



# BUILDING BETTER ENERGY EFFICIENCY PROGRAMS FOR LOW-INCOME HOUSEHOLDS

Highlights from ACEEE's March 2016 Report

Full Report  
<http://wp.me/a5WT9H-oN>

# Highlights

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## Key Learnings

Recommendations for utilities for success of low-income EE programs

- Offer a range of eligible measures.
- Coordinate with other organizations, particularly Community Action Partnerships
- Use a portfolio approach.
- Address health, safety, and building integrity issues, working with housing rehab partners
- Incorporate customer energy efficiency education is key to ensure persistence of installed measures, build trust with community
- Develop dual-fuel and fuel-blind programs
- Coordinate between efficiency and bill payment assistance programs to coordinate and better reach highest need households
- Increase electricity savings through high-efficiency products and equipment - Programs could rely more heavily on appliances, equipment, and electronics to produce savings, rather than leaning just on weatherization shell measures and direct install measures, primarily lighting, faucet aerators, and showerheads.

Report provides context for recommended expansion of appliance and electronic rebate programs as a cost-effective strategy for greater energy savings, noting that low-income households (whether owned or rented):

- Are seldom targeted for appliance and electronic replacement incentives
- Purchase far fewer ENERGY STAR appliances
- Are less likely to have programmable thermostats (24% vs 47% of all households)
- Are more likely to leave heating temperature same when residents are away from home (40% vs 29% of all households)
- Are more likely to have older appliances that are less frequently retired from use, that have been purchased from a secondhand market, or obtained at no cost as friends and family retire older models
- Are more likely to heat their homes primarily with electricity (37% versus 29% of all households)
- 4% use portable electric heaters as their primary heating equipment.

Utility Ratepayer Funding

- Low-income energy assistance and EE for 2013 was \$3.91 billion, with \$3.13 billion going to bill payment assistance and \$777 million (~20%) going to efficiency programs.
- 2014 US electric demand-side management (DSM) expenditures for the low-income customer class were 6% of total expenditures on EE (\$361 million), while spending for all residential programs was 28% (\$1.68 billion).

Other report highlights:

- Statistical snapshot of utility investment in programs serving low-income households, reflecting much opportunity to address disparities.

- Discussion of multiple benefits of whole-building retrofit programs including increased comfort, improved indoor air quality and reduced maintenance noted need for additional cost–benefit calculations (particularly to aid in incorporating into cost effectiveness testing).
- Review of new efforts to evaluate and rank other benefits for cost effectiveness purposes, which in California have been helpful in elevating equity measures.
- Overview of post-purchase counseling programs including homeownership maintenance and improvement programs, and delinquency and foreclosure prevention services.

## Contact

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