

2020 SAG Portfolio Planning Process Proposed Energy Efficiency Ideas

Idea #1: All Illinois Utilities - Website

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Energy Efficiency Idea Questions

Type of Energy Efficiency Idea: Proposed Program Approach
Illinois Utility Impacted by Energy Efficiency Idea: All Illinois Utilities
Energy Efficiency Sector Targeted by Energy Efficiency Idea: All Residential and Small Business Customers

Additional Questions:

1. **Description of Idea:** Improve website content and organization.
The utility programs often place the burden on the resident or business owner to decipher what they may be eligible for. It is therefore critically important that customers be able to access clear and current information about the utility portfolios.
 - a. *Integration of energy efficiency website with bill payment website:* Many customers have access to the main utility website, but aren't familiar with the energy efficiency program (or the energy efficiency program's website if the two are distinct). Limited resources could be invested into making this connection easier for customers.
 - i. *Ameren Illinois:* Change the Home Energy Profile tool (available via Ameren.com but not easily accessible via AmerenIllinoisSavings.com) to include language on utility measures that could help bring down costs. For example, under "Reduce Your Use of Central Air Conditioning During Critical Peak Events," it could link to smart thermostat rebates on the Marketplace, Peak Time Rewards, and Power Smart Pricing. The "Insulate Your Ceiling" section could include information on home energy audits. Also, under the "Reports" tab of Ameren.com, it appears this just links to reports that the customer has already requested - this section could be clearer about how the customer might obtain reports. The "Ways to Save" tab, which customers can use to navigate to AmerenIllinoisSavings.com, is clear under the "Account Dashboard" page of Ameren.com.

- ii. *ComEd*: Under “My Account/My Bill & Usage,” or the landing page when a customer logs in, there is a box to “Schedule a Home Energy Assessment.” While there is another box under “Discover” that prompts the customer to explore “A variety of Ways to Save, All Year Long,” this landing page could have more details on other programs.
 - iii. *Nicor Gas*: Under NicorGas.com/Residential, the “Ways to Save” tab is hidden. Perhaps a “Ways to Save” tab could be added under “Resources.”
- b. *Green Button*: Both electric utilities have excellent tools for individuals to access their smart meter data, but there is limited customer awareness of this option. Making these tools more easily accessible, with better explanations to the customer, would improve customer accessibility and awareness of their unique household usage.
- i. *Ameren Illinois*: Under “Energy Usage Alerts,” there could be an option to receive weekly reports of your usage, in addition to an alert if your usage exceeds your threshold for the current billing cycle. If adopted, this tool could be easier to navigate to, perhaps including a link under “View Usage Details.”
 - ii. *ComEd*: In the “My Usage” section of a customer’s ComEd account, there could be a button to easily link to sign up for usage alerts, currently housed under My Profile>My Alerts & Notifications (“High Usage Alert” and “Weekly Usage Report”).
- c. *Storytelling*: Many customers aren’t aware of what utility incentives exist, how to use them, or how the incentives relate to one another. The energy efficiency website could help build a narrative for the customer, so that they can better see how the various programs interact. This refers not only to stories from individuals in testimonials, which are already effectively used, but to the overall language used to talk about how the offerings relate to one another within each program, making those connections easier for customers to see. Room-by-room approaches, seen in some utility materials, are helpful toward this end, building a more cohesive picture for the customer.
- i. *Nicor Gas*: The “Rebates” page (Home>Residential>Ways To Save>Rebates) could contain more information about why a customer should consider rebates, and more context on how a customer could identify whether a rebate would be a smart investment. For example, telling the story of how an assessment could lead to an audit, which could lead to weatherization measures and savings through rebates. Additionally, the “Rebates For Equipment” and “Rebates For Air Sealing and Insulation” are separate sections, without the acknowledgement that the two investments are most cost-effective together: “Improvements to furnace efficiency is most effective after weatherization has been conducted.”¹
 - ii. *Peoples Gas/North Shore Gas*: Rather than having separate pages for the “Home Energy Rebate program,” “Home Energy Jumpstart program,” and “Rebates and incentives,” consider one page for the single-family program, and one for the multi-family program. With one page to go to,

¹ Project Energy Savers, *The Complete Guide to Saving Energy in the Home* (2013), p. 21.

the customer can better understand the “order of operations” - that they could schedule an assessment, sign up for a rebate, and even finance needed equipment on their bill.

