



# Helping Solve the Affordable Housing Crisis using Energy Efficiency in Gunnison County, Colorado

ACEEE 2018 Rural Energy Conference

October 22, 2018



# Significant Community Need

- Resort town -- mix of income levels
  - 20% of community at or below FPL
- 50% of homes have high energy burden of 6% to 9%
- High energy bills ~\$300+ in winter, temps down to -20 deg F
- BIGGEST issue is affordable housing
  - High energy burden affects affordability





## Our Solution is GV-HEAT

- Comprehensive energy efficiency program
- One of the first programs to integrate efficiency services with affordable housing
- Available to everyone, but emphasizes help for income-qualified (IQ) households
- Brings **FOUR** efficiency programs and **THREE** loan programs to the community



# GV-HEAT Goals and Targets

## Goals

1. Reduce household energy burden  
<6%
2. Improve housing affordability

## Targets

3. Assess 150 homes per year
  - 75 ESC, 75 IQ
4. Assist with 75 retrofits per year
  - Mix of ESC and IQ across the Valley







- Remote, rural area
- Limited contractor pool
- Some resistance from the community
- Difficult get word out
- Lack of funding

Challenges: What I Wish We Knew and How We Overcame

## Remote, Rural Area

- Historically had one WAP home per year
- No energy efficiency services
- Various income-qualified services but not connected



**We created connections and resources**

# Key Players and Roles: True Valley Wide Partnership





## Limited Contractor Pool

- New, fancy home market is exploding – BIG competition
- Few contractors with efficiency expertise

**We leveraged the benefits of constant work and connection to community.**



# Some Resistance From Community

- Been there, done that!
- Skepticism
- Lack of funding
- No previous call to action



**We changed the  
messaging  
Energy  
Efficiency =  
Affordable  
Housing**

Solicited  
Funding from a  
Ton of Partners!

## **Grants for Program Development and Household Improvements**

- All three municipalities + county
- Energy Smart Colorado
- Gunnison Housing Foundation
- Gunnison Congregation Church
- Energy Outreach Colorado – CARE



Leveraged Even  
More Funding  
for Household  
Improvements

**Grants and Loans for Household  
Improvements**

- Weatherization Assistance Program
- USDA 504 Grant and Loan Program
- Crisis Intervention Program
- Colorado Residential Energy Upgrades Loans
- Regional Housing Rehabilitation Program

## Difficult to Get Word Out



**We used all  
community  
resources and  
leveraged our  
partner's  
outlets.**

- Letters to the editors
- Shared outreach and marketing
- Radio series
- Pamphlets and brochures
- Connection with other IQ programs and faith base organizations
- Farmer's markets
- Newspaper features
- Newspaper ads
- Utility bill inserts
- Posted info on website, Facebook

## Demographics Served

- Mix of single-family homes and mobile homes with a few condos
- Most of our participants are seniors on fixed incomes
- Some households have members with disability
- Large immigrant population in Gunnison; small portion of immigrants





## Program Successes to Date: 10 Months In

- Created program structure and framework – first of its kind
- Developed 12+ partnerships
- Pre-qualified contractor pool
- Conducted extensive outreach and marketing
- Connected with 62 households
- Facilitated 26 assessments
- Successful transfer to local administrating organization



## Program Successes to Date: Provided Solutions When None Existed

- Case study:
  - Roof repair
  - Window repair
  - New floors
  - Cleaning
  - Energy efficient assessment



Before

After

IQ participant stated that a monthly winter savings of just \$50 was enough to ensure that the family could make it through the winter!

## Energy Savings: Detailed Look

Annual Income	Total Investment into Home	Measures Implemented	Annual Energy Savings (th)	Annual Cost Savings (\$)	Est. Energy Burden	New Est. Energy Burden
\$13,848.00	\$4,101.54	Air leakage, attic insulation, duct insulation, health and safety, low cost, pipe insulation, refrigerator, subspace insulation, wall insulation	778.13	\$739.00	11.24%	5.91%
\$6,876.00	\$4,621.34	Air leakage, attic insulation, EC incidental repairs, furnace/boilers, health and safety, low cost, pipe insulation, subspace insulation, wall insulation, water heater	587.21	\$559.00	22.64%	14.51%

## Long-Term Plan: Meet Our Community's Need

- Needs Assessment stated that we have 1,700 substandard homes
- 36% of our population qualifies for CARE
- Our need is long-lasting and will not go away until we do something about it!





# For More Information

---

Emily Artale at (303) 709-9948  
[emily@lotussustainability.com](mailto:emily@lotussustainability.com)

