2027 Energy Efficiency Council (EEC) Education Proposal

A supplement to the 2026 agreement for the a RI Community-Based Energy Navigator Program

University of Rhode Island Cooperative Extension, last updated 09.10.26 by KVH & KLD

CONTEXT

The University of Rhode Island Cooperative Extension (URI Extension) has been supporting the RI Energy Efficiency Council since 2019 with a constantly evolving approach to education and engagement around energy efficiency (Figure 1).

FIGURE 1: URI Extension's Evolving Approach to Community Engagement in Energy Efficiency



Over the last year, we've gained a new, refined perspective about the challenges and costs associated with true, equitable and effective community engagement. Based on national best practices, the evolving programmatic ecosystem, and the reality on the ground in Central Falls, RI, this updated scope of work broadens proposed efforts in 2026 to design and host a "training" into the need for a "program". This broader focus honors the lessons learned through our seven years of work on behalf of the EEC, and additional evidence provided through our new partnership with the American Council for an Energy Efficient Economy (ACEEE). The importance of focusing more broadly will maximize the effectiveness of the Community-based Energy Navigator (C-BEN) Program in increasing participation in energy efficiency programs among RI's income-eligible ratepayers and landlords. This education and engagement effort seeks to bridge the gap between participation in energy efficiency programs, high energy burden, high energy consumption and unhealthy housing through the development of community-based energy navigators, in coordination with statewide energy navigators and other structural elements of the energy efficiency landscape in Rhode Island.

THE SITUATION

Income-eligible ratepayers have the highest energy burden and the unhealthiest homes, but participation in energy efficiency programs that reduce energy costs and enhance building performance because:

- They lack of awareness of energy efficiency programs;
- They lack trust in utility services and energy-related programs; and
- Applications, timelines and stigmatizing language limit ratepayer participation in energy efficiency programs.

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Community-based health workers have the skills and community trust needed to fill this gap, but they lack the specific knowledge required to teach income-eligible ratepayers about:

- Why energy efficiency is important vis a vis reducing energy burden, home air quality and how both relate to social determinants of health;
- The difference between market rate and income eligible EE services, the commonly used terminology for each, and the most common weatherization deferrals in RI; and
- The Weatherization Assistance Program application process and income-eligible programs and funding to address weatherization deferrals.

INPUTS

1. Facilitation by the URI Cooperative Extension Energy Literacy Initiative (CEELI) team based on learnings from the *Efficient Housing for All* Community of Practice;
2. Technical assistance from RI Energy and the American Council for an Energy-Efficient Economy (ACEEE) related to training content development and training evaluation;
3. Advisement from the RI Energy Efficiency Council (RI EEC) Education team and RI Energy Equity Working Group (EWG) related to equity in programming and general coordination across RI programs;
4. Input via key informant interviews with over thirty energy, public health, housing, and community engagement experts on topics including (but not limited to) training content, program design, trainee incentive scheme development, landlord outreach, and community context;
5. Coordination with and support from the Statewide Energy Navigator Program implementing agency;
6. Coordination with Green and Healthy Homes Initiative for Central Falls program implementation;
7. Community engagement and participation through the RI Department of Health (RIDOH) Health Equity Zone (HEZ) Initiative Training and Technical Assistance Program (TTAP), RI Energy Equity Working Group (EWG), Children's Friend, City of Central Falls and the Community Health Worker Association of RI (CHWARI); and
8. Translation services.

AUDIENCE

Primary: Community-based workers and landlords in Central Falls

Secondary: Income eligible ratepayers, including renters

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ACTIVITIES (by year)

