

**City of Minneapolis Community Engagement for Energy Efficiency Pilot Project 2016-2017  
Final Report  
November 8, 2017**

**Name of Organization:** Minneapolis Renters Coalition (Community Power (CP), Corcoran Neighborhood Organization (CNO), Holland Neighborhood Improvement Association (HNIA), Nokomis East Neighborhood Association (NENA))

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**A. Project Summary (3-4 pages)**

**1. Please provide a summary of findings from the project. What were the key themes and lessons learned? Please try to provide details for each phase of the project, including activities related to:**

**a. Phase 1. Assess targeted community’s current knowledge, interest and barriers to participating in current energy efficiency programs.**

**i. Define your community (from application)**

The geographic areas for our project were in the three Minneapolis neighborhoods of 1) the Bossen area of the Wenonah neighborhood (north of Hwy 62 and west of 34<sup>th</sup> Ave.); 2) Corcoran neighborhood (south of Lake St. and west of Hiawatha Ave.); and 3) Holland neighborhood (west of Central Ave. and south of 27<sup>th</sup> St.).

<b>Demographics</b>	<b>Bossen Area (NENA)</b>	<b>Corcoran</b>	<b>Holland</b>
Total Population	1,247	4,178	5,089
Race and Identity - Of Color - Total	88.3%	49.3%	53.7%
Renter Occupied Housing	93%	38.6%	57.5%
Workers by Earnings - \$15k or less	28.3%	20.1%	20.9%
Workers by Earnings - \$15k - \$40k	33.2%	36.6%	41.0%
Cost-Burdened Renter Households	60.3%	49.8%	66.2%
Language Other Than English	N/A	20.2%	30.8%

\*Minnesota Compass Report – Neighborhood Profiles

**Identifying Multi-Family Rental Buildings**

To launch Phase I, project partners used several resources to identify the multi-family buildings in the focus areas, contact information, and if the properties were classified as “low-income” or “market-rate.” NENA and CNO have extensive experience working with renters in our communities and were familiar with the locations of buildings. This was a new outreach focus for HNIA.

We first reviewed the City of Minneapolis rental property information lists, which include property owner and caretaker names, property address, property owner mailing address, phone number, email (if available) and number of units. Some data was out of date with former property owner information or non-working phone numbers. This incorrect information prevented neighborhoods from reaching some property owners.

Secondly, we partnered with the Center for Urban and Regional Affairs (CURA) at the University of Minnesota to provide maps of focus areas to identify multi-family buildings. The group used the maps and rental property lists to develop our Action Plans.

Lastly, we reviewed the Low Income Renter Certification (LIRC) list. There were seven LIRC properties in the focus areas, including four newer buildings in Corcoran and Holland, and in the Bossen area, there were two older buildings and the townhome complex of Diamond Hill. The Diamond Hill complex was also on the HUD Weatherization Assistance Program (WAP) list.

The seven properties listed above qualify for “low-income” energy efficiency programs. We assumed the newer buildings in Corcoran and Holland were built with energy efficiency design in mind. The two older buildings in Bossen completed the Multi-Family Energy Savings Program in 2016. The townhome complex was remodeled in 2015 with energy efficiency upgrades and NENA completed the landlord survey with the property manager.

We determined the majority of multi-family buildings in the neighborhoods were only eligible for “market-rate” energy efficiency programs and rebates.

**Completed Surveys with Landlords**

Type of Building	Number of Buildings	Low Income	Market-Rate
Duplex	14		14
Triplex	5		5
Fourplex	9		9
5+ Units	32	11 (Diamond Hills Townhomes)	21

**ii. Describe how you reached residents and stakeholders in the community, and who you were able to reach. Of these contacts, how many were:**

- **Homeowners** – N/A – the project targeted renters
- **Renters** – 209 – The three neighborhoods, along with support from CP staff, used several outreach techniques to reach a diverse representation of renters. The goal of each interaction was to complete a renter survey and to share information about the Home Energy Squad. The neighborhoods scheduled outreach outings at different times of the day and on weekdays and weekends.

