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# Assessment of Progress Against Equity Targets

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# Summary of Status by Target

| Equity Targets | Status |
|---|---|
| **Renters:** RCD and IECD Renters served | |
| **Language Access:** HEAs/ weatherization delivered in Spanish, Portuguese | |
| **Small Business Weatherization jobs** | |
| **Moderate Income-verified customers served** | |
| **Equity Benefits** | |
| **Investments and participants in Environmental Justice Communities** | |
| **Partnerships:** Investments in, outreach to, participants in underserved segments | |
| **Number of and spending on contracts with MWBEs** | |

**Definitions:**

- Green = on track to meet (or almost meet) target
- Yellow = progress is lagging, but significant efforts are underway that the PAs and their partners hope will start to deliver measurable progress toward target
- Red = progress toward target is significantly lagging, more significant changes likely required to start delivering measurable progress toward target
- Too early to tell or metrics are focused on tracking and don't include specific targets

# Renters

Status:

**Targets:**

- Increase total renter unit participation by 24% from 2021 to 2024.
- Increase renter unit participation in attached low rise 16% each across market rate and income eligible programs.

**Challenges**

- Engaging absentee landlords, and securing landlord authorization (more generally)
- Awareness among renters and landlords of available offers for rental units
- Renters' and landlords' lack of time to participate in a HEA and lack of priority for the property owner
- Split incentives, in which renters typically pay energy bills but do not control decisions around improvements
- Building code violations at some properties limit landlords' interest in providing access for energy assessments or pursuing improvements
- Declining rental units in some PA territories

# Renters Cont'd

Status:

**Key Efforts under Renter Strategic Plan to Increase Renter Participation**

**Marketing**

- Updates to statewide renter page
- Promotional videos designed to educate Landlords and Renters on available offerings
- PA-specific targeted marketing to renters in Spanish and Portuguese and to Landlords
- Action/ABCD targeted marketing to owners of small multi (5-25) in Boston, Lawrence, New Bedford, Springfield; to be replicated in additional cities and towns.

**Program Delivery**

- Continued roll-out of "50%" rule, in which whole buildings will be served by the program applicable to >50% of occupants based on rate code (plus additional Income Eligible offerings for LI units)
- Renter incentives: 100% weatherization and up to $5k/unit Pre-Wx barrier repair

**Partnerships**

- 215 outreach activities targeting renters and/or landlords executed by Community First Partner participants so far in 2023
- Coordinating co-branded letters to property owners in all “Hard-to-Reach” National Grid communities to reach landlords

# Language Access

Status:

**Targets:**

- Increase # of participants who receive an HEA or online assessment in Spanish or Portuguese by 21% over term
- Increase # of participants receiving weatherization after receiving HEAs in Spanish or Portuguese by 10% over term

**Key Challenges**

- Expanding language access across the programs, including balancing timing for development and implementation of the Language Access Plan against the need to serve English isolated customers today
- Historically poor visibility into customers' language preference and cultural sensitivities

**Current Status of Language Access**

- Online Assessment available in Spanish and Portuguese, some energy specialists and ABCD/ Action field staff are bilingual (primarily Spanish and Portuguese)
- Low-Income Client Service Center staff speak Spanish, Portuguese, Mandarin, Vietnamese, French, Haitian Creole and conduct outreach to clients in preferred languages
- Other residential customers also now have access to streamlined call center support at intake in Spanish, Portuguese, and Mandarin
- Significant PA-specific marketing campaigns in Spanish and Portuguese underway
- ABCD and other residential lead vendors working to recruit and retain bilingual staff

# Language Access Cont'd

Status:

**Key Efforts under Language Access Plan to Increase Language Access**

- Internal needs assessments completed for RCD, Small Business, New Construction, and Retail in Q2. Income Eligible will be finished in a few weeks.
- Community Needs Assessments in the works - several focus groups have happened or are scheduled in Spanish, Portuguese, and other languages spoken in MA.

