



Energy Coach Program

The Coach Experience from a Homeowner's Perspective



- HC – Wasn't optimizing steps she had already taken.

- TP –Client needed 5 months to make decisions.

- JO – Didn't realize she might qualify for free program





- LY – Were told heat pumps wouldn't be enough so they've been afraid to use them on cold days.



- EB –Radiant floor, looking into an ATW HP or electric boiler w tank + HP water heater.

- None of our clients have been familiar with rebates and tax credits, especially low- and moderate-income clients – coaches close the information gap
- Sometimes it's not about installing new equipment, it's about guidance on better use of the systems for customer satisfaction once vendors are gone
- Virtually all have expressed relief at having an objective, informed neighbor to talk things out with, find answers to questions – people don't want to be "sold"
- Renters feel left out

Some mid-point metrics

Two-year goal:

120 engagements, 60 projects, 10 in low-income homes

7 – 10 volunteer coaches

As of April 2024, one year in:

72 inquiries, 67 engagements, 21 projects in 20 households

1 low-income home – a challenge

7 volunteer coaches – always recruiting for more capacity to respond

- 10 energy audits completed or scheduled
- 4 insulation projects
- 8 heat pumps in 4 homes + 1 scheduled late March
- 12 window orders in 2 homes for Fall build (+ 26 inquiries)

- **We're slightly behind in installations but trending in right direction**
- **Some qualitative outcomes include greater public awareness and interest in retrofits, commercial spin-offs, the "neighbor" effect.**

Challenges

Getting started and staying with it are the greatest challenges for volunteers *and* residents

The process is always evolving, being refined

- Sustaining volunteers is unpredictable
- Funding for low-income residents still has gaps, especially in communities not identified as underserved, and for single-family homes
- Reaching and engaging low-income households is a challenge
- Renters have few options - Owners of small apartment buildings often don't pay tenants' utilities so incentives don't align well
- Coaches provide local installation data on projects we assist but total installation numbers are difficult to obtain
- The process is long-term, single-family homes are not a volume strategy but they are a needed constituency of advocates for policies that expand Maine's climate resilience

- Air-to-Water Heat Pumps are in demand but not many Maine companies have installed them and they don't receive rebates
- Developing program infrastructure took months, but we now have tools to share with other communities pending funding -- coach toolkits and communication templates, training curriculum, client information packets, household questionnaires, client surveys, coach mentoring. Staff support is necessary.
- It takes many partners to make it work – we thank York Community Services, York County Community Action, Window Dressers, Habitat, Efficiency Maine, SMPDC, Town of York, GOPIF, the many industry pros who have volunteered to train coaches, all our financial supporters!
- We are part of a statewide network (Local Leads the Way) and several communities have expressed interest in York's coaching model.



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