

News From the Field

New Lessons Learned Interview: GTECH Strategies Shares Partnership Successes

Better Buildings Residential Network member [GTECH Strategies](#)' Healthy Homes Incentive Program (HHIP) is utilizing funding from Allegheny County, Pennsylvania's health agency to increase residents' home indoor air quality while saving energy and money. To help complete its goal of 100 home energy upgrades that enhance health, GTECH Strategies developed and maintains strong strategic partnerships with trusted local organizations to ensure contractor availability and increase marketing support.

Following are key takeaways from a case study interview with GTECH Strategies Project Coordinator Nicole Miller on ways other organizations can develop similar partnerships to increase their impact.

What are the most important characteristics you look for in a partner?

We look for partners that offer services we can't provide ourselves. For HHIP, we needed funding to administer the program, a workforce to perform the upgrades, and a way for our program to reach low-income residents.

How did you deal with challenges that arose with your partners?

To address issues, we held in-person meetings with the contractors, which allowed us to describe the issues as we saw them, hear our contractors' point of view, and collaboratively come up with a solution that was fair to our program and also provided our contractors time to make the necessary changes to resolve the problem. Working with our contractors to problem-solve allowed them the courtesy of



Partnerships Toolkit

Are you ready to start forming strategic partnerships for your organization? Download the Residential Network [Partnerships Toolkit](#) to instantly access a range of tools to understand how to develop partnerships; establish what kind of partnerships are needed; self-assess potential partners; and conduct, evaluate, and communicate success of partnerships.

February 2015

In This Issue

- [New Lessons Learned Interview: GTECH Strategies Shares Partnerships Successes](#)
- [DOE State Energy Program Funding Opportunity](#)
- [Poll: U.S. Homeowners Seek Energy-Efficient Solutions](#)
- [Financing and Follow-Up are Key to Program Success](#)
- [DOE Profiles Strategies From \\$500 Million Grant Program](#)
- [Farmington Hill Partners With Michigan Saves](#)
- [New Members Expand the Residential Network](#)
- [Boost Participation Rates and Energize Communities](#)



Peer Exchange Calls*

Residential Network members are invited to take part in these topical calls that are more discussion than webinar and serve as a forum to ask questions and bounce ideas off of peers. Members can access Peer Exchange Call registration links and past call summaries through announcement emails sent to Residential Network

professionalism and the ability to show that they could make the necessary improvements and continue with a successful partnership.

What is one piece of advice you would give to an energy efficiency program administrator who is looking to form partnerships?

Having expectations for your partners very well thought-out, written in an agreement, and signed by both parties is important. Also, be sure to allow for flexibility to make changes as the program progresses.

[Read](#) the full case study interview with GTECH Strategies' Miller to learn more, and find additional information on partnerships in the [Better Buildings Residential Program Solution Center](#).

DOE Announces State Energy Program Funding Opportunity

The U.S. Department of Energy's (DOE's) Office of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy's (EERE's) State Energy Program seeks applications for the Fiscal Year 2015 Competitive Financial Assistance Awards. This competitive Funding Opportunity Announcement will allow states to compete for EERE funding focused on state energy planning and opportunities for innovative energy efficiency and renewable energy practices. [Learn how](#) to apply.

Poll: Answer to Housing Satisfaction Gap Lies in Energy-Efficient Solutions

More than 70% of 10,000 U.S. homeowners participating in a Demand Institute survey placed a great deal of importance on energy efficiency, but only 35% felt their homes were energy efficient with low monthly utility costs. Survey respondents ranked 52 housing and community concerns by how important they felt the issues were and how much their current home satisfied these needs. Not only could affordable home energy upgrades help close the satisfaction gap, but they would also appeal to homeowners' cost concerns as utility prices increase.

"Utilities are a significant and regular part of households' budgets, and spending on utilities has risen more quickly than overall consumer spending—56% versus 38% growth since 2000," Demand Institute President Louise Keely said.

[Read more](#) about the Demand Institute's survey findings and [learn how](#) you can make home energy upgrades more affordable.

Survey Suggests Financial Incentives and Following Up Helps Homeowners Make the Upgrade

Resources for the Future (RFF) [survey findings](#) suggest that residential energy efficiency programs

members or via the Residential Network Group on Home Energy Pros. [Sign in](#) to access the Residential Network Group. Non-members wishing to gain access to these and many other valuable resources are invited to [join the Better Buildings Residential Network Group](#) to participate in the online community on Home Energy Pros. To receive emails about upcoming calls, email bbresidentialnetwork@ee.doe.gov.