**Who Took the Survey?**

African American – 23%	Caucasian/White – 27%	East African – 7%
Latino/Hispanic – 28%	Native American – 6%	Two or More – 1%
Did Not Share – 6%		

Outreach efforts included:

- **Door-Knocking** – About half of the renter surveys were completed during visits to multi-family buildings. Staff usually went out in pairs and tried to have at least one bilingual person for outings. After the first visit to the building, teams often secured a resident contact to let the team back into the building for future visits. This allowed the teams to catch other residents not at home during the first visit.
- **In the Community** – Each neighborhood spent time in areas frequented by renters such as nearby parks, gathering spaces and bus stops (Metro Transit and school buses). This proved to be the second best way to gather surveys.
- **Hosting Events and/or Participating in Events Already Scheduled** – NENA hosted the well-attended Bossen Renters Party on July 8, 2017. CP staff worked the event and gathered over 30 renter surveys. CNO organized smaller renter-focused events to gather surveys with less success. Each neighborhood also participated in events not organized by themselves, such as Open Streets on Central Avenue and Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board events at local parks. At these events, it proved difficult to identify renters vs homeowners.
- **Focus Groups** – As listed in the application, neighborhoods planned to organize focus groups for renters. CNO organized an event with no turn out and switched efforts to plan a more social event for renters. In previous outreach projects, NENA and CNO have had difficulty in organizing focus group type meetings with renters and had similar results for this project.

• **Landlords – Contact Steps:**

	<b># of Landlords Contacted</b> (Letters, voicemails and emails)	<b># of Surveys Completed</b>	<b>% of Completion</b>
<b>Total</b>	108	41	40%

**Introductory Letter** - All three neighborhoods mailed an initial informational letter to property owners announcing the project concepts. These letters also let landlords know the neighborhood organization would be calling to complete a survey. We used rental property lists from the City of Minneapolis for the mailing addresses. Neighborhoods did not report responses from these letters, but several landlords said they had received the letter when reached by phone.

In its letter, NENA invited property owners to a meeting on March 17, 2017. Five properties attended and expressed interest. NENA was able to speak to 100% of these participating landlords in follow-up calls to complete the survey.

**Phone Calls** – Neighborhoods called each property owner one time each month from May through September. Interested property owners were more likely to return our calls or to pick up their phones when we called. The initial rounds of calls or emails generated the largest number of surveys. As time passed, the neighborhoods continued to call and leave messages but the likelihood of a call back was minimal.

**Information Sharing** – Neighborhoods emailed information to landlords if they showed interest in energy efficiency programs or rebates. This information included the program

leave behind materials (PDFs) and/or links to program websites.

**Landlord Survey #2** – In September and October, neighborhoods called back property owners who received program information. CNO mailed out these surveys. The teams could not reach the property owners and were unable to complete the second surveys.

**iii. Describe the tool or methods for collecting information from community (attach survey tools)**

We used three surveys to collect data from residents and property owners. The surveys were reviewed and approved by MCEP staff.

**Renter Survey**

- Available in English and Spanish.
- Administered by a staff member, not handed to the respondent to complete.
- Pacing of the survey was meant to allow for conversation with the respondent.
- The first question was open-ended and asked about the current condition of the renter's unit. This proved to be an effective way to introduce the survey's purpose, the staff person and to establish that the neighborhood organization is interested in its residents.
- Included a color photo of the Home Energy Squad (HES) van to determine familiarity with the program. Included photos of LED and CFL lightbulbs.
- Included list of HES program benefits such as new lightbulbs, aerators, programmable thermostat, etc. Staff found it challenging to explain some of these products to renters, especially in languages other than English.

**Landlord Survey #1**

- Available in English only. Did not require interpretation support for conversations.
- Administered by a staff member, not given to the respondent to complete. Three surveys were given in face-to-face meetings with the property owner and the rest by phone.
- Challenging for our group to understand which kind of properties qualify for which energy efficiency programs. Created a key for staff to only speak about the correct programs.
- Challenging for our group when property owners asked specific questions about the programs, rebates, financing or their specific needs. Made referrals to the correct programs, but likely lost some interest from property owners.

**Landlord Survey #2**

- Five questions to determine if property owners who showed interest in programs/ rebates and received materials contacted the programs/utility and any barriers to participation.
- Unable to complete any surveys.

