



# SC HELP MY HOUSE PROGRAM

Highlights from 2015 EPA Case Study

Full Report

<http://wp.me/a5WT9H-pL>

# Highlights

---

## Key Learnings

- This on-bill financing program was piloted in 2011–2013 by a group of rural electric cooperatives in South Carolina
- Led by Central Electric Power Cooperative (CEPC), which serves as supplier to 20 rural electric cooperatives
- Financing is approved for households based on one year of good bill payment history rather than credit scores, addressing a common limiting factor for low-income households.
- Pilot served 125 largely rural, single-family homes
- Whole-building approach taken to identify greater savings opportunities
- EE upgrades financed by a 10-year loan at 2.5 percent interest.
- Program partners (including power wholesalers, electric co-ops, nonprofit organizations) created a new nonprofit to administer loans.
- Key partners contributions:
  - EESI - program design, outreach
  - Ecova - program planning
  - Integral Analytics - cost-effectiveness analyses
- Target participant households were single-family homes with high electricity use, located in low-income areas.
- Program trained crew of energy auditors to ensure consistency in audits.
- Auditors conducted post-install audits to ensure quality of work.
- Contractors were not paid until passing post-install audit.
- Customers saw an average net reduction in their electric bills of ~\$25 per month or about \$300 per year, even while paying off the loan.
- Average payback for loan is just over six and a half years — far shorter than the 10-year loan term.
- The pilot will avoid an estimated 6.7 million metric tons of greenhouse gas emissions over 10 years, equivalent to the annual energy-related emissions of more than 600,000 average American homes.
- The average home participating in the project has reduced its energy consumption by nearly 35%, or roughly 11,000 kWh annually.
- Savings during peak demand periods (when co-ops pay the most for electricity) from the houses participating in the pilot were more than 25% during the summer cooling peak in June and over 45% during the winter heating peak in January.

- Loan financing was provided by U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Rural Economic Development Loan and Grant Program (REDLG). EESI received funding from the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation, the Surdna Foundation, and the Merck Family Fund to assist with pilot design and outreach. Since completion of the initial pilot program, three of the participating co-ops and two other South Carolina co-ops that observed the pilot have used a combination of their own budget funds and additional no-interest loans from the REDLG.
- In 2014, USDA established the Energy Efficiency and Conservation Loan Program, which provides a new way for co-ops to fund on-bill financing and other energy efficiency projects. EESI is working with co-ops nationwide to access these loans and use them to develop or expand on-bill financing programs.

## Contact

Lindsey Smith, Electric Cooperatives of SC, 803-739-3046, [lindsey.smith@ecsc.org](mailto:lindsey.smith@ecsc.org), [Environmental and Energy Study Institute \(EESI\)](#)