- d. Organization according to eligibility: Many customers would be eligible for multiple incentives, but because eligibility varies according to program, it's difficult to know all of the measures one customer may be eligible for. If the website had a screening mechanism for you to select what type of customer you are and other eligibility requirements, and then be presented with all of the available incentives to your customer type, that would be an easier consumer experience.
 - e. Energy Efficiency Education: There are numerous educational materials out there on “Energy Saving Tips,” including many great utility resources. Finding ways to empower customers through compelling fact sheets and videos is a worthy goal, though these resources don't always acknowledge the energy efficiency offerings that could help customers incorporate those tips.
 - i. Ameren Illinois: The Energy Savings Center is a good step.² Fact sheets like “Ameren Illinois Energy Saving Tips for Your Home” could include actual savings estimates to help customers see the value of energy efficiency investment.³ The “Education and Training” section under “For My Business” and “For Multifamily Properties” could be considered for single-family customers.
 - ii. Nicor Gas: There are lots of great tips under “Tips for Saving Money and Energy” (Home>Residential>Ways to Save>Energy Saving Tips).⁴ Supplementing these tips with savings estimates or links to help customers incorporate these tips, along with visuals, would be helpful.
 - f. Interactive maps: Customer privacy is a huge concern here, but for customers who would like to make their experiences public (likely businesses), an interactive map of successful projects, measures installed, and their savings could be created.⁵
2. **Implementation**: Through making relevant changes to website design and content.
 3. **Background**: This idea came from numerous discussions with utility customers.
 4. **Idea Impact**: While additional market share is unknown, anecdotally, this would improve customer experience and satisfaction with the utility offerings.
 5. **Duration**: Duration of the 4-year EE Plan, with ongoing modifications as needed.
 6. **Estimated Budget**: Unknown. 7. **Estimated Participation**: Unknown.

² <https://amerenillinoissavings.com/for-multifamily-properties/energy-savings-center>

³

[https://amerenillinoissavings.com/portals/0/business/forms/PY20%20\(FEB%202020\)%20EE%20Tips%20%26%20Tricks%20Handout%20-%20FINAL.pdf](https://amerenillinoissavings.com/portals/0/business/forms/PY20%20(FEB%202020)%20EE%20Tips%20%26%20Tricks%20Handout%20-%20FINAL.pdf)

⁴ There isn't a tip about washing your clothes on the “Cold” setting, and I believe there was a Nicor Potential Study that found that washing clothes consumed a high amount of gas.

⁵ An example (among many) of an interactive map can be found at: Minnesota Conservation Improvement Program, “Energizing Minnesota's Economy,” <https://www.mncip.org>.

Idea #2: Ameren Illinois, ComEd, and Nicor Gas - Utility Coordination

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Energy Efficiency Idea Questions

Type of Energy Efficiency Idea: Proposed Program Approach
Illinois Utility Impacted by Energy Efficiency Idea: Ameren Illinois, ComEd, and Nicor Gas
Energy Efficiency Sector Targeted by Energy Efficiency Idea: All Residential and Small Business Customers

Additional Questions:

1. **Description of Idea:** Joint utility coordination between energy efficiency programs reduces cost and builds customer satisfaction.
 - a. Ameren Illinois and Nicor Gas: It is exciting to hear about Ameren Illinois and Nicor Gas' pilot program to target customers in their joint territory. Approximately 133,101 households are estimated to have Ameren IL electric and Nicor Gas.⁶ In this light, it's important for the utilities to coordinate offerings to maximize customer savings. This includes allowing customers who don't have an Ameren Illinois heating source to be eligible for Ameren Illinois Online Marketplace measures that are not heat-related, including light bulbs and advanced power strips.
 - b. ComEd and Nicor Gas: Having two distinct utility-only Income Eligible programs is inefficient and difficult for customers. Unless one program can definitively demonstrate a more cost-effective and expansive approach, the programs should be consolidated.
2. **Implementation:** Strategic coordination between the utilities, with clear, definitive updates to the SAG.
3. **Background:** SAG discussions and discussions among stakeholders.
4. **Idea Impact:** Customers will have a measurably improved experience with a streamlined, thorough approach. This avoids customer frustration due to multiple invasive assessments, or finding out about another utility's offering down the line.

⁶ Based on inference from census tract data.