March 12

Networking Call for Residential Network Members

12:30–2:00 PM EST
[Register now](#)

Using Mobile Applications to Generate Customer Demand

3:00–4:30 PM EST
[Register now](#)

March 26

Voluntary Initiative on Incentives: Toolkit Training Webinar

12:30–2:00 PM EST
[Register now](#)

Fostering Behavior Change in the Energy Efficiency Market

3:00–4:30 PM EST
[Register now](#)

Find the Latest Peer Exchange Call Summaries*

Residential Network members can now [review summaries](#) from the following calls:

- January 22, 2015:
[Residential Energy Efficiency Customer Service Best Practices](#)

Related Events

[Energy Center of Wisconsin's Better Buildings: Better](#)

could increase their success rate by combining [financial incentives](#) with deadlines and [designing a program](#) that effectively converts assessments to upgrades by following up with homeowners promptly. More than 560 of 1,784 homeowners surveyed in 24 states had undertaken a home energy assessment in the past four years. Nearly 50% of these homeowners said the main reason for their failure to seal air gaps, a commonly recommended measure, was that they “had not gotten around to it,” with a slightly smaller percentage saying the same for recommendations about insulation.



Of those who had not undertaken an assessment, 29% said they had “never heard of them,” and 16% said that they “had heard of them but did not know anything about them.” Implementing [marketing and outreach strategies](#) to better communicate the benefits of home energy assessments can help energy efficiency programs boost their assessment and upgrade success.

[Read more](#) about the RFF survey findings.

Stories From the Neighborhood

DOE Profiles the Impacts of More Than 40 Partners from a \$500 Million Grant Program



DOE recently profiled the energy-saving and economic impacts of more than 40 Better Buildings Neighborhood Program partners that launched or enhanced energy upgrade programs across the United States from 2010 to 2013 using over \$500 million in DOE grant funding. Newly released [Better Buildings partner profiles](#) contain key takeaways and lessons learned in program design, marketing,

[Business Illinois Conference](#)
February 26–27, 2015
Rosemont, IL

[Energy Center of Wisconsin's Better Buildings: Better Business Wisconsin Conference](#)
March 11–13, 2015
Wisconsin Dells, WI

[2015 ACI National Home Performance Conference and Trade Show](#)
May 4–7, 2015
New Orleans, LA

[DOE's Better Buildings Summit](#)
May 27–29, 2015
Washington, DC

Home Energy Pros Spotlight*

[Join the conversation](#) on Home Energy Pros, where Better Buildings Residential Network Group members are discussing how Residential Network member GTECH Strategies developed partnerships to delivery home energy upgrades in Pennsylvania.

Watch Energy Highlights From the 2015 State of the Union Address



From the way we produce energy to how we use it in our homes, DOE [took to YouTube](#) to summarize the key ways President Barack Obama said he plans to fight climate change and build the clean energy economy in his 2015 State of the Union Address.

financing, and workforce development.

“We witnessed countless creative examples of how partners improved the energy efficiency of residential neighborhoods,” said Better Buildings Neighborhood Program Director Danielle Sass Byrnett. “From having a flexible program design to establishing trusted community and financing partners, their lessons learned will help future energy efficiency programs succeed.”

As of September 30, 2013, data reported by these partners indicated that more than 100,000 homes and buildings had been upgraded.¹ All told, partners saved families and commercial business owners an estimated \$730 million in lifetime energy costs.

“Not only will the legacy of these partners spur energy efficiency innovations, but those who have become Better Buildings Residential Network members will continue to gather and share lessons learned to help the residential energy efficiency industry grow,” Byrnett said.

A final Better Buildings Neighborhood Program evaluation report is expected this summer.

[Explore](#) the Better Buildings partner profiles to learn from successes in states across the country.

1 To protect privacy, some building upgrade project data was omitted or transformed.

Eye on the Energy Prize

Farmington Hills Partners With Michigan Saves to Bolster Energy Prize Participation

Better Buildings Residential Network member [Farmington Hills, Michigan](#), held a January kick-off event to announce its plans to launch a host of programs designed to reduce residential and municipal energy consumption as part of its Georgetown University Energy Prize (GUEP) participation. Farmington Hills is one of [50 communities](#) competing to reduce energy over the next two years to win GUEP’s \$5 million prize.



