

EMPOWERED: Diverse Business Development and Customer Engagement in Energy Efficiency



Energy Efficiency
PROGRAM

EMPOWERING PEOPLE
ENRICHING
COMMUNITIES

Presentation Outline



PURPOSE



OBJECTIVES &
DESIRED OUTCOME



WALKER-MILLER
ENERGY SERVICES



URBAN ENERGY
JUSTICE LAB



DIVERSITY, EQUITY &
INCLUSION INITIATIVES



KEY FINDINGS:
DIVERSE BUSINESS
ENTERPRISES



KEY FINDINGS:
DIVERSE RESIDENTIAL
CUSTOMERS

Research Purpose

To support Ameren Illinois' commitment to "Energy Efficiency for All" by identifying the best practices to:

- Engage a larger number of diverse businesses in the delivery of its energy efficiency programs
- Increase meaningful participation of diverse customers in those same programs

Identify opportunities to increase diversity, equity and inclusion in utility managed energy efficiency programs:

- Providing equitable access
- Hiring inclusive implementation teams
- Affording easy access to opportunities



Research Objectives & Desired Outcome

This research focuses on reducing consumer energy consumption through utility-offered energy efficiency programs. The research seeks to:

Understand how Midwest utilities can increase engagement in energy efficiency programs for those diverse residential customers who are traditionally harder to engage

Identify best practices to addressing challenges and barriers diverse-owned vendors/suppliers face when attempting to partner with Midwest utilities to provide products and/or services in support of the Midwest utilities' energy efficiency programs.





Minority and woman-owned, Detroit-based company dedicated to changing lives through energy efficiency,

Help utilities achieve energy efficiency goals in ways that reduce the energy burden on families, create local clean energy jobs, diversify the local energy workforce, and serve the needs of low- and moderate-income families with compassion

improve infrastructure while also promoting energy education and best practices for all utility customers

WALKER-MILLER TEAM

Erika Dominick & Amber Anderson



Urban Energy Justice Lab



The Urban Energy Justice Lab (UEJ Lab) launched in 2015 at the University of Michigan School for Environment and Sustainability and has collaborated with WMES since 2016

UEJ Lab conducts research at the intersection of energy and equity, focusing on the production and persistence of spatial, racial, and socioeconomic disparities in accessibility and affordability of energy services, technology, and programs