5. **Duration:** Duration of the 4-year EE Plan.
6. **Estimated Budget:** Unknown.
7. **Estimated Participation:** Unknown.

Idea #3: All Illinois Utilities - Training and Education

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Energy Efficiency Idea Questions

Type of Energy Efficiency Idea: Proposed Program Approach
Illinois Utility Impacted by Energy Efficiency Idea: All Illinois Utilities
Energy Efficiency Sector Targeted by Energy Efficiency Idea: All Residential Customers (can also apply to Small Business)

Additional Questions:

1. **Description of Idea:** Train contractors, especially those performing in-home visits, on the full portfolio offerings relevant to the customer sector being engaged.⁷ Provide adequate resources for the customer to enjoy a fuller and more satisfying experience.
 - a. **Context:** Direct Install measures are often referred to as “a foot in the door,” but that metaphor loses its luster if the door swings shut behind the technician. The utility programs often place the burden on the resident or business owner to decipher what they may be eligible for, rather than communicating this information in a way the customer understands. In-home visits are effective, but expensive and invasive. Using every customer touch to encourage customer education and elaborate on the wealth of offerings that customer is eligible for could propel customers up the ladder of engagement.
 - b. **Portfolio awareness:** Utility contractors should have adequate training in the full portfolio offerings for their targeted customer sector. For residential, this can include: Rebates, Appliance Recycling, On-Bill Financing, and Income Qualified/Eligible programs, etc. Contractors may not let customers know about utility offerings that they don’t work on. Telling the story of energy savings, and building a narrative to connect disparate measures, can help customers better understand what their options are. Encouraging contractors to take a holistic approach with customers would help maximize that customer’s savings and improve customer satisfaction.
 - c. **Customer checklist:** Customers don’t know what to expect during an energy assessment or audit. Like having a list of questions before visiting the doctor, it would be helpful for customers to have better information on what to expect, ask, and follow up on. While I have heard from many utility customers that they were

⁷ I use the term “contractor” loosely to refer to any entity under a utility contract to provide energy efficiency services through direct customer engagement.

very pleased with their utility assessment, I have heard from others that their technician did not communicate well with them, or they were confused by the experience. This fact sheet or checklist could be available on the energy efficiency website and distributed to customers through mail or email after appointment confirmation.⁸ It would help set customer expectations (avoiding frustration or disappointment), encourage a more comprehensive assessment (making fuller use of utility resources), empower the customer to speak up if their technician doesn't fulfill the checklist's "promises" (informing the utility of contractor neglect), and prompt the customer to take advantage of other offerings.⁹

- d. Transparency in fees: If fees or copayments are required, it is crucial to be upfront. This can include providing the customer with a co-pay schedule for partially-covered measures, including prescriptive electric and gas measures and health and safety measures. An itemized bill or estimate must be approved by the customer before the work is done. I have heard from some utility customers who received "surprise bills" after participating in utility energy efficiency offerings.
- e. Misconceptions:¹⁰ Many customers don't understand the distinction between an audit and an assessment, because no one has taken the time to explain it. A market-rate customer may have the financial resources to invest in a more comprehensive energy audit to identify air leakage, but because of the confusing term "assessment," they may think they've done all they need. Customers may see that air sealing and insulation rebates are available, but how are they to know whether those measures are necessary for them? Another common customer misconception is that replacing doors and windows is a cost-effective measure. Building customer awareness on this issue could be improved by explicitly addressing both of these issues in contractor training and customer education materials.

The Direct Install technician is supposed to identify if weatherization is needed in a home, and they can perform a visual check of the attic and basement, but an accurate determination is impossible without a blower door test. This is a clear barrier for an assessment recommendation to convert to a weatherization project, especially because the customer doesn't have the rapport with a stranger (DI technician) that they would with a trusted contractor (trade ally), and the weatherization recommendation is not based on a quantitative audit, but a qualitative visual check. Providing information on energy audits in print and online materials and training DI technicians to address with customers would help overcome this barrier.¹¹

- f. Contractor List: Utilities already provide lists of contractors to take advantage of HVAC rebates, though this list could be searchable by zip code. This list could

⁸ It could be called "What to Expect When You're Assessing." Please know this is a joke.

⁹ Nicor Gas outlines several great factors to consider under the "How can I find a contractor?" tab of the website - these could be reiterated next to the "Find a Contractor" tool and used to inform a more comprehensive customer checklist.