**b. Phase 2. Develop an action plan based on information collected in Phase I for engaging the specific community to participate in current energy efficiency programs.**

i. Action Plan (See attached Action Plans 1 & 2)

**c. Phase 3. Implementation of the action plan, including evaluation of process and outcomes.**

**Key Findings:** Landlord and Renters Survey Response Summaries (See attached summaries)

**i. What are the most effective ways to reach this community?**

**1) Renters** - By far the best way to reach renters is to meet them where they are at. We directed most of our outreach efforts to door-knocking in multi-family buildings and surveying in public areas where the target community was likely to be. The neighborhoods spent significant time (e.g. - different times of day and days of the week) at bus stops or parks near apartment buildings. We had some success organizing events that renters would be interested in attending (CNO and NENA hosted renters parties).

Only a small number of respondents indicated they read bill inserts or mailers (especially English-only materials). Most respondents did not indicate they use social media or websites to seek out information on energy efficiency and programs.

**2) Landlords** - Phone calls to property owners was sufficient to reach our survey target numbers. Neighborhoods also used a mailed letter, voicemail messages and emails to inform the landlords that we would be calling with a survey.

**ii. What barriers to participation in energy efficiency programs did you encounter? Was there one or two key barriers or was there a broad range of barriers with no common themes?**

**Renter Participation:** The surveys clearly identified two main barriers to participation:

**1) Programs that Meet the Needs and Interests of Renters** – The Home Energy Squad (HES) is the only program available for renters.

Property owners, not tenants, can make changes to units, so the value of a HES visit is extremely limited from the perspective of most renters surveyed. We heard over and over again, “Why would I be interested in this program if I can’t make any of the changes?”

Residents in duplexes and triplexes may find more value in an HES visit, since most program benefits are designed for free standing structures, not larger apartment buildings.

The HES program is not meeting the needs and interests of **renters in 4 or more unit buildings**. The majority of these tenants do not pay a water bill and will not see benefits from using aerators/showerheads. Compounding the barriers to participation, many other HES program benefits are useless for these tenants such as blower test, thermal testing weather stripping and energy audit.

Most survey respondents were familiar with LED or CFL lightbulbs and were interested in receiving lights. Many of the respondents would qualify for a free HES visit, but did not indicate this would be a strong enough incentive to participate. Lastly, several landlords expressed concern about programmable thermostats and prefer to keep

control of the heating system in larger buildings.

On a related note, during monthly meetings of the project group we often talked about energy efficiency and cost savings as part of larger livability issues for renters. During the summer, some tenants shared that their wall a/c units were not working and their apartment temperature was extremely uncomfortable.

During outings in September and October, some renters expressed concern about when the heat would be turned on. We collected stories of tenants who use their ovens or space heaters to warm the unit. In addition to the safety concerns, use of the stove or heaters increases the electricity bill - most landlords surveyed said the stoves are electric. Lastly, many tenants are not provided a cover for the wall a/c unit and cold air enters the unit throughout the cold months.

**2) Awareness of Programs** – Only 28% of renter respondents were familiar with the HES and only 40% of those could identify what the HES does.

**Landlord Participation:** The surveys identified several potential barriers for property owners.

### **1) Types of Property Owners:**

**Informed & Completed** - The buildings which qualify for low-income energy efficiency programs have already completed upgrades or were built with energy efficiency in mind.

Market-rate property owners who are interested in energy efficiency and cost savings are likely to have already completed some upgrades. Several only have a few more items to complete such as the need to swap out old appliances (e.g. a/c units, refrigerators and stoves) with more energy efficient models. Many furnaces/ boilers and water heaters have been replaced within the last few years. These property owners have also replaced lightbulbs in common areas with LED or CFL lightbulbs.

**Uninformed & Uninterested** – The majority of market-rate property owners may have indicated an interest in energy efficiency and cost savings, but have not taken steps to increase knowledge of or improvements toward energy efficient buildings. Many of these properties have a piecemeal approach to operations and only replace appliances when a repair cannot be made. Property owners often value low cost over energy efficiency for appliance selection criteria. Renters, not landlords, pay the electricity bill for the use of refrigerators, stoves, a/c units and lighting.

Several property owners shared they are not interested in investing in the property, but only plan to keep it operational. In 4+ unit buildings, landlords are generally responsible for the water bill and may be interested in program benefits to reduce water use in the units, such as aerators/showerheads.