1. **Community-Based Energy Navigator (C-BEN) Training**

   - ★ 2026 - Conduct a literature review to identify best practices and lessons learned to inform C-BEN program and training design;
   - ★ 2026 - Conduct key informant interviews with key stakeholders and experts in energy, public health, housing, and community engagement, including (but not limited to): Emily Koo (Acadia Center), David Ruggiero and Andrew Broccolo (City of Providence Sustainability), Dana Beale, Wade Rya, Matt Francisco and Rita Rose (CLEAResult), Bert Cooper, Bryan Evans, Anabel Espinal (Green and Healthy Homes Initiative), Brenda Clement (HousingWorksRI), Daphany Rose Sanchez (KC3), Carinel LeGrand and Brendan Dagher (Rhode Island Energy), Steve Chybowski, Georgia Cheney (RI Office of Energy Resources), Timothy Lett (RI Weatherization Assistance Program), Danielle Woody and Nicholas Thibault (The RISE Group), Carrie Bridges (Brown University Health), Tonya Glantz, Laura Blackwell (Community Health Worker Association RI), MManuela Barcelos (Health Equity Institute), Jim Logan and Leonardo Carnicelli (Pawtucket Central Falls Health Equity Zone), Patricia Martinez (Central Falls School District), Owen Heleen and Claudia Villa (Children's Friend), Andrew Pierson (PCF Development), Dayanarah Baez (Providence Community Action Program), Jim Logan and Leo Carnicelli (Local Initiative Support Corporation) - *as of September 11, 2026*
   - ★ 2026 - Weatherization Action Program State Monitors, Progreso Latino, Blackstone Valley Community Health, Blackstone Valley Community Action Program, Meals on Wheels, CrossRoads, Clinica Esperanza, NV Consulting, Central Falls Housing Authority, Addison County Energy Navigator Program, CLEAResult Field Monitors, Concord, MA Heating/Cooling Coaches, Providence Preservation Revolving Fund - *to be scheduled*
   - ★ 2026 - Coordinate with ACEEE to ensure that technical assistance aligns with the specific needs of the C-BEN program;
   - ★ 2026 - Synthesize findings with ACEEE technical assistance into C-BEN program and curriculum design;
   - ★ 2026 - Develop program design inputs, including logic model, process map, client experience map, and Central Falls resource guide;
   - ★ 2026 - Develop a training curriculum and workbook focused on equipping community-based workers with the knowledge, communication skills, and practical tools to help residents understand home energy efficiency, identify opportunities, navigate available programs, and feel empowered to take action;
   - ★ 2027 - Gather resources for participants that includes information about residential energy efficiency programs and incentives, and identify gaps for RI Energy to create resources around; and
   - ★ 2027 - Plan and facilitate a Community-based Energy Navigator training for community-based workers using lessons learned from the EHACoP, targeting 100 participants in two cohorts.

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2. **RI Home Weatherization Roadmap**
    - ★ 2026 - Refine the roadmap drafted in 2025 with input from the EEC and EWG;
    - ★ 2026 - Work with the URI Environmental Data Center programmers to turn the roadmap into a digital decision tree that can be used as an educational tool for community-based workers and to guide ratepayers through the weatherization process.
    - ★ 2027 - Host an online roadmap beta testing workshop and make adjustments in coordination with the URI Environmental Data Center to finalize and launch the tool
3. **Community-Based Worker (CBW) Incentive System Development:**
    - 2027 - Work with the CHWARI and the RIDOH Health Equity Zone Initiative / Learning Community to formalize a public health workforce development incentive structure that encourages engagement in energy efficiency.
4. **C-BEN Workshop:**
    - 2027 - Host one in-person C-BEN workshop to engage with and gather feedback from CBWs on Community-based Energy Navigator Training curriculum, RI Home Weatherization Roadmap, and community-based worker incentive system.
5. **Landlord Engagement:**
    - 2026 - Conduct key informant interviews with landlord-facing organizations in Central Falls
    - 2027 - Develop a plan for landlord outreach to accompany the C-BEN training
    - 2027 - Coordinate with RI Energy on landlord outreach efforts to complement the C-BEN program in Central Falls

★ **Statewide Energy Navigator Program (SENP) Coordination:**

- 2027 - Coordinate with SENP team
- 2027 - Incorporate into program design

OUTPUTS

1. 2026 - Key Informant Interview Summary Report
2. 2026 - Data Compilation Matrix, including program and training design input from key informant interviews, ACEEE feedback, C-BEN partner organization feedback, and literature review
3. 2026 - C-BEN training curriculum
4. 2026 - Digital RI Home Weatherization Roadmap web tool
5. 2026 - C-BEN Logic Model
6. 2026 - C-BEN Process Map
7. 2026 - C-BEN Client Experience Map

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8. 2026 - C-BEN training lesson plans and instructional materials
9. 2027 - Central Falls energy efficiency resource list
10. 2027 - C-BEN Workshop with community-based workers
11. 2027 - (2) C-BEN trainings
12. 2027 - CBW incentive system implementation
13. 2027 - Landlord engagement to accompany C-BEN program
14. 2027 - Community Engagement & Training Development Process Guide
15. 2027 - Final Report

OUTCOMES

Short-term (Knowledge)

Community-based health workers [primary audience] are empowered to assist ratepayers with weatherization programs using the EE Roadmap through an Energy Navigator pilot training program with knowledge about:

a) Why energy efficiency is important vis a vis reducing energy burden, home air quality and how both relate to social determinants of health;

b) The difference between market rate and income eligible EE services, the commonly used terminology for each, and the most common weatherization deferrals in RI; and

c) The Weatherization Assistance Program application process and income-eligible programs and funding to address weatherization deferrals.

