



May 19, 2015

Re: Proposed Demonstration Project – Non-Profit Liaison

Be they community centers, early education facilities, houses of worship, or advocacy organizations there are numerous nonprofit organizations in the small-to-medium-C&I sector that pay utility costs for their facilities. Because many of these customers are housed in inefficient facilities, they would benefit tremendously from investments in efficiency. However, their participation in Mass Save is hampered by several barriers.

Barriers to participation:

- *Lack of awareness about the program, how to engage*
- *Limited access to capital to invest in large scale improvements*
- *No in-house energy expertise or someone to interpret assessment results/recommendations or how leverage rebates to maximize savings*
- *Multiple facilities with multiple rate classes and utilities*
- *Age, construction, use pattern barriers (especially in houses of worship)*
- *Program inconsistencies across territories*
- *Financing constraints and aggressive payback periods that vary across PAs*

The Small Business Process Evaluation released in March 2015 identified several opportunities to build upon past successes of the Mass Save Direct Install Program to further enhance the customer experience, deepen energy savings achieved beyond lighting, and increase program participation. The following is consistent with the contracting process and assessment process recommendations made in the evaluation.

Proposed Solution: *Pilot a small non-profit liaison and coordination program as part of the 2016-2018 Three Year Efficiency Plan.*

1. Establish a Nonprofit Liaison.

- Designated staff/team of persons housed within each PA or at a chosen lead vendor. If there are multiple liaisons across PAs, they should meet regularly (and frequently) to ensure standardization of best practices. This is particularly important to make sure the process is streamlined and experience enhanced for those nonprofits with multiple utilities.
- Liaison is someone who has been trained to specialize in knowledge of nonprofits and who can establish a trusting relationship with customers by being a consistent point of contact through each step in the Mass Save program

- Consistency is key in making sure customers do not fall through the cracks
- Liaison will help nonprofit customers
 - a. interpret and understand assessment reports and opportunities to maximize savings
 - b. identify applicable rebates, incentives, and financing opportunities

2. Designate a Budget for Marketing Program/Outreach Materials.

- PAs should designate a modest budget to support a marketing program/outreach campaign targeting nonprofits in small to medium C&I sector
- The campaign messages and objectives should be cohesive across PAs for all nonprofit customers and materials should be made available at no cost to nonprofit collaborators
- The liaison should then work together with/leverage nonprofit networks and community partners to launch an outreach campaign
- Some community partners who are well-positioned to help engage nonprofits and to spearhead an outreach/education campaign include Mass Interfaith Power & Light, Home Energy Efficiency Team (HEET)

3. Standardize Rebates, Incentives, and Repayment Terms for Nonprofits.

Financing is often a barrier to measure implementation for small-to-medium nonprofits, many of which have limited access to discretionary funds or lack sufficient capital required to implement more expensive and/or non-lighting measures. In particular, house of worship and many small nonprofits face barriers to accessing 0% HEAT Loans because they do not have standard budgets, 990s, or long term credit history.

- Currently PAs offer on-bill financing, but the repayment terms vary between utilities – Eversource offers 12 months, National Grid offers 36 months.
- We support extending the repayment period for 0% interest, on-bill financing for nonprofits
- Houses of worship and many small nonprofit organizations face barriers to accessing 0% HEAT loans. We support helping these nonprofits create standard budgets or allowing them to more easily take into account endowments, donation history, and building value will help these sites access HEAT loans.

Nonprofit organizations often play key roles in the community. They are trusted voices and important messengers of the benefits of energy efficiency. We can already point to examples of nonprofit organizations leading by example – lowering their energy consumption, educating their constituents about the benefits of doing so, then engaging those constituents in the residential sector. Establishing a program to help serve them more effectively and more thoroughly will lead to increased program participation and deeper energy savings in the sector, but it will also contribute to increased engagement among community members and residents, too.

For questions or for more information, please contact **Eugenia Gibbons, Clean Energy Program Director at Mass Energy Consumers Alliance**, Eugenia@massenergy.org, 617-524-3950 x 141.