Visit: www.urbanenergyjusticelab.com

UEJL Team

Dr. Reames
Sabrina Vivian
Larry Borum, III





Diversity & Inclusion Initiatives

Key Findings: Diverse Business Enterprises

Barriers & Constraints Identified by Diverse Businesses

Best Practices to Increase Diverse Businesses as Program Providers

Recommendations for Increasing Diverse Business Participation

Barriers & Constraints Identified by DBEs

Lack of access to contract opportunities

Lack of relationships with utility decision-makers

Limited access to capital

Marketing capabilities

Inadequate staffing

Lack of access to training

Limited cash flow

Lack of access to legal advice

Lack of knowledge about contract opportunities

Lack of technical expertise

Lack of sufficient cybersecurity and liability insurance

Best Practices: Increasing DBE Participation



Building an Inclusive
Cultures for DBEs



Attracting and Recruiting
DBEs



Increasing Development
Opportunities for DBEs

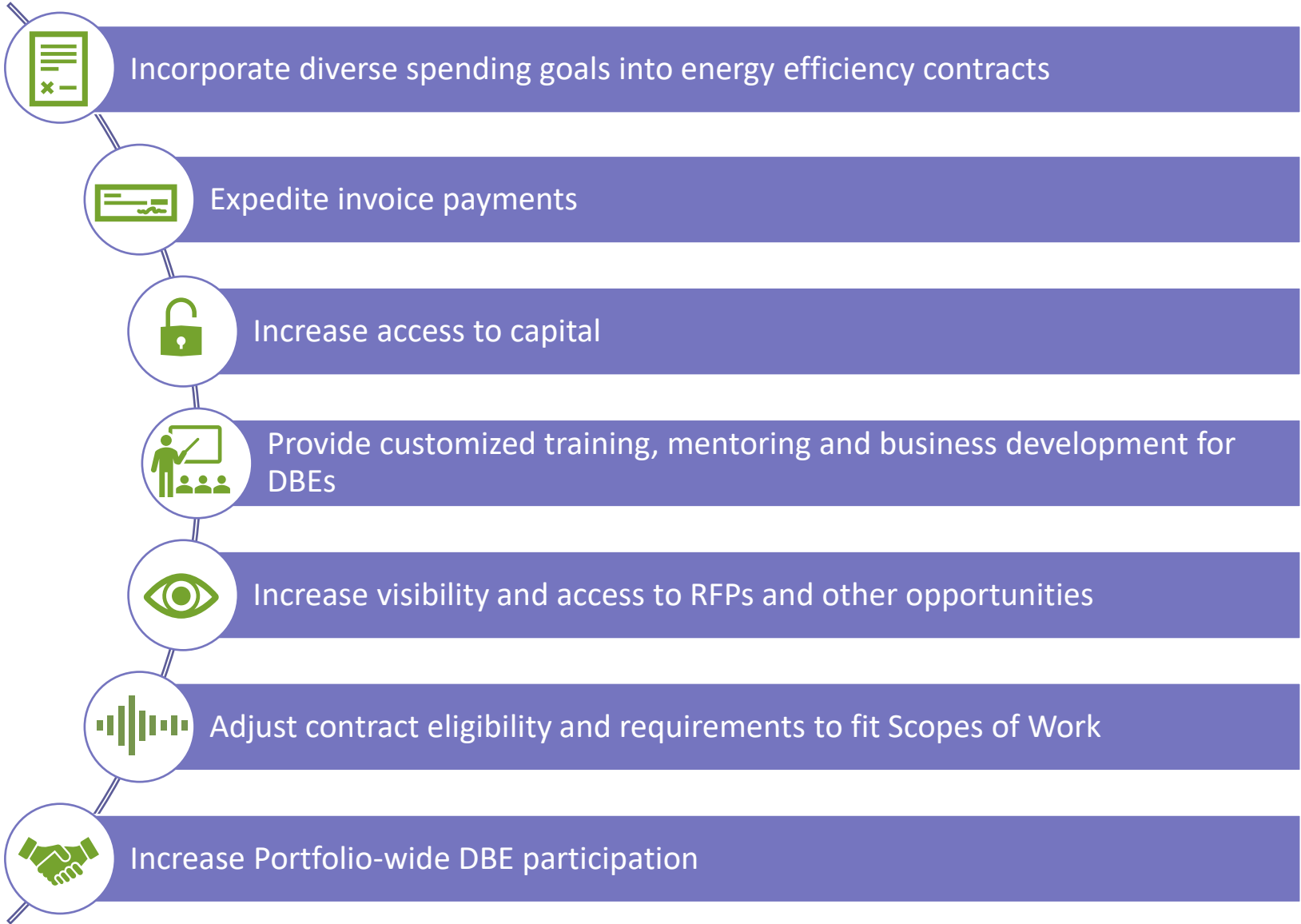


Integrating DBE
Participation into
Program Design

Recommendations to Increase DBE Participation



Energy Efficiency PROGRAM



Key Findings: Diverse Residential Customers

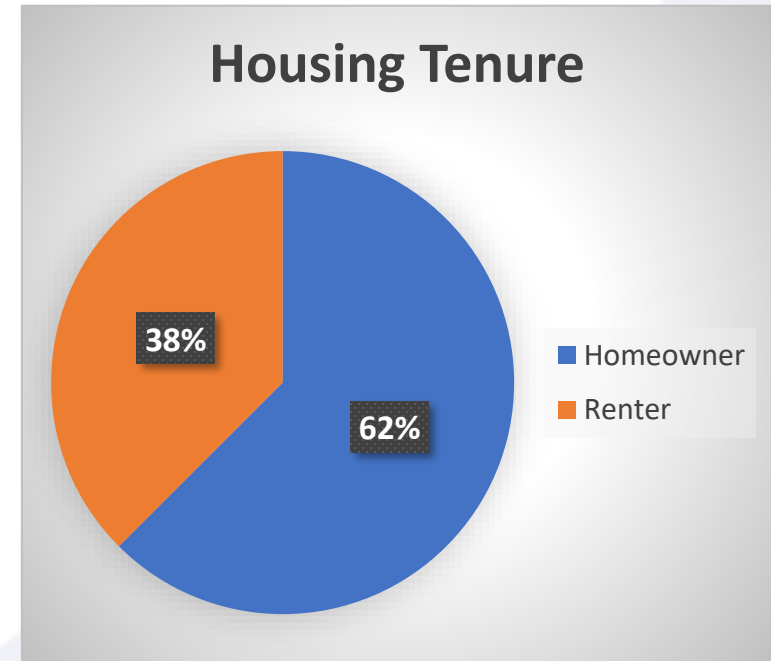
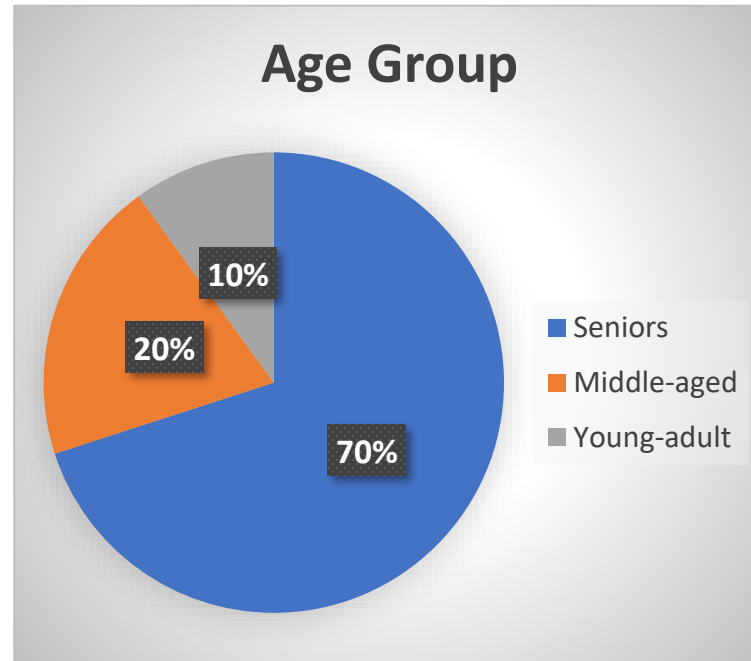
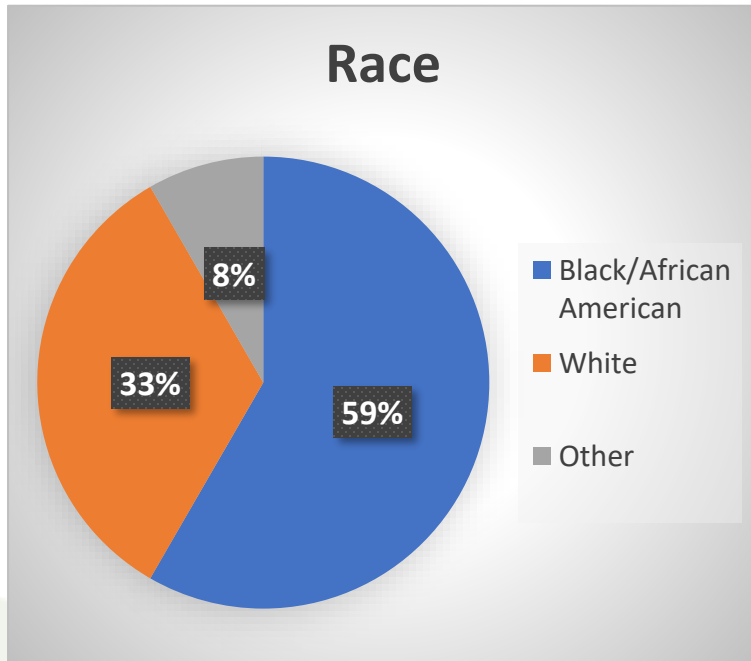
Barriers & Constraints Identified by Diverse Residential Customers (Focus Group Findings)

Best Practices to Increase Diverse Customers as Program Participants

Recommendations for Increasing Diverse Residential Customers as Program Participants

