



June 9, 2021

Members of the Energy Efficiency Advisory Council,

The City of Boston shares the vision of equity that is highlighted in this plan. While some aspects of the plan clearly move in that direction, others may need some tweaks.

Enhanced incentives for weatherization and HVAC systems will address financial barriers for moderate-income residents. However, the enhanced moderate income offer will require weatherization before HVAC installation, which is a best practice, but isn't required for standard HVAC incentives. This additional step may introduce a barrier for some customers that will reduce uptake of this offer. A more inclusive approach would be, in cases where the enhanced HVAC incentives are drawing residents into the programs, to move forward with that installation and then to follow up with the no-cost weatherization.

Expanded language access could address another barrier for underserved customers, but it must cover the full end-to-end customer journey, including contracts. Availability of additional languages in marketing materials and even call centers is not enough. Even better would be to create a simplified one-page summary highlighting important areas of the contract, which would also be translated. And while we know that incorporating language access into the full journey will start with residential and income-eligible programs, it must also be added for small business customers.

Simplifying the participation process addresses another barrier for hard-to-reach customers. We're happy to see that virtual home energy assessments will continue for the residential program, and begin for income-eligible programs, and that a new centralized LEAN call center and single family intake website will be created. However, there are other elements of easing participation that are unclear, and additional details about them and timelines would be helpful.

- A residential heating solutions calculator will help residents make decisions, but we believe it was described in the last plan, and there doesn't seem to be much more detail here.
- While streamlining the processes for mixed income buildings and for HEAT loans is mentioned, it's unclear how those processes will improve.
- A C&I custom express calculator tool and a savings assessment tool for small businesses will help business owners understand the value of the programs and encourage their participation, but it's unclear which PAs have already been using these tools and which will be adopting them.

We're particularly interested in the development of a customized electric conversion approach for income-eligible multifamily buildings and want to make sure that the support offered there meets the needs that we've seen. We appreciate the PAs for including stakeholders in that working group and look forward to helping develop that path.



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