

5.2.8 Recommendations Based on Best Practice Reviews

Economic Opportunity Studies, Inc. established a collection of recommended tasks which will allow for the successful integration of Energy Efficiency and WAPs. These tasks were determined by evaluation practices used by local and regional utilities in Massachusetts, Washington State, Wisconsin, Kentucky New York City, Texas, New Hampshire, West Virginia, and California. A summary of the lessons learned – with recommended “Do’s” and “Do Not’s” – is provided in the following tables. Where GDS felt the recommendation applied to AE, either in support of current practices or as new practices to implement, GDS include an “AE” in the right hand column next to the recommendation.

GDS also compiled a table based on the studies summarized in the previous sections. For AE specific recommendations based on these findings, please see Table 5-4¹, Table 5-5², and Table 5-6³ on the following pages.

Table 5-1: Weatherization Best Practices Recommendations – Program “Do’s”³⁰

Do's	What?	Why?	Where?
Structure	Choose a single model of utility-to-agency and programs statewide. Consider one of three success models:		MA, WA, TX
	- Utility \$ to one lead local agency w/ subcontracts - Utilities \$ to each local w/ identical program and state agency oversight - Utilities to state WAP agency		MA, NYC TX, OH TX, OH
Audit & Diagnostics			
AE	Adopt unified, statewide audit for government & utility that standardizes most measures and tests.	High cost of performing multiple tasks/or different audits in one home; multiple testing or cost standards.	MA
AE	Make that standardized audit broader than NEAT for measures and similar cost/benefit or ROI.	Confusion and differences in PUC registration or legislation. Multiple tests inhibit smart mix of funds.	WA
	Ensure discretion for some crew investment decisions.	Need choice of investments in various sources or DOE, also choice of various standard audits to adapt to buildings, conditions.	WA, MA
AE	Allow groupings of buildings to be eligible and all units to get treatment if ROI is positive for all together (i.e., not only unit-by-unit).	Indirect cost savings and or group efficiencies are a legitimate goal; community scale impact.	MA, NY
Goals & Results Measurement			
AE	Make all utility investments “fuel-blind.”		MA, WA, MV, KY, TX
AE	Include as program goals: 1) Sustainability/affordability/safety and protection (i.e., goals of client, not just those of utility). 2) The positive consumer added to the energy benefits. 3) The positive community impacts added to the energy benefits.	Fits WAP & LIHEAP goals and allowable expenditures. Reduces system's collection, bad debt and customer service costs. <i>gbl-vent m</i>	WA, MA
Costs			
	Use (at least) expected retail costs as the standard.		WI
	Assure information-sharing with utility on program cost and customer fuel costs and bills.		MA, TX
	Include competitive salaries for crews and managers – and/or performance incentives (may be difference from CAA Pay system). Consider a salary survey.		WI, MA, TX
Management & Quality			
	Have a plan for managing growth & checking quality. Ensure utility information sharing on costs, important data on effectiveness, and value. Do not allow the utility investment, costs, or benefits to be a utility “trade	Partners must agree on changed rules and on form of reports, evaluation studies.	MA, WV, WA, VA

³⁰ Power, Meg. “Introduction to: Best Practices in WAP/ Utility Energy Efficiency Programs or: Lessons Learned the Long Way” Economic Opportunity Studies, December 2002.

Do's	What?	Why?	Where?
AE	secret." Build Quality Control into WAP control. Use program and utility procedures together.		MA, WA
AE	State program involvement builds support in WAP network and outside.		TX, IL, OH
	In implementation phase, include frequent, close communication among locals. Meet, write, include an attorney in the group, make adjustments as needed.		MA, NY
AE	Ensure regulators are involved in oversight/enforcement.		MA, TX, OH
AE	Conduct training for and provide follow-up contacts for multi-family building management staff. Cost effective element of utility programs.		TX, NY
Eligibility			
AE	Consider usage level as a factor along with income.	High usage closely related to high burden and high savings. Allowances for family special needs, provides authentic estimate of burden. Targeting most "in need" of investment requires significant sample size – i.e., large pool of possible homes.	IN, ME, OH
AE	Have flexible method of calculating incomes. Use deductions (Rx?, child care?). Use at least max federal eligibility level.		MA, ME, NY
AE	Allow groups/blocks/neighborhoods not just individual unit.	Economy of scale, overall higher benefit-to-cost ratio.	NY
Timing/Schedules			
	Include ramp-up period.	Training, hiring & equipment – utilities cannot anticipate as well as the WAP partner. You need time – plan for it. Get goals low enough for start-up of utility program; raise.	MA, WA, IN
AE	Use (and train) contractors for faster build-up.	Make adjustments simpler, deploys energy technology to private sector.	MA, PA
	Establish a bonus payment system for crew/contractor managers who meet or exceed goals.	Use utility funds.	TX
Installed Measures-Utility Programs			
AE	Be sure utility program is fuel blind.		MA, WI
AE	Include appliance replacement.	Major source of savings of gas and/or electricity.	All
AE	Include combustion air safety tests & repairs.	If not done, liability or walk-away policies are problems. DOE cannot cover these alone.	CA
	Include administration and direct costs in plan.	Utility partners must see "real" cost; an honest comparison to their own overhead will demonstrate the efficiencies in local agencies.	MA, WV, WA, VA