Diverse Customer Focus Groups

2 Virtual Focus Groups | August 2020 | 2 Cities – Springfield (7 participants) & Taylorville (5 participants)



Barriers & Constraints Identified by Diverse Residential Customers (Focus Group Findings)

Unaffordable upfront costs and limited incomes

Building owners/property managers have little incentive to pay for energy efficient retrofits when renters are paying the costs of wasted energy not the building owner or property manager

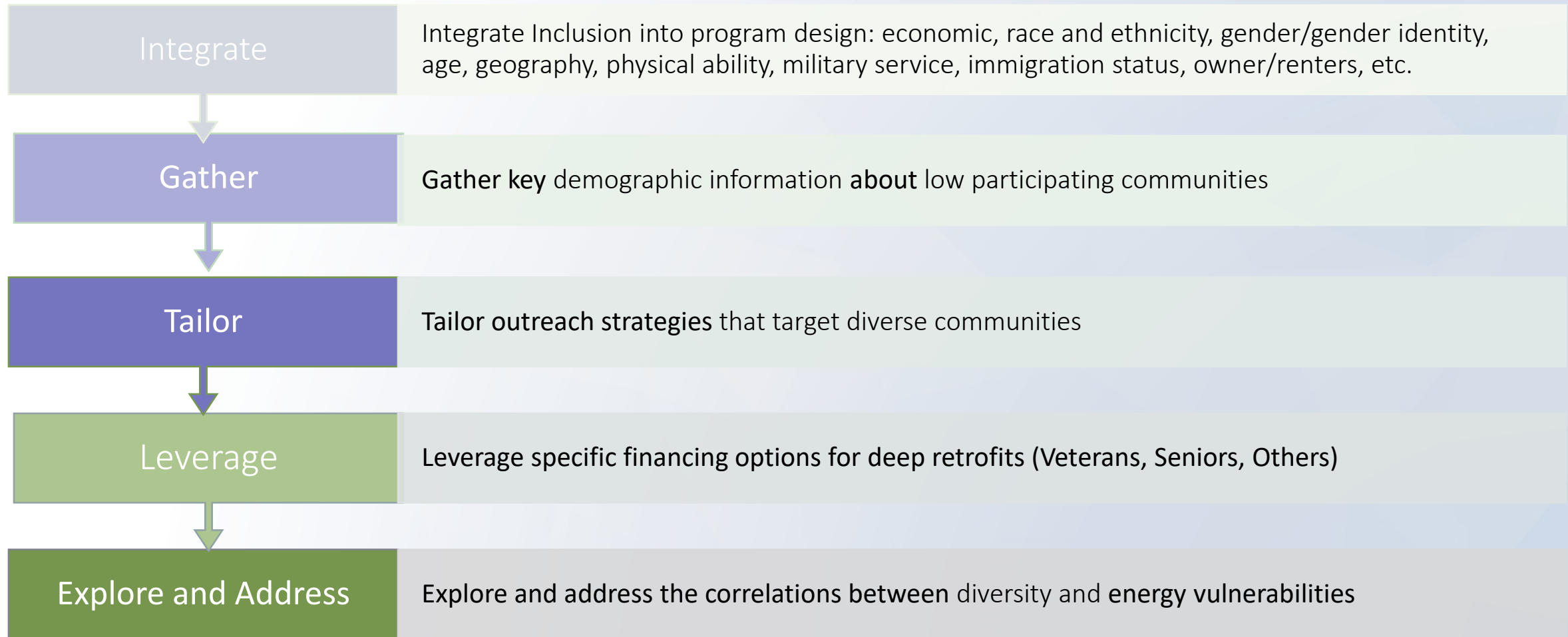
Access to digestible and credible information – product advertising was found to be misleading or confusing

Resistance by older customers to use new technology

Lack of confidence or trust in utilities or government agencies administering energy efficiency programs

Lack of awareness of energy efficiency programs offered by their local utility

Best Practices: Increasing Diverse Customer Participation



Recommendations to Increase Diverse Residential Customers Participation



01

Build trust, cultivate abiding relationships, and coordinate engagement efforts

02

Fill gaps in energy efficiency knowledge through customer education

03

Investigate the connection between energy efficiency and health disparities

04

Target customers by geography

In Summary