¹⁰ "Assessment" can refer to HES, HEJ, HEA, ISA, etc.

¹¹ I recognize that potential future measures with savings numbers are already included in the PGL/ComEd "Home Energy Assessment Report" left with the customer post-assessment, but this rubric could include more information.

also include contractors that can provide annual furnace maintenance, and used as an educational opportunity to help customers ensure maximum furnace efficiency and help them understand that a home warranty company is not their only or most cost-effective option for HVAC maintenance.

2. **Implementation:** Providing clear educational materials and training existing and new contractors and utility staff, most importantly, anyone who is interacting with customers directly, and providing clearer information to customers. Contractors may include: outreach workers (both implementers and community partners), Direct Install technicians, and Trade Allies.
3. **Background:** This idea came from numerous discussions with both residential and small business utility customers across all five territories.
4. **Idea Impact:** While additional market share is unknown, anecdotally, this would improve customer experience and satisfaction with the utility offerings.
5. **Duration:** Duration of the 4-year EE Plan, with ongoing modifications as needed.
6. **Estimated Budget:** Unknown.
7. **Estimated Participation:** Unknown.

Sources:

1. Energy Sage, "Should you get an energy audit?" January 1, 2019, <https://www.energysage.com/energy-efficiency/buyers-guide/home-energy-audit>.

Idea #4: All Illinois Utilities - Community Engagement

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Energy Efficiency Idea Questions

Type of Energy Efficiency Idea: Proposed Program Approach
Illinois Utility Impacted by Energy Efficiency Idea: All Illinois Utilities
Energy Efficiency Sector Targeted by Energy Efficiency Idea: All Residential and Small Business Customers

Additional Questions:

1. **Description of Idea:** Ensure outreach is community-driven.
 - a. ***Outreach Calendar:*** Include more community meetings in outreach approach. Community meetings are how most customers and community leaders I have spoken with found out about utility energy efficiency programs. The programs all invest in a substantial amount of outreach, but unless contacted directly, it is difficult for community leaders and stakeholders to know when these meetings occur. The utility energy efficiency program could have a community events calendar on its website. Or if this is too logistically burdensome, there could be a community events social media account.
 - b. ***Sustainable Partnerships:*** One consistent piece of feedback from organizations is that energy efficiency outreach events are very successful in building program knowledge. I have spoken with many who first heard about the program or better understood the offerings by attending a community meeting.

Community outreach campaigns must be community-driven. This means that a community-targeted initiative, such as a neighborhood blitz, should not be designed absent meaningful communication with members of that community. While data can inform areas of focus, the outreach and marketing strategy can only work if the community is engaged. Savings are not the only indication of campaign success for a utility that will continue to serve customers long after the campaign has ended.

Organizing a listening session campaign can help toward better understanding the priorities of a community. Rather than a targeted focus group, a listening session can foster a larger conversation, engaging for broader feedback. Rather than advertising, this initial phase of a community-based

campaign should work toward building community trust and better understanding the barriers that make that community a “hard-to-reach population.”¹²

It should be noted that one or two community leaders or organizations do not represent that entire community, and any effort to drive community participation should attempt a respectful, multi-faceted approach that engages a diversity of entities (this can include location, type of organization and client base, demographics, etc).

Outreach resources, coming from the Outreach and Marketing funds, should focus on empowering community messengers, which can streamline outreach travel budgets. Programs could instead provide financial support for local organizations to serve as trusted partners, if trained adequately and provided clear educational resources.

2. **Implementation:** Restructuring outreach campaigns in coordination with communities.
3. **Background:** This idea came from stakeholder engagement as well as personal outreach experience across IL communities in all five utility territories.
4. **Idea Impact:** Building community trust.
5. **Duration:** Duration of the 4-year EE Plan, with ongoing modifications as needed.
6. **Estimated Budget:** Unknown.
7. **Estimated Participation:** Unknown.

Sources:

1. On the distinction between a focus group and a listening session, see AARP, “Roadmap to Livability: Community Listening Session Tool Kit,” January 2019, <https://www.aarp.org/content/dam/aarp/livable-communities/livable-documents/document-s-2018/Book-2-Roadmap-To-Livability-Listening-21318-lr.pdf>.

¹² ComEd’s “Design Thinking” exercise is a good start, but this listening approach can be brought into communities as well.