Table 5-2: Weatherization Best Practices Recommendations – Program “Do Not’s”³¹

Do Not's	What?	Why?	Where?
Costs, Benefits/Results			
AE	Accept measures and/or expenditure ceilings per unit.	Short term cost orientation will yield poor results on energy savings test. Also, it skews DOE investments to accommodate utility accounting.	KY, WV, TX, WA
AE	Agree to traditional utility cost test of success (TRC, avoided costs, performance-based, etc.)	Low usage, like that of most of the poor, obviously predicts lower savings potential in plus and money. Residential sector savings are marginal anyway in utility programs. Many benefits accrue to the client, utility and community. All are a return on the investment.	All
	Allow inclusion of utility costs for “soft” elements of their work.	When calculating costs, utilities will allocate a portion of their PR, billing, and mailing costs if they can.	MA, NH, WA
	Accept utility reports of any costs without an agreed method of audited, shared accounts.	Your costs/investments will be documented. Require similar standards for all items included in utility reports to PUC/stockholders.	MA
	Forget cost of appliance disposal.	Utility must help cover.	TX
Measures			
AE	Require sharing with WAP per each unit.	Limits utility funds overall and by unit. Needs vary – some may need one utility measure. (WAP-Plus may permit/support only units).	KY, WA, OR
	Exempt utility from administrative cost share.	It's false costing; public money would have to support private – could be political issue too as well as DOE rules issue.	KY
	Require customer lease or payment on appliances.	High cost of collection information/billing even if customer can pay eventually is not cost-effective.	TX
AE	Use only NEAT or a checklist.	Added modules or selection tools are essential for mobile homes, large multi-family, appliance replacement.	WA, TX, OH
AE	Limit to heating and cooling measures.	Baseload offers big savings. Audit all options and then choose.	CA, TX, MA, OH, KY
Eligibility			
	Prioritize payment-troubled customers.	Use payment record as a warning sign weatherization may be needed. But just because these are the source of a problem the utility cares about does not assure they will be the best WAP candidate. Also, this will exclude those who sacrifice to make payments.	NY
AE	Forget high users as priority.	Utility collections problems clients may not be related to max energy savings.	MA, NY, ME, PA
AE	Promise too many completions.	Utilities fuel the need to serve the max. numbers of customers even if that limits savings per home. Could be it uses many contractors and gets low return.	CA, KY
AE	Restrict to DOE eligibility or to individual units only. Allow whole building or block.	Big efficiencies in administrative overhead, etc. covers the near-poor better, just assure ROI of whole project.	NY
Management			

³¹ Power, Meg. “Introduction to: Best Practices in WAP/ Utility Energy Efficiency Programs or: Lessons Learned the Long Way” Economic Opportunity Studies. December 2002.

Do Not's	What?	Why?	Where?
AE	Start a new state governing entity to new programs.	Big delays, long-lead times can mean failure.	CA, WA
	Sunset the program.	There's no incentive for utility to get it right.	MA
Information			
	Allow limits on shared utility data regarding all program costs (marketing, collections, purchases, etc.) and all benefits (customer service, etc.)	The expectation is that many more will be served; high users, LIHEAP participants, not only payment troubled should be provided by utility to agency for outreach along with stepped-up utility communications to these customers.	WA, MA
	Allow limits on shared utility data regarding participants.	The more restrictions on utility money, the more they should help outreach. Info-sharing/privacy policies should be in the Act, Order and/or rules, this avoids excuses.	MA
	Do not provide all other agency leveraging & other federal reports to utility.	They may not understand your program constraints and rules and/or decide how to run your job better.	WA, KY
	Do not take all the responsibility for getting info & doing outreach to find homes; utility info & communications work must be built in and paid for.		KY, WV, CO, WI

Table 5-3: Recommendations Based on Best Practice Reviews

Category	Details	GDS Recommendation	Source
Measures	The following measures are installed in WAP Programs: • Arlington: caulking; weather-stripping; insulation & repairs – ceiling, wall, floor; duct work; HVAC tune-up or repair • Dallas: caulking, weather-stripping, insulation, repair/new doors & windows, solar screens, duct repair, HVAC tune-up or retrofit • Onco/Cooler House: insulation, duct sealing, caulking & weather-stripping, CFLs, water-saving devices, HVAC upgrades, solar screens, ENERGY STAR® appliances, window replacement • Princeton Study: Programmable Thermostats	AE currently installs most, if not all, of these recommend measures. GDS recommends that AE continue to offer this wide variety of weatherization measures to ensure that the needs of their customers are met.	Arlington, Dallas, Onco, Cooler House, Princeton
Eligibility Preferences	The following households are given priority for participation: • With children under 6 • With elderly residents • With disabled residents • With highest energy cost & lowest income • With highest residential energy use	AE currently has a similar framework in place for targeting WAP participants. GDS recommends that AE continue to service these low-income households with the greatest need first.	Arlington, AACOG
Program Processes	The typical program follows the following procedures: home audit, installation of measures, final inspection.	GDS recommends AE continue to follow these three simple steps of program implementation.	AACOG
Program Goals	Project goal for participants to realize savings of 25-30% on their energy bills (gas & electric) during peak months.	GDS recommends that AE adopt this type of program goal that focuses on achieving a set level of energy savings per home weatherized. This will help to leverage the fixed costs of weatherizing each home by maximizing the savings for each project.	El Paso
Partnerships	Partner with local and/or national business (e.g., Home Depot) to help facilitate home repairs and weatherization services to WAP participants.	GDS recommends that AE look to leverage this type of support going forward as a way to help subsidize the costs of the WAP Program in the absence of DOE ARRA funds.	Florida
Training	Training is essential to a successful weatherization program as in ensures that quality work is conducted as part of the program and promotes better building practices outside of the program as well. It is recommended that to achieve high quality in work a program must (a) create solid work expectations, (2) define worker tasks, and (3) train and certify workers.	GDS recommends that AE work with their contractors to establish clear program guidelines and expectations – especially if program goals shift in the next iteration of AE's WAP Program. GDS also recommends that AE conduct regular training sessions to ensure that their partnering contractors are up to date on the latest in weatherization best practices.	National Plan