**Partnerships**

- 144 outreach activities targeting limited English-speaking populations executed by Community First Partner participants so far in 2023
- Customers responding to co-branded, multi-lingual letters have expressed preferred languages other than English at rates commensurate with the number of “Limited English Speaking” households in the communities

# Small Business Wx

Status:

**Targets:**

- Complete 600-800 small business weatherization jobs annually over the term

**Key Challenges**

- Awareness of available offerings and prior complexity of offerings available to C&I customers
- With the phase-out of lighting measures, weatherization (and HVAC) improvements tend to be more costly and disruptive and customers are time constrained
- Turnkey vendors serving small business customers (electric PAs only) were previously focused on lighting and are now being required to transition their business model
- Limited discretionary spending among certain small businesses hit hard by the pandemic

**Key Efforts to Serve Small Business Customers**

- Significant increase in Main Streets Events (aimed at small businesses), including in EJ Communities
  - **Coordination with Partner Communities:** 11 of 17 in CFP Main Streets in CFP communities, leveraged community support, co-branding, on-the-ground support, and non-English support
    - Working to improve coordination with community partners going forward
- Training and other efforts to transition Turnkey Vendors away from lighting and toward delivery of weatherization and HVAC improvements
- Expanded the Wx offering to include prescriptive and custom express options for easier participation
- Increased incentives for renter Wx projects and Main Street Events
- Increased marketing for EJ communities

# Moderate Income

Status:

**Targets:**

- Increase moderate-income ("MI") weatherization jobs by 700% over term
- Increase MI heating system replacements by 56% over term

**Key Challenges**

- Awareness of available offerings, sensitivity around discussing income, and need for clear messaging around offers
- Challenges in identifying moderate income customers (e.g., no corollary for LIHEAP as we are not aware of programs explicitly using 61-80% of SMI as a criteria for eligibility. Ideas welcome!)
- Complexity of navigating the program, including requirements for weatherizing prior to electrifying
- Potentially small pool of customers that are moderate-income and not served by other offers (e.g., renters)

**Key Efforts to MI customer participation**

- Significant PA-specific marketing campaigns targeting likely MI customers
- Overhaul of statewide webpages to identify and direct MI customers to enhanced offers
- Development of a concierge service for MI customers to help them navigate the program
- Updates to intake processes to identify and flag MI customers for additional follow-up
- Efforts underway to pilot streamlined referrals for weatherization and HVAC contractors

# Equity Benefits, Spending, & Participation in EJ Communities

Status:

**Targets:**

- Achieve approx. 23% of Statewide Benefits as Equity Benefits across Gas and Electric plans
- Increase plan over plan investments and # of participants in EJ Communities

**Highlights**

- For 2022, statewide equity benefits achievement was 70% of goal for Electric PAs and 108% of goal for Gas PAs.
  - Note: Underperformance in Electric benefits relates to an incorrect planning assumption in which National Grid assigned 100% of all planned oil- and propane-to-electric conversions statewide to Environmental Justice Communities. This has been previously disclosed and discussed with the EWG.
- As of year-end 2022, almost all PAs were on track to meet or exceed investment and participation targets in EJ communities for the plan period

# Community Partnerships

Status:

- Metrics designed to track partnership investments in, participation from, and outreach to underserved customer segments
- CFP now covers 29 programs representing 52 communities, including
  - 28 of 61 DPU "Hard-to-Reach" (HTR) Communities
  - 73% of population lives in Environmental Justice Communities
  - 52% of units are occupied by renters
  - 36% of households speak a language other than English at home, 10% "Limited English Speaking" households which represents 75% of the state's population of English Isolated Households

**2023 Updates**

- Onboarded 11 new programs representing 23 new communities into Community First Partnership in 2023, (17 HTR)
- Updated community evaluation rubric to place more weight on reaching target populations
- Adjusted intake income questions to more readily identify moderate income households
- Communities have executed over 800 outreach activities that communities estimate have reached ~265k residents and small businesses in 2023
- Main Streets collaboration with some vendors has led to increased access for non-English speaking business owners
- Supported LEAN's effort evaluate and implement plan to increase pathways for low-income households by allowing Home Performance Contractors partnered with CFP communities to deliver service to all income levels

**Ongoing Challenges**

- Buy-in and collaboration from some small business vendors to leverage community support is lacking
- Data collection from PAs and vendors remains inconsistent, making it challenging to fully evaluate impact
- Program and vendor support for languages of than English is an ongoing challenge that makes some communities hesitant to do multi-lingual marketing

# Supplier Diversity

Status:

- Metrics designed to track # of contracts and spend on contracts between PAs and Minority and Woman-Owned Business Enterprises (M/WBEs)

**Updates on Supplier Diversity**

- 2 Supplier Diversity Summits held and direct outreach completed to all MWBEs on state-certified list
  - Planning is underway for a 3rd summit Supplier Diversity Summit in Q3 of 2023.
  - Individual PAs have their own Supplier diversity efforts that extend beyond MassSave program
- **MWBE EM&V Study:** PAs are tracking the number of Minority/Women Business Enterprises ("MWBEs") by assessing direct contracts and spend between PAs and vendors, compared to the total number and spend of all direct contracts.
  - Study to be completed in 2023.