



**Better Buildings Residential Network
Program Sustainability Peer Exchange Call
Series: *Voluntary Initiative: Partnering to
Enhance Program Capacity***

Call Slides and Summary

May 8, 2014

Agenda

- Call Logistics and Introductions
- BBRN and Peer Exchange Overview
- Overview of BBRN Voluntary Initiatives (Jonathan Cohen, DOE)
 - Poll on Voluntary Initiative Topics
- Discussion of Voluntary Initiative Candidate Topic: *Partnering to Enhance Program Capacity*
 - What are key questions for this subject? For example:
 - *Why are partnerships important?*
 - *How should programs assess (or reassess) potential partners?*
 - *What are lessons for initiating partnerships?*
 - *What are lessons for sustaining partnerships over time?*
 - What concrete outcomes of a voluntary initiative on this topic would be most useful? (discussion and poll)

Call Participants

- CalCERTS, Inc. (Folsom, CA)
- Eagle County, CO
- Ecolibrium3 (Duluth, MN)
- EnergyFit Nevada
- Gtech Strategies (Pittsburgh, PA)
- Midwest Energy Efficiency Alliance (MEEA)

Better Buildings Residential Network

- **Better Buildings Residential Network**: Connects energy efficiency programs and partners to share best practices to increase the number of American homes that are energy efficient.
 - Membership: Open to organizations committed to accelerating the pace of existing residential upgrades. Commit to providing DOE with annual number of residential upgrades, and information about benefits associated with them.
 - Benefits:
 - Peer Exchange Calls
 - Tools, templates, & resources
 - Newsletter updates on trends
 - Recognition: Media, materials
 - Optional benchmarking
 - Residential Solution Center

For more information & to join, email bbresidentialnetwork@ee.doe.gov.

- **Better Buildings Residential Network Group on Home Energy Pros**

Join to access:

- Peer exchange call summaries and calendar
- Discussion threads with energy efficiency programs and partners
- Resources and documents for energy efficiency programs and partners

<http://homeenergypros.lbl.gov/group/better-buildings-residential-network>

Better Buildings Residential Network Group on Home Energy Pros Website

The screenshot displays a web browser window with the address bar showing `homeenergypros.lbl.gov/groups/group/show?groupUrl=better-buildings-residential-network`. The page content is organized into several sections:

- Group Header:** Features the Better Buildings logo and text: "The Better Buildings Residential Network connects energy efficiency programs and partners to share best practices and learn from one another to dramatically increase the number of American homes that are energy efficient." It also lists "Website: <http://betterbuildings.energy.gov/bbm>", "Members: 39", and "Latest Activity: 6 hours ago".
- Helpful Links:** A list of links including "Table of Contents", "Better Buildings Residential Network", "Better Buildings Neighborhood Program Website", "Home Performance with ENERGY STAR", and "Home Energy Score".
- Discussion Forum:** Contains three entries:
 - Show Your Customers How Much You Love Energy Efficiency:** A post about Valentine's Day marketing campaigns, dated 6 hours ago.
 - Invite Your Colleagues to Join Home Energy Pros:** A post inviting participation in the group, dated Tuesday.
 - Help Your Customers Understand Heating Systems With Infographic:** A post about a DOE infographic on home heating, dated Jan 31.
- Attend "Overcoming Persistent Barriers to Energy Efficiency in Multifamily Housing through Partnerships" Webinar:** A post about a DOE webinar on partnerships, dated Jan 31.

On the right side of the page, there are additional features:

- Members (39):** A grid of 39 member profile pictures.
- Home Energy Pros:** A section describing the group's founding by the developers of Home Energy Saver Pro, sponsored by the U.S. Department of Energy, in partnership with Home Energy magazine.
- Latest Activity:** A section showing recent group activity, including a search bar and a post by Elizabeth Snyder joining James Sayers's group.
- Social Media and Energy Efficiency:** A section encouraging members to share their online social media reach.
- Home Energy Ratings:** A section discussing the calculation and visualization of energy ratings.

At the bottom of the page, there is a "Pages (13)" section with links for "Tools", "Better Buildings Network", "Peer Exchange Call Schedule and Archive", and "Peer Exchange Archive: Market". A status bar at the very bottom indicates "Main Room" and "Members Online (5)".