Idea #5: Ameren Illinois and ComEd - Demand Response

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Energy Efficiency Idea Questions

Type of Energy Efficiency Idea: Proposed Program Approach
Illinois Utility Impacted by Energy Efficiency Idea: Ameren Illinois and ComEd
Energy Efficiency Sector Targeted by Energy Efficiency Idea: All Residential and Small Business Customers

Additional Questions:

1. **Description of Idea:** Use opportunity to educate customers receiving energy efficiency measures about other utility programs offered, including demand response.
 - a. **Context:** Demand response programs encourage participants to shift energy usage to off-peak times, motivated either through lower prices on a real-time pricing program, or bill credits on a summer peak time event program. Ameren Illinois and ComEd both offer several demand response programs: for Ameren Illinois, Power Smart Pricing and Peak Time Rewards, and for ComEd, Hourly Pricing, Peak Time Savings, and Central Air Conditioning Cycling.
 - b. **DR saves energy:** Demand response programs have proven energy efficiency impact. According to the Program Administrator for Hourly Pricing, Power Smart Pricing, and Peak Time Rewards, these programs “have saved more than 143,000 customers over \$31 million since 2007...[and] reduced 64 million kWh in energy use.”¹³ Intuitively, when a customer is motivated to use less electricity at certain times, they will likely use less electricity overall. But there are other reasons for a correlation between success in both demand response and energy efficiency. The above source also describes the effect of strategic appliance usage on lowering overall usage. When a customer is financially motivated to use less energy at peak times, especially on hot days, they can shift their use of heat-producing appliances like dishwashers, laundry machines, and electric ovens, to off-peak times, when it is cooler and thus less energy will be used overall.

Unfortunately, many customers who participate in Ameren Illinois and ComEd energy efficiency offerings receive no education about demand response programs. Perhaps there is not sufficient financial motivation for the utility energy

¹³ Elevate Energy, “Save Money This Summer with Smart Grid Programs,” July 12, 2019, <https://www.elevateenergy.org/save-money-summer-smart-grid>.

efficiency program to invest in demand response promotion; however, simple changes to website and marketing content could be an inexpensive step toward this goal. Of course, it is crucially important that customers understand what they are signing up for with real-time pricing programs; however, these programs are already very clear for customers signing up on the website and phone that savings are not guaranteed, and these programs will change the customers' electric rates.¹⁴

- c. Ameren Illinois: There is no mention of "Power Smart Pricing" or "Peak Time Rewards" on AmerenIllinoisSavings.com or the Ameren Illinois Online Marketplace.¹⁵
 - d. ComEd: Under comed.com/MyAccount/MyBillUsage/Pages/MyUsage, there is only a heading for "Demand Response for Large Commercial customers." This is a clear opportunity to inform customers about Hourly Pricing and Peak Time Savings.
2. **Implementation:** Through making relevant changes to the energy efficiency program websites.
 3. **Background:** Working with utility customers in both territories.
 4. **Idea Impact:** Streamlining utility offerings to help customers save.
 5. **Duration:** Duration of the 4-year EE Plan, with ongoing modifications as needed.
 6. **Estimated Budget:** Unknown.
 7. **Estimated Participation:** Unknown.

¹⁴ Average savings for Power Smart Pricing are 10% on supply, average savings for Hourly Pricing are 15% on supply, and the majority of customers save in both programs.

¹⁵ To address some barriers to DR participation, Ameren Illinois could also consider: calling more Peak Time Rewards events, removing the \$2.25 Power Smart Pricing participation fee, and introducing IFTTT, a free online platform to help customers with smart devices save during peak times - this could be marketed as part of Smart Savers. On the PSP participation fee, this has been addressed as a barrier to customer participation by the Program Administrator numerous times; see: Docket 11-0547, <https://www.icc.illinois.gov/docket/P2011-0547/documents>.

