



NYSERDA

EmPower New York Heating System Repairs and Replacements: Lessons Learned



Installed by New Buffalo Impact

**LIFE Regional Meetings
April-May, 2015**

Mid-winter heating system failures for low-income households

A health and safety risk for the family

Replacement adds a financial burden, and emergency service can be expensive

Failure to act immediately can cause further damage (bursting pipes, etc.)



The EmPower No-Heat Initiative (ENHI)

- In the winter of 2014-15, EmPower provided assistance to **668** households in no-heat situations. **This initiative is now closed.**
- Contractors repaired or replaced heating systems within 1-4 days
- Additional energy efficiency measures were installed where appropriate
- Local Departments of Social Services (DSS) assisted with referrals and temporary housing
- *QA reports from on-site inspections were generally very favorable.*

Triage for Heating Equipment Services



Installed by Gomez Comfort Systems

Low income homeowners:

- With inefficient heating systems that meet cost-effectiveness guidelines for replacement
- In no-heat situations who are denied assistance by HERR

In rental situations, landlords are responsible for heating system services

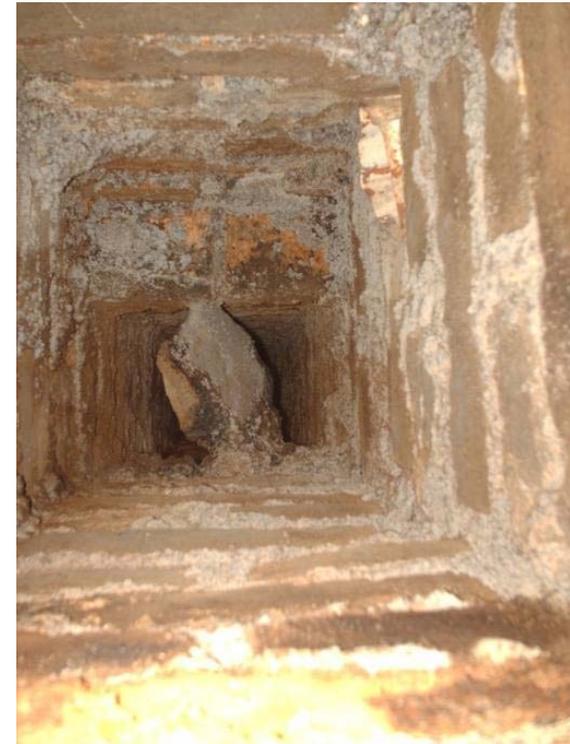
Screening Questions before the Visit

Examples:

- ✓ Do you own your home?
- ✓ How old is your heating system?
- ✓ How and when did your system break down?
- ✓ Have you changed the batteries in your thermostat lately?
- ✓ Are you able to heat your home with any other heat source (space heat, wood etc.)? If not, how are you getting by?

The EmPower No-Heat Initiative: Lessons Learned

- Repairs often solve the problem:
(40% of the time in ENHI)
- Household maintenance training is critical
- Look at entire system: chimney, fuel line, etc.
- Lowest bids not always best: get the details
- Include a full scope in the proposal



Workscope Proposals

Customer Name: _____ EmPower ID #: 00

Proposed Appliance(s):		Primary System	Secondary System
Proposed Heating System Replacement	Make		
	Model		
	System Type		
	Efficiency Rating		
	Fuel Type	Conversion? Yes No	Conversion? Yes No
	BTU In/Out	In _____ Out _____	In _____ Out _____
	Will water heater be orphaned by heating upgrade?	Yes No	Yes No
	Manufacturer's Warranty (Describe)		
	Contractor Warranty (Describe)		
	Equipment and parts in stock?	Yes No	Proposed Start Date: _____
Minor Repair Subtotal (from page 1)			\$ 0.00
HEATING SYSTEM REPAIRS	Fuel Supply, Tank Leak(s), and repairs (Describe)		\$
	Flue Pipe & Chimney Repairs (Describe)		\$
	Parts (List)		\$
	Other (Describe)		\$
	Heating System Repair Subtotal:		
PROPOSED WORKSCOPE AND COSTS	Replacement Heating System(s)		\$
	Heating System Base		\$
	Parts (List)		\$
	Parts (List)		\$
	Parts (List)		\$
	Other (Describe)		\$
Heating System Replacement Subtotal:			\$ 0.00
Building Permits			\$
Labor Cost			\$
Labor & Permit Subtotal:			\$ 0.00
Total Proposed Costs:			\$ 0.00

- Obtain two bids whenever possible
- Require detailed specifications of the proposed work
- Take into consideration added maintenance for high efficiency boilers/furnaces
- Identify and support contractors who respond quickly and provide a reasonable price

Sizing is critical



Installed by Seneca County Weatherization

- System must be correctly sized by the contractor. Easy Manual J calculators are available on line that take about 10 minutes to complete.
- Sizing must take into consideration other measures provided to the dwelling, such as insulation and air sealing, that reduce the heat load.
- Installations must follow all local, State and Federal codes.

Agency support in no heat situations

- Confirming income eligibility and notifying the program
- Asking questions up front, (such as the screening questions listed earlier), and sharing answers with program
- Assist the household in assembling any required documentation such as a completed application, proof of ownership, etc.
- Assist in communications between the household and the program as needed
- Provide additional services as available through the Agency.

Other Considerations

- Oil Tank treatment for sludge can be included in workscope
- Distribution pressure testing is recommended if pipes have frozen
- Consider a two-stage furnace if insulation cannot be installed immediately
- Authorized repairs if less than \$400 without prior approval, require appropriate documentation afterwards
- Install oil or propane systems only if household has least 100 gallons of oil or propane and the ability to purchase more
- Consider conversions to natural gas if possible

ENHI demonstrated the value of:

- Ensuring that adequate funding is available for providing services to low income households in no-heat situations
- Building cooperation between Departments of Social Services, NYSERDA, Community Based Organizations and other entities
- Ensuring quality through the use of BPI Gold Star Contractors, appropriate documentation requirements and careful Quality Control/Quality Assurance procedures
- Combining heating system services with energy efficiency services

**Have all of your
questions been
answered?**



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