Peer Exchange Call Series

- There are currently 6 Peer Exchange call series:
 - Data & Evaluation
 - Financing & Revenue
 - Marketing & Outreach
 - Multifamily/ Low-income Housing
 - Program Sustainability
 - Workforce/ Business Partners
- Calls are held the 2nd and 4th Thursday of every month at 12:30 and 3:00 ET
- Upcoming calls:
 - Data & Evaluation: BBRN Member Reporting (May 22)
 - Financing: Project Performance Relative to Loan Performance (May 22)
 - Program Sustainability: Business Models for Coordinating with Utility Programs (June 12)
 - Workforce: Understanding the Field: How Does the Recent Merger of Energy Efficiency Organizations Affect Programs? (June 12)
 - Marketing and Outreach: Stakeholder Mapping (June 26)
- Send call topic ideas or requests to be added to additional call series distribution lists to peerexchange@rossstrategic.com.

BBRN Voluntary Initiatives

- Overview of BBRN Voluntary Initiatives (Jonathan Cohen, DOE)
- Candidate Topics From February 27 Call:
 - Partnering to enhance program capacity (topic of today's call)
 - Public education on energy efficiency
 - Customer service best practices
 - Packaging deeper retrofits
 - Other?

Participant Poll Results

In which of the following voluntary initiatives would you be most interested?

- Partnering to enhance program capacity—**80%**
- Public education on energy efficiency—**80%**
- Customer service best practices—**60%**
- Packaging deeper retrofits—**60%**
- Other (none)

Discussion of Voluntary Initiative Candidate Topic: *Partnering to Enhance Program Capacity*

- What are key questions for this subject? For example:
 - *Why are partnerships important?*
 - *How should programs assess (or reassess) partnerships?*
 - *What are lessons for initiating partnerships?*
 - *What are lessons for sustaining partnerships over time?*
- What concrete outputs of a voluntary initiative on this topic would be most useful? (discussion and poll)

Discussion: Why partner?

- **Build capacity**
 - Increase the effectiveness of a small program and/or limited staff through partners.
- **Expand your reach**
 - Partners may have the experience and communications capability to reach audiences your program or organization is not yet reaching, such as:
 - Different industries (e.g., real estate industry)
 - Different sectors (e.g., non-profits)
 - Different geographic scope. (e.g. Chicago vs. Southern Illinois)

Discussion: Initiating Partnerships

- **Identify the “win-win”** so that everyone has a stake in the partnership’s success.
 - Align where your goals are similar to a potential partner’s.
- **Establish personal relationships with individuals in potential partner organizations**
 - Strong relationships with individuals can be a source to build institutional partnerships.
 - Industry and staff volunteer involvement can also be asset for building partnerships.
- **Work around barriers** to participation in a partnership
 - Common barriers: restrictions in funding sources, the organization is a different size, different mission, etc.
 - Initiate a dialogue to determine if working around these barriers is possible.

Discussion: The Partnership Lifecycle

- **Some partnerships follow a partnership lifecycle** and may need to change as your program changes:
 - Initiation stage
 - Implementation stage
 - Evaluation and revision/refinement
- **Each phase may involve different people** within one partner organization.
 - Make sure you have the most effective people at the table.
- **The level of alignment and buy-in may change** over time based shifts in your organization's focus.

Discussion: Sustaining Partnerships

- **Demonstrate value:**
 - Help partners communicate the value of the partnership within their organizations and with their stakeholders
 - Program success can attract new partners
- **No contribution is too small:** value each piece of talent in the partnership.
- **Check-in with past or inactive partners:** Once you've built a relationship, keep the lines of communication open even when not actively engaged on a project together.
 - Keep the relationship fresh and the opportunity to partner again available.

Discussion: Examples of Partnerships

- A program partnered with the **National Association of Realtors** to reduce the cost of green real estate classes and certification through grant funding.
 - The organization was able to speak directly to real estate agents about their program in the classes
- Another program partnered with the **county's health department** to administer a Healthy Homes initiative.
 - The partnership grew from an existing relationship within the county's sustainability department.
- **Other examples of partners:** utilities, natural gas cooperatives, universities, faith-based congregations.

Participant Poll Results

Which of these concrete outputs of a voluntary initiative would be most useful?

- Compilations of how-to resources—**60%**
- Lessons learned from energy efficiency programs—**20%**
- Templates and tools—**20%**
- Examples or case studies—**0%**
- Training—**0%**

Future Program Sustainability Call Topics

- Business Models for Coordinating with Utility Programs (June 12)
- Incorporating Behavior Change Efforts into Energy Efficiency Programs (July 10)

Please email suggestions for additional call topics to peerexchange@rossstrategic.com