**2) Communications** – Property owners did not indicate a strong preference for specific communication methods to receive information. It was not clear from surveys how they get information about maintaining and operating their buildings. Several said, “I have been doing this a long time and know most things.” Buildings with professional management staff, as opposed to a hands-on property owner, seem much more

informed and more likely to be aware of the importance of energy efficiency and resources.

**3) Financing** – The upfront costs of enrolling in a program or waiting for rebates is a barrier to many property owners. Most market-rate properties have limited resources to invest in a “complete building” project and tend to use a piecemeal approach for repairs and replacements. Easy-to-understand financing materials and programs may be an incentive to some.

**iii. What are the potential strategies to overcome the barriers to participation for this community?**

See above

**Communications**

- Different messaging for tenants in duplexes and triplexes vs 4+ unit buildings.
- Focus on saving money, as opposed to saving energy.
- Many of the respondents still receive bills and do not pay bills online. Inserts are may still be relevant if tailored to target audience.
- Not many respondents indicated that they receive information from social media.
- Materials in multiple languages.

**Other**

- Several respondents work with social service agencies, housing agencies or are in energy assistance programs. These respondents get information from case workers. Program promotion through the agencies may be helpful.
- Work with the City of Minneapolis Housing and Fire Inspections to share program/rebate information with property owners as they renew the annual rental license.
- Enlist contractors to promote program/rebate information. A few property owners said they have participated in rebate programs on the advice of a contractor.

**2. For phases 1 and 3 of the project, please describe what worked well and why.**

- **Persistence** – Each neighborhood allocated staff outreach time from March through October to engage with renters and property owners. This work was slow and at times frustrating. Each neighborhood reported outings that resulted in no renter surveys. By spreading the work over months and dedicating time each week to go out or to organize events, the team completed 209 renters surveys.
- **Working as a collaborative group** – With three geographic areas, the teams were able to reach different types of buildings to collect data (e.g. - duplexes, triplexes, fourplexes and buildings with up to 55 units). We also talked to many property owners with different management styles and levels of interest/knowledge of energy efficiency.

The team met monthly and supported each other with individual surveying outings. The outreach staff members trained each other and adjusted tactics based on conversations with other team members. During this same time period, community organizers from three neighborhoods and

other organizations established bi-monthly meetings to gather to discuss their work as a peer network.

Community Power staff provided invaluable support to the team with training and by joining the neighborhoods for surveying outings and working events, and data entry. Neighborhoods used contract interpreters for surveying outings.

For future outreach projects, MCEP staff should gather outreach contractors to meet on a regular basis to share ideas and experiences.

- **Incentives** – The availability of LED lightbulbs (Xcel Energy) led to a marked increase in interest in taking resident surveys. Neighborhoods used signs when tabling at events to attract attention, “See me for a free LED lightbulb!” HNIA used treats to start conversations with families at its local park. Early in the project, NENA used bus passes as incentives before the lightbulbs were available.
- **Connections** – Each neighborhood benefited from meeting renters and property owners, all of which are members of our associations. In particular, this project gave neighborhoods the opportunity to contact landlords with information on beneficial programs, which made the initial conversations much easier.

In addition to the surveys, staff talked with renters and property owners about other initiatives in the neighborhood – such as HNIA offering free HES visits. The teams facilitated connections for renters and landlords to government agencies and nonprofit organizations (e.g. - Minneapolis Police Department Crime Prevention Specialists; Minneapolis Health Department; Community Action Partnership of Suburban Hennepin; HOME Line; and the Immigration Law Center).

### **3. For phases 1 and 3 of the project, please describe challenges, ways you overcome them or ideas for the future.**

- **Training** – The level of knowledge of energy efficiency and utility programs of our group members was low, but increased over the project period. There is a steep learning curve for the materials.

**Example of Excellent Training to Prepare Outreach Groups** - CNO and NENA participated in Metro Transit’s Better Bus Stop outreach project in 2016. Outreach groups were contracted to work in specific geographic areas to collect data from transit users on placement of bus stops and shelters.

CNO and NENA staff attended a full day of training and each Metro Transit department involved in bus stops provided training (e.g. - rationale for placement on the street, shelter design, snow removal, etc.). Metro Transit provided an extensive online library of training resources (e.g. - where each stop is located in the geographic area, ridership data for each stop, leave-behinds, etc.) Also, Metro Transit provided project tools, such as a survey template and bus stop placement game, which each organization could modify to meet its needs. Lastly, many of the important documents were translated into multiple languages. CNO and NENA agree that we



felt much more prepared to start this project and comfortable with bus stop materials compared to our level of preparedness on energy efficiency and programs.