Mid-term (Behavior)

Community-based health workers [primary audience] will:

a) Guide clients through appropriate Energy Efficiency programs using the RI Home Weatherization Roadmap;

b) Share Energy Efficiency program information with landlords to increase participation; and

c) Increase the number of residents applying for IES (e.g. LIHEAP > WAP).

Through training and support offered by community-based health workers, income-eligible ratepayers [secondary audience] will understand:

a) Why energy efficiency is important vis a vis reducing energy burden, home air quality and how both relate to social determinants of health;

b) The difference between market rate and income eligible EE services, the commonly used terminology for each, and the most common weatherization deferrals in RI; and

c) The Weatherization Assistance Program application process and income-eligible programs and funding to address weatherization deferrals.

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Long-term (Conditions)

We expect to see:

a) An increase in completed home energy assessments for ratepayers with high energy burdens in under-resourced communities;

b) An increase in completed home weatherization projects for ratepayers with high energy burdens in under-resourced communities; and

c) Community-based public health workers adopt an Energy Efficiency Coach role through their regular outreach and engagement practice.

TIMELINE - GANTT CHART

BUDGET

Activities marked “2026 - ” above are covered under URI AWD11451 (April 6, 2026 - December 4, 2027) in the amount of $90,000. Activities marked “2027 -” are included in Table 1: 2027 Budget by Activity below. Not reflected in the 2026 budget is an in-kind contribution of $13,000 for an undergraduate Energy Literacy Fellow who assisted in completing the work outlined above. The same is true for 2027, as URI will provide an in-kind contribution of $15,000 for an undergraduate Energy Literacy Fellow to assist in completing the work outlined above and in the table below.

***Note**: Total budget is not to exceed the total below, though the costs per activity may be adjusted as each aspect of the proposal is finalized.*

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Table 1: 2027 Budget

Direct Costs		
Activity 1: C-BEN Training	URI staff (RA IV + RA II) salary and fringe (to curate training participant resources; and plan and facilitate training for two cohorts. ★ *RA IV: 144 hours * $82.48/hour = $11,877* ★ *RA II: 500 hours * $56.27/hour = $28,135*	$40,012
Activity 2 RI Home Weatherizatio n Roadmap	URI staff salary and fringe to host an online roadmap beta testing workshop and make adjustments in coordination with the URI Environmental Data Center to finalize and launch the tool ★ *RA IV: 36 hours * $82.48/hour = $2,969* ★ *RA II: 125 hours * $56.27/hour = $7,034*	$10,003
Activity 3: Incentive System Development	URI staff salary and fringe to formalize a public health workforce development incentive structure that encourages engagement in energy efficiency in partnership with CHWARI and the RIDOH Health Equity Zone Initiative / Learning Community. ★ *RA IV: 144 hours * $82.48/hour = $11,877* ★ *RA II: 500 hours * $56.27/hour = $28,135*	$40,012
Activity 4: C-BEN Workshop	URI staff salary and fringe to host one in-person C-BEN workshop to gather feedback about program outputs (e.g. C-BEN curriculum, roadmap, incentive system) and synthesize results. ★ *RA IV: 36 hours * $82.48/hour = $2,969* ★ *RA II: 125 hours * $56.27/hour = $7,034*	$10,003
Activity 5: Landlord Engagement	URI staff salary and fringe to develop a plan and implement landlord outreach efforts in coordination with RI Energy ★ *RA IV: 54 hours * $82.48/hour = $4,454* ★ *RA II: 188 hours * $56.27/hour = $10,551*	$15,005
Activity 6: Statewide Energy Navigator Program Coordination	URI staff salary and fringe for coordination with Statewide Energy Navigator Program vendor (TBD) and incorporation of changes into the C-BEN program design, training curriculum, and training materials ★ *RA IV: 93 hours * $82.48/hour = $7,671* ★ *RA II: 313 hours * $56.27/hour = $17,613*	$25,284
Incentive Payments	Incentives for CHWs who a) Participate in C-BEN workshop (~20 CBWs at $100/CBW): $2,000; b) Complete C-BEN training (~60 CBWs at $200/CBW): $12,000; and c) Complete energy efficiency house visits to connect residents with and support them through the home energy assessment and weatherization process (~60 CBWs at $400/CBW): $24,000	$38,000
Printing	Printing of resources developed for C-BENs to share with residents	$5,000
Refreshments	In-person session refreshments	$5,000
		$188,319
Indirect Costs		
Off-campus F&A rate of 26%		$48,963
	TOTAL:	**$237,282**

QUESTIONS about this proposal should be directed to Kate Hardesty (kate@uri.edu; 401.874.4096).

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