Idea #6: All Illinois Utilities - IHWAP Utility-Braided Program

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Energy Efficiency Idea Questions

Type of Energy Efficiency Idea: Proposed Program Approach
Illinois Utility Impacted by Energy Efficiency Idea: All Illinois Utilities
Energy Efficiency Sector Targeted by Energy Efficiency Idea: Residential Customers - All Income Qualified/Income Eligible

Additional Questions:

1. **Description of Idea:** Use utility funding to address utility-braided IHWAP challenges.
 - a. **Administration:** Methods to better leverage the Program Support and Administration cost should be considered.
 - b. **Competition:** Non-Income Qualified/Eligible utility contractors working to maximize their metrics have no incentive to redirect low and moderate income customers to the more comprehensive offerings within the Income Qualified/Eligible programs. This has led to frustration among professionals and tremendous confusion among customers. Even if a contractor is not screening for income, they can still provide information on the Income Qualified/Eligible program, which would improve customer trust. It would also streamline the programs so that contractors can focus on the customer sectors that would most benefit from “their” offering.
 - c. **CAA Reporting and QC Inspections:** There should be a single point of contact and one budget reporting document for CAAs, to ensure the most efficient allocation of limited CAA administrative resources. This point of contact should be responsible for consolidation of QC inspections to prevent over-burdening customers with excessively invasive procedures.¹⁶
 - d. **Transparent Reporting:** It is unclear as to what the true comparison is between CAAs and alternative community partners in terms of cost efficiency. With better data on this issue, including accounting for full scope of work, a more complete assessment could be made as to where to allocate funds.
 - e. **Multi-family Energy Modeling:** Utilities could help support development of Multi-family energy modeling software. CAAs are prohibited from using

¹⁶ Opinion Dynamics Evaluation Team, “AIC Income Qualified Initiative – Community Action Agency Interview Findings,” February 24, 2020, <https://s3.amazonaws.com/ilsag/AIC-IQ-CAA-Study-Findings-Memo-FINAL-2020-02-24.pdf>.

Weatherworks to calculate utility-only project savings, and assessing manually using the TRM through hiring an engineering firm is a barrier to more multi-family work being completed. Perhaps the tool that CEDA uses could be assessed for wider use.

- f. **Targeting IHWAP-Ineligible Customers:** Homes can only be weatherized once within a given period using Department of Energy Funds.¹⁷ Customers who went through IHWAP before existing energy efficiency technology was available would benefit from utility-funded measures. This could be accomplished through targeted outreach and marketing in collaboration with DCEO. Additionally, it is my understanding that rented single-family homes are not considered for IHWAP, due to a separate prevailing wage rate set by the Illinois Department of Labor. This is another customer sector that would hugely benefit from utility-only funding if CAAs could help identify.
 - g. **Contractor Network:** Encourage development of best practices for agencies and contractors, including a regional or statewide approach to recruitment and capacity building. For example, the North Carolina Building Performance Association (NCBPA) provides market and workforce development as well as educational resources for both consumers and industry professionals.¹⁸ This idea was raised by John Pady and Chris Neme, who in turn suggested a Market Transformation approach.
 - h. **For Ameren Illinois: HVAC and Mechanicals:** If the building has been assessed through cost-effectiveness tests as needing a mechanical replacement or HVAC upgrade, the utility should contribute funding to that measure as part of the cost share agreement. Obviously, any mechanical investment should be installed in conjunction with air sealing and insulation.¹⁹
2. **Implementation:** Coordination between utilities, Community Action Agencies, and utility contractors.
 3. **Background:** These are mostly reiterations of issues raised at the January 28th Large Group SAG Meeting.
 4. **Idea Impact:** Improved relationships with CAAs and the communities they serve.
 5. **Duration:** Duration of the 4-year EE Plan, with ongoing modifications as needed.
 6. **Estimated Budget:** Unknown.
 7. **Estimated Participation:** Unknown.

¹⁷ Applies to homes that have gone through IHWAP since September 30, 1994: <https://www.ncrpc.org/services/housing/weatherization>.

¹⁸ North Carolina Building Performance Association: <http://buildingnc.org>.

¹⁹ Put another way, "Consider funding a portion of the cost of HVAC and mechanical repairs through the CAA channel to improve the efficiency of CAA's administration and completion of weatherization projects. If plausible, consider funding at least some HVAC measure types using a 50/50 split between government grants and AIC funds." "AIC Income Qualified Initiative," p.5.