Team members are willing to work with MCEP staff to provide training and preparation guidance for the next rounds of outreach projects. Our experience and expertise could be helpful in improving the training for future outreach groups to be much more familiar with energy efficiency and the programs in a shorter amount of time.

- **Data Entry** – Although we thought we developed shorter surveys, the teams collected a large amount of data. We had underestimated the amount of staff time it took to enter the renter and landlord survey data into the spreadsheet. It took about 3-5 minutes per renter survey and about 5-11 minutes per landlord survey. In addition, it took time to follow-up with interested landlords to email the energy efficiency program materials.

#### **4. Are there additional lessons you learned?**

Group members were asked to individually respond to this question:

- Renters are focused on more pressing matters, such as their rents rising.
- The core conclusions were apparent from the start and were reinforced throughout this outreach:
  - Renters are barred from participating without landlord interest/action.
  - Landlords are unlikely to participate because there are very low incentives - the programs are complex, they have to front money or take out a loan, they don't pay energy costs or are passing them along to renters so there is not direct incentive either.
  - Renters do not wish to invest in a property that is not theirs and/or in which the landlord does not care for.
  - Views expressed by some landlords that renters are transient & irresponsible making some landlords less willing to invest in their buildings.
  - Asking residents who are scraping by economically to "invest" money to save money is not a useful (or logical) strategy - we need to increase landlord "yes's" either by carrot or stick, and create real incentives by removing upfront cost and credit barriers.
  - If the program worked for people, word of mouth would help spread the program.
- Other things learned:
  - Collaboration (where uniqueness & independence is still maintained) across neighborhoods is great for info-sharing, cost-savings, and a stronger outreach strategy
  - Door-knocking can have inconsistent results and has more success when paired with multiple reasons for the door-knock.
  - Social gatherings (extremely local & highly visible) are great outreach tool - e.g. Bossen Renters Party.
  - Meeting people in public spaces is another good strategy, though again, useful when paired with multiple reasons for being there (e.g. invitation to party, energy survey, renters' health & safety, public art project).

- It changes the project smoothness/results/success hugely by having a product that people already want, and having adequate training & materials & ongoing support at the start.
- Landlords weren't invested in energy efficiency, but were interested in cost savings.
- A handful of tenants in multifamily buildings have referenced Lutheran Social Services (<http://www.lssmn.org/services/>) and St. Stephen's Human Services (they have a manual which lists different community resources/programs). Case Managers or ARMHS Workers. These people seem to rely on these individuals to learn about resources like HES (and generally have caregivers or independent living skills coaches to help the tenant set up these appointments).
- Landlords seem interested in the prospect of financing options to fund efficiency projects as long as it was simple to set up/sign up. These are generally landlords who pay for heating in the building. They are particularly interested if energy savings outweigh the cost of improvement.
- I have been getting a lot of inquiries about rebates or subsidies for individual wall/window a/c units.
- Letters do not seem to be an effective way to get a hold of landlords.
- If you cannot find the list of rental property (with contact information for landlords) in your neighborhood, contact your councilmember at the City.
- Many tenants do not feel they had the authority to let a service like the HES make improvements in their apartment.
- Most wall a/c units in multi-family buildings do not have covers. During the winter, tenants generally cover them with blankets or do not cover them at all.
- During the winter, tenants in multi-family buildings regularly report using other means to heat or cool the space (space heaters, open windows, turn on the oven.) This is especially common in buildings that are not owner occupied.
- Having free food has been helpful for drawing people in to talk -- When I am at a park, I approach parents and ask if I can give their child ice cream. It turns out to be a nice way to greet them. It quickly comes up that I am from the neighborhood. Has been nice to have something on me that I can give to children, because they are generally the first people to approach me.
- I have gotten feedback that having two people out is often helpful, with a mix of genders.
- When tabling with an interpreter -- it has been helpful to have large signage about "get a free lightbulb" in English and whatever language you are targeting (of course have an interpreter present). This seems to melt another barrier for ESL community members.

