish structured, ongoing feedback loops (post-assessment and follow-up surveys) with a designated staff person accountable for reviewing responses and reporting changes.
- Set clear goals for underserved groups and tie program success to fairness, not just volume.

Renters & Landlord Engagement

- Educate landlords on long-term cost savings and property-value benefits; directly address landlord retaliation concerns and split-incentive barriers in outreach.
- Create a single, unified enrollment application for income-eligible and market-rate customers to reduce confusion.
- Provide the same hands-on, in-language follow-up support (e.g., RISE-style auditor debriefs) to income-eligible renters and landlords that market-rate customers receive.
- Expand the Central Falls approach; note that MA offers 100% heat pump incentives for rentals in certain communities. RIE's Customer Advocate program and parallel Spanish-language landlord sessions cited as promising practices.

Outreach

- Shift toward community-based outreach through trusted organizations and messengers (radio interviews, social media influencers, CBOs) rather than relying solely on paid advertising.
- Combine outreach with services people already use (health, housing, fuel assistance).
- Favor in-person engagement over virtual-only formats where possible; EHACoP found in-person sessions produced livelier discussion and more organic relationship-building.

Examples of Progress & Collaboration to Cite

- Stronger collaboration between RI Energy, OER, and CAP agencies in identifying high-need households, and growth in contractor engagement for barrier mitigation.
- The 2025 Efficient Housing for All Community of Practice (EHACoP), facilitated by URI Cooperative Extension (CEELI) and EEC-funded, which engaged 59 residents and professionals over six bilingual sessions.
- RIE's Customer Advocate program, the library network partnership reaching underserved communities, and parallel English/Spanish landlord sessions.

Additional Topic Areas for the Next Triennium

- Electrification readiness in low-income housing.
- Helping residents stay safe in extreme weather (heat and cold).
- Expanded programming and funding for pre-weatherization barriers.

EWG Structure & Triennial Planning

- Start the planning-input process earlier and add more structure so EWG input can inform the first draft of the Company's plan.
- Include more input from people who work directly with clients (coordinators, auditors) and build more structured feedback loops from CAP agencies and contractors.
- Hold some in-person meetings, which EHACoP found led to more engagement and collaboration.

RI Energy Progress & Areas for Improvement

Progress seen: Greater focus on fairness and underserved communities, improved awareness of barriers that delay projects, and positive metric tracking and reporting. Landlord outreach and PWB collaboration with GHFI are off to a good start.

Improvement needed: Increased contractor availability and reliability; more attention to high energy-burden households; more funding for repairs (not just energy upgrades); expanded metric tracking; more community-based collaborations outside the Providence area; a unified enrollment application; consistent

in-language follow-up for all customers; formal cultural competency training requirements; dedicated statewide pre-weatherization funding; and institutionalized equity metrics and feedback loops.

EWG GUIDELINES & EXPECTATIONS

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

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

2024 & 2025 RI EWG RECOMMENDATIONS

The Rhode Island Energy 2026 Annual Plan should build upon the recommendations from previous years, ensuring that progress is sustained and that prior work is not set aside. As Rhode Island Energy looks ahead, it is essential that the Plan continues to advance key equity priorities, such as multi-family housing, the development and tracking of equity metrics, and other critical areas previously identified by the RI EWG and other stakeholders. The following is a list of recommendations from the 2024 and 2025 RI EWG reports. Even if certain items cannot be prioritized in the 2026 program year, Rhode Island Energy should explicitly document them and commit to revisiting these recommendations in future planning cycles.

2024 RI EWG Recommendations & Strategies

- **Incorporate Prior Recommendations & Strategies**
 - **Strategically Align, Braid, & Leverage Additional Healthy Homes, Lead Hazard Control, and other programs to Address Pre-Weatherization Deferral:** The Company should continue to work with partners, including GHHI, to address pre-weatherization barriers. GHHI's whole-home strategy can significantly support in addressing pre-weatherization barriers that lead to deferrals including mold/mildew, carbon monoxide, and inoperable heating systems.
 - **Increase Targeted Support for Small and Micro Businesses:** Implement targeted outreach strategies and create a Customer Advocate role within Rhode Island Energy specifically for small and micro businesses. Expand efforts in underserved communities such as Providence, Central Falls, and Pawtucket through initiatives like the Main Street efforts.
 - **Provide Transparency in Planned and Actual Spending on Equity-Related Efforts:** Compile, provide, and report information on spending on equity efforts for renters, LMI customers, language access, low-income customers, small/microbusinesses, and workforce diversity.
- **Community Outreach & Education**
 - **Enhance Outreach & Education Efforts:** Leverage upcoming events such as the Health Equity Zone (HEZ) Learning Community Events and the University of Rhode Island's Plugged into Energy Research Lecture Series, as strategic platforms to enhance outreach and increase par-

ticipation across the Company's energy efficiency programs. By focusing these opportunities on engaging community-based workers, advocates, and residents, it will actively promote energy efficiency programs, increase awareness, and drive participation, especially in underserved and underrepresented communities