Idea #7: All Illinois Utilities - Renter Resources

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Energy Efficiency Idea Questions

Type of Energy Efficiency Idea: Proposed Program Approach
Illinois Utility Impacted by Energy Efficiency Idea: All Illinois Utilities
Energy Efficiency Sector Targeted by Energy Efficiency Idea: Residential Customers - All Multifamily

Additional Questions:

1. **Description of Idea:** Expand resources for renters
Renters have limited capacity to engage with energy efficiency programs, because their participation is largely at the discretion of the owner or manager of their building. A renter has no control over a property owner or manager's enthusiasm for energy efficiency.
 - a. **Educational materials:** Include a "For renters" page on the energy efficiency website, including a clear measure list and messaging strategies on how to convince your property owner or manager.
 - b. **Submission of property owner contact information:** Introduce a process whereby renters can submit their property's ownership information, and program implementers receive this information and attempt contact. This could be online and over the phone.²⁰
 - c. **Expanding multi-family kits:** Single-family homeowners have more control over whether to allow building envelope measures, but single-family and multi-family renters could benefit from energy-saving products. Providing greater access to kits could serve this goal.
 - i. **Nicor Gas:** Under Home>Residential>Ways To Save>Free Products and Services, it could be specified that you can qualify for a kit whether or not you own the property at which your Nicor Gas account resides.
2. **Implementation:** Through making relevant changes to website design and content.
3. **Background:** This idea came from numerous discussions with utility customers.
4. **Idea Impact:** Expand access to energy efficiency offerings for renters.

²⁰ This is already an option at AmerenIllinoisSavings.com under "Multifamily Properties": <https://amerenillinoissavings.com/multifamily-properties>.

5. **Duration:** Duration of the 4-year EE Plan, with ongoing modifications as needed.
6. **Estimated Budget:** Unknown.
7. **Estimated Participation:** Unknown.

Idea #8: All Illinois Utilities - On-Bill Financing

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Energy Efficiency Idea Questions

Type of Energy Efficiency Idea: Proposed Program Approach
Illinois Utility Impacted by Energy Efficiency Idea: All Illinois Utilities
Energy Efficiency Sector Targeted by Energy Efficiency Idea: All Residential and Small Business Customers

Additional Questions:

1. **Description of Idea:** Market the On-Bill Financing program to customers who will be well-served by the offering, and ensure all customers understand program terms.
 - a. ***Incentives first:*** The On-Bill Financing program is designed to serve customers already taking advantage of utility energy efficiency offerings; however, the IIEnergyLoan.com website does not explicitly state this. The website should lead with information on how to take advantage of utility rebates and programs first, before directing a customer to sign up for a loan.
 - b. ***Income eligible customers:*** There is a predicament in that low and moderate income customers are eligible for many free and discounted measures, but may not be able to have those measures installed in a timely manner due to contractor capacity and budget constraints. But these customers must be adequately educated about their options so as to make an informed decision that will have such lasting financial consequences. The On-Bill Financing program is not without risk. If a customer defaults, they could have their utility service terminated. If they want to pay off the loan early, the customer must pay the loan in full, as any overpayment will go first to the utility balance owed. On-Bill Financing materials must be clear about the risks, and also clear about the Income Qualified/Eligible programs. The website should include information on IHWAP, and customer service representatives should be trained to inform loan applicants.
 - c. ***Required customer sectors:*** The On-Bill Financing program must include offerings for single-family, multi-family, and small business customers, as required by Sections 16-11.7 and 19-140.
 - d. ***Pairing any mechanical investment with air sealing and insulation:*** Many contractors will oversize a furnace to compensate for a leaky home. Many, many customers are misinformed about this. Before a customer commits the

tremendous investment of a new, efficient, and expensive furnace, they need to be adequately informed about the importance of weatherization. This can be accomplished through clearer information on IIEnergyLoan.com as well as the utility energy efficiency program websites.

- e. ***Make program metrics publicly available:*** Public Act 96-0033 only required one evaluation of the On-Bill Financing program, which was submitted in 2015 in evaluation of program years 2011-2014. There is no ongoing way to account for the program's default rate, number of shut-offs as a consequence of defaulting, and other important information vital to understanding the program's effectiveness. The utilities should consider making this information transparent to stakeholders to best evaluate the program as a component of the utility portfolios.
2. **Implementation:** Making changes to the Illinois Energy Loan Program website, providing clearer training to program customer service representatives, and being careful in program marketing so as to not engage the wrong customer sector.
 3. **Background:** This idea came from discussions with stakeholders.
 4. **Idea Impact:** Protect customers from making financial decisions without adequate information, and prevent customer mistrust and anxiety over energy efficiency offers.
 5. **Duration:** Duration of the 4-year EE Plan, with ongoing modifications as needed.
 6. **Estimated Budget:** Unknown.
 7. **Estimated Participation:** Unknown.