## **B. Measuring & Evaluating Results (1-2 pages)**

1. Please include information on the measures identified in your application. Please try to provide SPECIFICS such as:

- **Number of events by type and name (including focus groups, if applicable)**
  - Events organized for this project: 5
  - Events organized by other organizations, group participated: 7
- **Number of people participating in a certain event**
  - 30 people completed surveys at the Bossen Renters Party. Low attendance at CNO events
  - 5 landlords attended a NENA focus group
  - Did not track the number of participants at events organized by other organizations
- **Number of one-on-ones**
  - 3 visits by CNO and NENA staff with property owners to view the property and complete the survey
  - 2 HNIA one-on-ones with tenants

- 1 one-on-one HNIA visit with Language Central to discuss best approach to engaging Ecuadorian and Somali community members
- 1 one-on-one HNIA visit with Ecuadorian Consulate
- **Number of surveys completed**
  - Renters: 209
  - Landlords: 41
- **Number of people reached that showed interest in signing up for energy efficiency programs**
  - Renters: 28
  - Landlords: 28
- **Materials distributed**
  - Renters: 93 HES; 10 How to Save Energy in your Apartment
  - Landlords: 7 HES; 7 Multi-Family Energy Savings Program; 14 rebates; and 2 101 Ways to Save Energy
- **Volunteer and staff hours, as of 6/30/2017**
  - CP: 42 hours
  - CNO: 91.5 hours
  - HNIA: 66.5 hours
  - NENA: 110.75 hours
  - Contract Interpreters: 20.75 hours
- **Number of volunteers (if applicable) N/A**

**2. Did you meet the goals stated in your application and/or Action Plan?**

**Total Outreach Goals & Completion for March – June (Action Plan #1)**

Activity	Tenants		Landlords	
	Goal	Completed	Goal	Completed
Contacts	260	175	50	108
Surveys	160	45	33	27
Events	1	-	-	-
Focus Groups	2	-	1	1

**Total Outreach Goals & Completion for July – October (Action Plan #2)**

Activity	Tenants		Landlords	
	Goal	Completed	Goal	Completed
Contacts	285	212	35	79
Surveys	170	164	23	14
Events	5	3	-	-
Focus Groups	2	1	1	-

**Total Survey Goals & Completion by Neighborhood**

Neighborhood	Tenants		Landlords	
	Goal	Completed	Goal	Completed
CNO	125	54	12	24
HNIA	50	50	6	4
NENA	175	105	12	13
<b>Total</b>	<b>350</b>	<b>209</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>41</b>

**C. Project Budget (1 page)**

**1. Please provide an expense sheet that shows how you spent the grant money, with break-outs based on your proposed budget, including personnel (hours), subcontractors, promotional activities and materials, office supplies, printing and postage, translation services, evaluation activities, and administrative overhead.**

See Invoices 1 & 2

**2. Was this grant your only source of funds? If not, what were the additional sources and amounts? Please include matching resources (volunteer hours etc.) in order to help us document leveraging of Clean Energy Partnership funds and continue the program.**

<u>Task /Budget Item</u>	<u>Grant Funds</u>	<u>Match/In-Kind</u>	<u>Completion Date</u>	<u>Explanation</u>
Staff Time – Community Power	\$1,200	None	11/30/2017	Outreach and project administration staff time.
Staff Time – Corcoran Neighborhood Organization	\$8,900	None	11/30/2017	Outreach and project administration staff time.
Staff Time – Holland Neighborhood Improvement Association	\$3,850	None	11/30/2017	Outreach and project administration staff time.
Staff Time – Nokomis East Neighborhood Association	\$9,850	None	11/30/2017	Outreach and project administration staff time. Project administration.
Expenses	\$1,200	None	11/30/2017	Interpretation, hospitality, office supplies.
<b><u>TOTAL</u></b>	<b><u>\$25,000</u></b>	<b><u>\$0</u></b>		