GUEP Project Director Christofer Nelson joined the Farmington Hills kick-off event via Skype. (Photo: John Stormzand)

“We don’t want financing to be a barrier,” Michigan Saves Operations Manager Laura Palombi said. That is in part why fellow Residential Network member [Michigan Saves](#) will provide [low-interest loans](#) to help homeowners finance home energy upgrades. The program also

Quotable

“Having expectations for your partners very well thought-out, written in an agreement, and signed by both parties is important.”

– Nicole Miller of GTECH Strategies, a Better Buildings Residential Network member featured in the new [partnerships case study](#)

*Accessing Home Energy Pros

Non-Members of the Residential Network:
The [Better Buildings Residential Network Group on Home Energy Pros](#) is open exclusively to Residential Network members. To join the Residential Network, complete a [membership form](#).

Residential Network Members:

Residential Network members that are already Home Energy Pros Group members must [sign in](#) to view the associated links in this newsletter.

Members who have not yet signed up and seek access to these valuable resources are invited to join the Better Buildings Residential Network Group to participate in the online community on Home Energy Pros. It’s an easy, two-step process—[sign up](#) for Home Energy Pros, and then after receiving your confirmation email, request to join the Residential Network Group.

partners with 300 contractors that are ready and authorized to complete the work, ensuring access to qualified energy professionals.

Farmington Hills' municipal and residential energy consumption has been recorded since January 1, 2015, with the help of Michigan utilities DTE Energy and Consumers Energy. After the first energy consumption reports are in, Georgetown University will post the numbers so competing communities can measure how they line up with Farmington Hills.

"It's a reality show with \$5 million—a big carrot at the other end. We've got our eyes on the prize," said WXYZ-TV 7 Chief Meteorologist Dave Rexroth, who served as master of ceremonies at Farmington Hills GUEP kick-off event.

[Learn more](#) about Farmington Hills' GUEP participation and Michigan Saves' role.

Meet the Members

New Members Expand the Residential Network

The Better Buildings Residential Network is pleased to welcome its newest members:

- [Cascadia Consulting Group](#) works with governments, corporations, and nonprofit organizations to develop and implement solutions for energy conservation and green infrastructure.
- [Johnson Environmental](#) is an environmental and energy efficiency contractor that is based in South Dakota and serves residential building needs.
- [Solar City Corporation](#) is a solar power provider that delivers a clean energy alternative to homeowners, businesses, schools, nonprofits, and government organizations.
- [STX Efficiency Experts, LLC](#) is a home performance contractor providing energy-efficient product installations and services to homeowners in Houston and Victoria, Texas.
- [The Building Performance Center, Inc.](#) provides training and credentialing solutions to northern and central California green-collar workers at its hands-on facility.

Connect your organization with these programs and learn more from them. Sign up to become a Residential Network member by completing a [membership form](#).

Resource Corner

Boost Participation Rates and Help Energize Communities

From driving energy efficiency program participation to a New York member's community accomplishments, read the latest news and reports:

- [Expanding the Energy Efficiency Pie: Serving More Customers. Saving More Energy Through High Program Participation](#) analyzes 10 categories of utility-sector energy efficiency programs that have achieved high participation among targeted customer markets to reveal key factors that increase participation rates (American Council for an Energy-Efficient Economy, January 2015).
- “[Renamed RUPCO Is on a Mission—An Expanded One](#)” highlights Better Buildings Residential Network member RUPCO's efforts to provide New York residents affordable housing that also saves energy (*Daily Freeman*, January 2015).

Share the View

Forward this email to colleagues or encourage them to sign up to receive each issue by sending their name, organization, and email address to [Better Buildings Residential Network Support](#).

Do you have something you would like to share with other members through the *Better Buildings Network View*? Send an email to [Better Buildings Residential Network Support](#) to submit your idea.

You are receiving this email from DOE's Better Buildings Residential Network. If you would like to unsubscribe, please contact [Better Buildings Residential Network Support](#).

U.S. Department of Energy
1000 Independence Ave., SW
Washington, DC 20585

betterbuildings.energy.gov/bbrn