- **Strengthen Support & Collaboration w/ Community-Based Organizations (CBO):** To enhance collaboration with community organizations, it is critical to increase the funding available for community organizations to support energy efficiency outreach and education. RI EWG members suggested that the Company provide direct financial commitments in addition to the funding received by the EEC and rate-payer funds. By significantly boosting financial support for organizations supporting energy efficiency outreach and marketing, similar to Massachusetts' Community First Partnership Program, the Company can elevate its capacity to engage and educate residents to increase participation in its programs.
- **Utilize URI Cooperative Extension's Housing Community of Practice & Integrate Energy Efficiency into Health Initiatives:** Collaborate with the Efficient Housing for all Community of Practice with URI's Extension Energy Literacy Initiative to address key issues outlined in the RI EWG Final Reports. This community will serve as a forum for discussing energy efficiency alongside related housing concerns such as affordability, energy burden, health and safety, accessibility, and language barriers.
- **Workforce Training & Resource Development**
 - **Continue to Expand Language Accessibility:** Develop a language access plan and support existing initiatives like CLEARResult's development of a Spanish curriculum for the 2024 IECC Update trainings. Ensure these resources are widely accessible to Spanish-speaking contractors and builders to enhance their understanding of energy codes and efficiency measures. This includes more than just Spanish translation (e.g., Khmer, Portuguese, Creole, etc.) and should include end-to-end language support to support residents and businesses.
 - **Strengthen Partnership with Builders and Contractors:** Collaborate closely with organizations like RIBA and CLEARResult to facilitate trainings that educate builders and other trades people on building science and energy efficiency requirements. Continue to focus on working with Minority- and Women-Owned Business Enterprises (MWBEs) to ensure inclusive participation in available training opportunities. This will help foster a supportive environment where builders and contractors can adopt energy efficiency practices seamlessly into their work.

2025 RI EWG Recommendations & Strategies

- **Community Outreach & Education**
 - **Continue to Strengthen Partnerships with Local Organizations & Communities:** Emulate the Massachusetts Community First Partnerships model by funding community-based organizations (CBOs) and municipalities in Rhode Island to act as trusted Energy Advocates. These partnerships can recruit and train residents as Energy Advocates or Weatherization Ambassadors who can serve as champions in their communities. Residents already trust local CBOs, and RIE could leverage those existing relationships by partnering with these organizations to more effectively reach residents for their energy efficiency programs.
 - **Enhance Clarity & Transparency of Program Offerings**
 - Create simple, multilingual explainer materials (print & digital) outlining steps to participate, estimated timelines, incentive amounts (i.e., "...up to \$10,000 per unit"), receive rebates, and solutions to common barriers or challenges.
 - Develop FAQs based on past participant feedback and concerns (e.g., delays, audit attendance challenges).
 - **Improve Accessibility for Non-English Speakers**

- Provide real-time interpretation services at meetings and outreach events
- Translate all materials, applications, deferral forms, and program instructions into multiple languages.
- Offer interpretation services for RI EWG meetings to make meetings more accessible for non-English speaking residents and members. GHHI will look to include interpretation services (if needed) on future RI EWG members via Zoom/Microsoft Teams.
- **Launch Centralized Outreach Calendar and Public RI EWG website:** A centralized website can streamline communication, increase transparency, and provide a single hub for meetings/presentations member updates, annual reports, public comments, and equity metrics reporting
- **Equitable Marketing Strategies**
 - **Feature Community-Based Storytelling Across All Channels:** Highlight real customer stories in case studies across print, digital, and in-person outreach, focusing on diverse lived experiences (e.g., renters, small business owners, multigenerational households, immigrants). This will humanize the data and highlight program impact beyond just the numbers. In addition, RI EWG members suggest launching a short video series featuring bilingual customer testimonials, amplified through partnerships with local, trusted community champions and advocates.
 - **Pilot Multilingual Text Messaging Campaigns:** Launch opt-in campaigns using SMS/MMS in English, Spanish, and Portuguese, with referral links, deadline alerts, and quick reply Q&A options. Through collaborating with community partners, this can help promote opt-ins through community events and workshops.
 - **Compensate Community Members Featured in Campaigns:** Provide stipends or incentives for families and small businesses featured in Rhode Island Energy's marketing campaigns to reflect their time and lived expertise.
 - **Build a Contractor & Assessor Ambassador Program:** Compensate and train assessors and contractors to act as informal program ambassadors by equipping them with culturally relevant talking points, translated materials, and testimonials to share with customers during site visits.
 - **Expand In-Person Presence in Trusted Community Settings:** Continue outreach at libraries, local events, and job fairs, especially in partnership with community radio, ESL programs, faith-based networks, and ethnic grocery stores. The Rhode Island Energy Landlord Sessions have continued to increase awareness of available energy efficiency programs and incentives in underserved communities. Ensure all in-person events are tabled with bilingual staff and digital sign-up stations.
 - **Track & Report on Outreach/Marketing Event Outcomes:** This includes collecting data on the number of audits initiated as a result of targeted outreach events, identifying common barriers for participation, and documenting the strategies used to overcome those barriers.
- **Removing Participation Barriers**
 - **Layer Funding Sources to Address Pre-Weatherization Barriers:** This includes promoting funding opportunities like HUD's Lead Hazard Reduction Grant Program, Healthy Homes Production Grant Program and Healthy Homes & Weatherization Cooperation Demonstration Program. These opportunities allow cities, towns, and non-profits to submit proposals that provide funding to eligible applicants to address home health and safety hazards such as lead, mold, asbestos, pests, and knob and tube wiring in low-income homes and support innovative partnerships that integrate weatherization services with health and safety improvements.
 - **Coordinate with EHACoP on Shared Barriers and Solutions:** The RI EWG and EHACoP should work collaboratively to share learnings, best practices, and impactful solutions to ensure that no household is left behind. Additionally, consider funding or scaling successful EHACoP