**D. Additional Comments (1 page)**

**1. Was this a valuable effort for you?**

- **CP** - Yes, it was valuable. Excited for it to be exponentially more valuable when this information is used actively to created programs that renters are able to see benefits from and homeowners (particularly those without access to credit or much upfront \$\$) and landlords participate in at much, much higher rate.
- **CNO** - This effort was valuable to our organization as it provided us with a reason to talk with renters in our neighborhood and the landlords who own property in our neighborhood. It took more energy than what was anticipated, but we were able to learn about the best time to connect with renters and innovative outreach methods beyond door knocking.
- **HNIA** - Yes. Improving the effectiveness and level of participation in energy efficiency is important to HNIA. If gathering this feedback helps accomplish this, particularly in multi-family rental properties, we will be satisfied. In addition, it gave the neighborhood another opportunity to engage tenants in Holland. It gave these residents an opportunity to ask other questions about what was happening in the community and for us to connect them to more resources.
- **NENA** – Yes, through this project we learned about energy efficiency and building conditions in 30 plus multi-family buildings – something we did not pay much attention to before. In addition to talking with renters and landlords about the survey topics, we uncovered additional resource

needs for landlords and livability issues for renters. We were seen by Bossen residents each week in the community and became better known by neighbors.

**2. With sufficient resources, would you continue and/or expand the energy efficiency engagement work started in this effort?**

- **CP** - Yes, definitely.
- **CNO** - We would be interested in discussing what that would look like and if our staff would have capacity.
- **HNIA** - Ultimately this is up to the HNIA Board. Our staff would be interested in discussing the scope of this engagement work and make a recommendation to the Board.
- **NENA** - Yes, we are interested in working on projects which bring resources and information to our community.

**3. Please comment on what the City, Xcel Energy and CenterPoint Energy can do to make future projects more successful, along with anything else you might want to add.**

Group members were asked to individually respond to these questions:

- Continue to contract with community-based organizations that already have relationships, expertise and importantly a commitment to livability concerns that are outside of and intersect with energy (housing, neighborhood cohesiveness, community safety, education, transit, etc). This saves the work of building relationships each time there is outreach, more efficient because all concerns can be brought up in the same session, builds trust and investment in the neighborhood (so people want to stay longer & invest in that place) doesn't jerk people around as much (having a new face for every set of services, many of whom won't be there in a year), and ensures a level of commitment (organization doing outreach has many reasons to be talking with the person, if one reason or set of funding dries up, the relationship doesn't go with it).
- More in person outreach (door-to-door, etc.). A lot of tenants in Minneapolis have not heard of the Home Energy Squad service and this is not the case in cities like St. Paul. For several years, I went door-to-door signing residents in St. Paul and surrounding suburbs for Home Energy Squad visits (this was contracted through the Neighborhood Energy Connection). In St. Paul, at least a third of the tenants I talked to either knew what the Home Energy Squad did or already had them come to their apartment.
- Continue to contract neighborhoods and community-based organizations to help with engagement. Several years ago, when I was signing up people in St. Paul, I noticed residents seemed to question my motives for being at their door. This seemed to happen a lot less when I worked for a neighborhood. Residents had interacted with our staff before, been to a meeting, or at the very least understand that helping them is part of our neighborhood's mission. I already knew tenants in some multifamily buildings and could get into them. Even tenants I didn't already know, I seemed had an easier time get them to let me back into the building. Also, the neighborhood coordinator, who lives in Holland, could also give me a good idea what buildings we need translators for and when were good times to do outreach. This saved us a lot of time.

- Better training - the training for community groups was very dense, one-time only.
- Hiring people within utilities that are multi-lingual, and more diverse by age/race/gender/primary language/geography (where do they live). It is not surprising why there is a disconnect between services & communities if the service provider is more or less from one set of well-resourced identities.
- Prioritize the utilities to hire more program staff that are bi-lingual. It is my impression that for the later part of this year, there were no HES staff (through CEE) that could speak Somali or Hmong. It has also been difficult to get translated program materials.
- Language barrier from utility employees and outreach employees: Not enough training at the beginning to decode all the utility jargon. It is okay if that is our job, but that needs to be clear and we need way more time to understand deeply (more than a two-hour training with complex materials) the ins and outs, get questions answered as they come up. OR it needs to be that the utilities are able to translate the jargon understandably and quickly and be available for ongoing support to all members of the outreach team, not just rely on one contact person (that is a lot of responsibility placed on the liaison, in this case Becky) to field all the questions and accurately convey/translate complex, often jargon-filled information. Key partners were not available/aware of outreach group (Franklin Energy, CEE) and/or outreach group was not made aware there was not a clear point of contact there.
- The City should set aside more funding for multi-family building inspectors (FIS).
- The best practices of community engagement on energy efficiency research from EVAC was not only not shared during the training but not trained on. This should be shared (beyond in the RFP), and EVAC should be required/invited to present a summary/training to the groups doing the work.
- The main point of contact should include an EVAC member, not just representation from the City & two utilities. There should be more report backs at each of the quarterly meeting for EVAC & CEP and the presenter from the organizations should be compensated for this time. That way any wrinkles in administration/etc. can be fixed as they go rather than at the end of the project. There is more time also for questions/absorption of info for EVAC/CEP Board.
- The CEP "Community Engagement Planning Process" document that EVAC put together should be more explicitly shared with partners. Consider inviting EVAC members to introduce and train participants. It is a helpful resource, unfortunately by the time the document was unearthed, we were too far along in the process incorporate some of their recommendations.
- The programs offered need to be available to those who we are engaging. It is difficult to engage people in a project who currently won't gain anything from giving their feedback, and may not for many years to come.
- Evaluate whether a Home Energy Squad visit for someone living in a multi-family property could be cheaper than a visit for someone in a duplex, as the multifamily tenant are generally getting much less out of the service.
- Have a more streamlined data entry mechanism and process.

## Feedback on Materials

- Online and printed materials – Clarify who is a “residential customer” for programs. It is unclear that some multi-family property owners may qualify for these programs. In a quick review of the CEE, Xcel and CenterPoint HES webpages, each uses different terms for eligibility and none reference multi-family buildings. (It took the project partners a significant amount of time to determine what kind of properties qualify for what kinds of programs).

The materials also have limited information stating that renters may sign up for a HES visit. It has always been unclear if the tenant needs the permission of the property owner to participate in a HES visit.

Any marketing to low-income utility customers should highlight that the customer may be eligible for a free visit and installations.

- One of the challenges was providing materials to those we talked to that were beneficial to them. Especially with renters, many were not interested in paying for a HES visit when it would only address a small number of things they could control. Beyond the lightbulb, there was nothing else for them to get engaged in energy efficiency.
- Organization of information on programs – Program materials and names should be seen from the perspective of the user – too many similar sounding names, unclear who the home owner is (e.g. – property owners of 4 and under unit buildings, etc.) Would be more helpful from a user standpoint (both outreach and energy user) is a flowchart of yes/no type questions to determine which programs might be available for the person wanting a service and ONLY displaying those options. This could also take the form of a "choose-your-own-adventure" online tool that asked yes/no questions.
- Urgently need better, more easy to understand materials about the programs. They are hard to wade through even for community groups being paid to figure them out. More visuals. More tools to walk people through eligibility. Name the programs things that are logical and distinct from one another. Need materials in all the languages that have significant numbers of speakers in the areas served by utilities (Hmong, Spanish, Somali, Oromo, etc). We had to ask repeatedly to get more materials, none were translated.
- Work on more easy to understand language for program materials. Marketing materials have some technical and programmatic terms that were unfamiliar to English speakers and very difficult to translate. Written for folks with knowledge of energy efficiency and with higher level of education.
- Would be helpful to include a current income eligibility bracket so that outreach groups don't have to find that info on their own, or worry that it is inaccurate to these programs' rules about income and what "low-income" means.
- Names of Programs - All sound the same and easy to confuse them. Maybe a solution could be to either:
  - 1) make them more unique sounding but still full of content ("Low-income 5+ efficiency, low-income 1-4 unit efficiency, low-income homeowner efficiency, etc) OR

- 2) make them entirely unique but don't try to cram as much content description into the title (ex: Magenta Efficiency Program, Periwinkle Efficiency or something that gets at how much energy is saved so surface level improvements is "Low Hanging Fruit Efficiency for Rentals" v. "Low Hanging Fruit for Homeowners" and medium level is "Energy Fit for Rentals" "Energy Fit for Homeowners" and high level is "Deep/Turbo Efficiency for Rentals" "Deep/Turbo Efficiency for Homeowners."...something that demonstrates the depth of improvements without sounding like the people who do one program v.. the other are better/worse for that choice because it will almost always be a choice about money. Imagine a program that is super energy efficient but costs \$10,000 and is called "Superhero Program" and the one that is free and doesn't save much is called "The Bare Minimum Program" ....extreme example but you get the point of why that is a bad labeling set up.