solutions, particularly those related to outreach, education, and customer experience improvements.

- **Increase Funding for CAP Agencies:** By providing more funding to CAP Agencies, this can improve their capacity to support residents by addressing pre-weatherization barriers and enhancing capacity for tracking and reporting.

- **Equitable Workforce Development**

- **Expand Multilingual Training and Outreach for Diverse Contractors:** Invest in and expand multilingual contractor training programs to better engage non-English speaking contractors, especially in high-demand trades like HVAC and weatherization. Increased targeted outreach and marketing for existing contractor support can raise awareness among diverse and underrepresented businesses. In addition, promote access to licensing and certification pathways in multiple languages.
- **Establish Clear Workforce Development Metrics:** Implement quarterly tracking and public reporting of contractor recruitment, training participation, and retention, disaggregated by race, ethnicity, language, and business size. In addition, develop and publish case studies highlighting success stories from minority contractors to inform future training strategies.
- **Continue to Leverage Integrated Service Delivery Models:** Continuing to collaborate with programs such as the Rhode Island Builders Association (RIBA), Residential Construction Workforce Partnership (RCWP) and other workforce development and training organizations to strengthen workforce pipelines.
 - As the HEAR Program rolls out, Rhode Island Energy and RI OER should prioritize recruiting contractors trained through RIBA's Minority Business Accelerator and bilingual training programs, helping to ensure diverse and qualified participation. Leveraging these partnerships can align home health, energy efficiency, and electrification goals while supporting economic opportunity and expanding access for MWBEs across the state.
 - Create a feedback loop between program administrators and training providers to ensure that workforce training aligns with market demands. Identify and promote high-demand career pathways within the energy efficiency sector to inform training development and better prepare trainees for in-demand careers.
- **Improve Access to Contractor Resources & Workforce Opportunities (New Entrants/Career Change)**
 - Maintain a centralized and regularly updated resource hub both for contractors and new workforce entrants that includes funding opportunities, licensing information, technical assistance, job/internship/apprenticeship openings, and certification pathways.
 - Expand access to paid internships, apprenticeships, and job shadowing programs through partnerships with high schools, trade schools, and programs like PrepareRI. This can also include supporting residents by offering paid training opportunities that include wrap-around supports such as childcare, transportation, and stipends.

- **Energy Efficiency Equity Metrics**

- **Disaggregate Equity Metrics for Deeper Insight:** RI EWG members recommend breaking down the equity metrics data further by geography (e.g., rural vs urban), customer type (e.g., renter vs homeowner and other demographics), and program track (e.g., market rate vs. income-eligible) to generate more actionable insights. This includes the total number of individual units for Multifamily Program participants, rather than only reporting just building count
- **Track and Report on Pre-Weatherization Barriers:** This includes deferrals that later result in weatherization (e.g., resolved barriers), by program type and by CAP and/or region. While full data standardization discussions are in progress, develop a basic interim reporting tool to track

deferral rates and barriers from the Income Eligible program to better allow for data analysis between Income Eligible and Market Rate Programs

- **Add Tracking & Reporting on Workforce Diversity:** Rhode Island Energy have not yet finalized the workforce development metrics and will continue to work with the PPL Supplier DEI team in 2026 to explore what is possible.

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Portions of this report were prepared with the assistance of AI based tools. All content, including data and figures, was reviewed, edited, and verified by GHHI-RI staff who take responsibility for its accuracy and conclusions.

