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**NYSERDA Residential Market Advisory  
Group (RMAG) Quarterly Meeting**

**In-Person Meeting: New York City, NY  
Tuesday, October 29, 2024**

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# NYSERDA RMAG Quarterly Meeting

Meeting Summary, Tuesday, October 29, 2024, at 09:00am ET

## Meeting Overview

### Background

On October 29, 2024, the New York State Energy Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA) convened its Q4 2024 in-person Residential Market Advisory Group (RMAG) meeting at Jay Suites Chelsea in New York City to engage stakeholders on key residential market priorities and initiatives.

The agenda featured updates on programs such as the Comfort Home Program, the phased rollout of Home Energy Rebates under the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA), and upcoming multifamily energy initiatives, including the launch of the Multifamily Residential Energy Pathways (MREP) program.

Attendees participated in collaborative discussions and breakout sessions focused on addressing Downstate Barriers, Non-Technical Barriers to Heat Pump Adoption, and Opportunities and Barriers for Renters, with an emphasis on overcoming obstacles, fostering consumer trust, and optimizing market incentives to drive clean energy adoption.

In total, 85 individuals attended the meeting, including 10 NYSERDA staff. Meeting Agenda

- Welcome and Ice Breaker Introductions
- RMAG Updates NYS Residential Updates
- RMAG Breakout Introductions and Walkthrough
- Closing Remarks

## Meeting Summary

### Ice Breaker

Participants engaged in the icebreaker activities by sharing their reflections on 2024, proposed changes for 2025, identifying gaps in current efforts, and suggesting what they would like to do differently in 2025. They contributed ideas on Post-it notes and displayed them on boards under categories such as "Reflections on 2024," "Changes in 2025," "What's Missing," and "What Would You Like to Do Differently?"

## RMAG Update

### Introduction to RMAG

Laura Geel, Assistant Director of the Single Family Residential team at NYSERDA, provided an overview of the RMAG as a collaborative forum where residential market stakeholders can engage regularly and offer insights to the NYSERDA. Through virtual sessions and working groups, RMAG extends beyond typical engagements, allowing stakeholders to gather, discuss priorities, and influence strategic directions. Its mission focuses on uniting residential market actors to shape the future of clean energy solutions, fostering strategies that promote market growth, enhance customer value, and advance New York State's energy policy goals.

### RMAG Objectives

Laura outlined RMAG's primary objectives, which include maintaining awareness of public policies that drive investments in energy efficiency and clean energy within the residential sector. RMAG serves as a conduit for sharing information on both current and planned initiatives, helping to streamline efforts and prevent redundancy as stakeholders pursue shared policy and industry goals. RMAG discussions address challenges that hinder the broad deployment of energy efficiency and clean energy services, working to guide the direction of these solutions within the residential market. RMAG also emphasizes building connections and partnerships to support mutual objectives and developing coordinated messaging and outreach strategies to maximize collective impact.

### RMAG Updates

Over the past ten months, RMAG has hosted several key sessions. The Q1 meeting focused on experiences with the Clean Heat Program, providing stakeholders with insights into its implementation. The RMAG also provided a forum for stakeholders to provide input to the IRA Community Benefits Plan. Additionally, Laura mentioned a series of webinars and working groups held for community stakeholders and contractors, as well as the Cold Climate Air Source Heat Pump Forum, which addressed specific technological challenges.

The Q2 virtual meeting topics were determined by a voting process, prioritizing three focus areas: Disadvantaged Communities (DAC) Access Barrier Identification and Remediation, Clean Energy Program Performance, and Supporting Market Insights for Policymakers and Decision Makers.

## NYS Update

### Clean and Resilient Buildings

Susanne DesRoches, Vice President of Clean and Resilient Buildings at NYSERDA, expressed gratitude to everyone for attending and highlighted the collaborative nature of the work being done. She noted the presence of NYSERDA representatives and the multifamily team, emphasizing the importance of understanding what is needed in downstate areas to facilitate the transition to a clean energy economy. She encouraged continued engagement with the multifamily sector to support these efforts.

### Single Family Residential Updates

Courtney Moriarta, Director of the Single Family Residential team at NYSERDA, provided an update on the residential market's role in achieving energy efficiency and clean energy goals, acknowledging the importance of program feedback and broader perspectives on the market.

#### Program Accomplishments

Courtney shared that while efforts are ongoing, significant progress has been made:

- 24,000 Homes Served: Includes energy audits, weatherization work, installation of heat pumps and water heaters, electrical improvements, and other supplementary updates.
- 9,000 Appliance Orders Fulfilled: Addresses the need for efficient appliances across the residential market.
- 28,000 Applications Received: These applications are expected to be fulfilled by the end of the year.
- \$138 Million in Incentives: Allocated to projects currently in the pipeline.

#### Comfort Home Program

Courtney discussed the Comfort Home market-rate pilot program, which provides small incentives for weatherization work. This weatherization aims to create heat pump-ready homes that save energy and reduce loads, allowing for the installation of smaller, more efficient heat pumps. The program is targeted and does not use active marketing, with an on-track goal of reaching 2,800 load reduction packages. Since 2019, 5,700 load reduction packages have been installed.

#### Distribution of Projects by County

Courtney provided an overview of the project distribution across counties, noting that the data aggregates multiple programs since 2009. The information reflects an accumulation of

completed projects rather than distinct households served, as some projects are ongoing, and there may be instances of double counting.

### [Income Segments and LMI Households Map](#)

The distribution maps revealed a concentration of projects in specific counties, influenced by contractor presence and regional population density, particularly in downstate and New York state regions. Notably, 17% of EmPower+ projects are concentrated in New York City boroughs. Courtney acknowledged the complexity of this data, much of which is published on Open New York, and encouraged stakeholders to reach out to the team for further clarification when analyzing this information.

### [Clean Heat Connect](#)

Courtney described the Clean Heat Connect initiative as a strategy to drive market transformation by encouraging practices among contractors and homeowners that align with energy efficiency goals. Clean Heat Connect focuses on leveraging relationships with distributors and manufacturers of heat pump equipment, who possess extensive networks of downstream contractors. By working collaboratively with these partners, the program aims to overcome barriers identified through market insight efforts, allowing impactful change with relatively minimal resource investment. This initiative has gained significant popularity, with several distributors actively involved, contributing ideas on useful tools and resources to address common challenges. Courtney noted plans to expand this network in the coming year.

### [Experience Clean Heat Campaign](#)

Courtney spoke about the Experience Clean Heat Campaign, an initiative partnering with businesses and public buildings equipped with heat pumps. The campaign includes displaying signage highlighting the building's clean energy system, training onsite staff to talk about the benefits of heat pumps, and developing collateral including social media posts to increase consumer awareness of heat pump benefits and create opportunities for organic engagement. Emerging from discussions in a recent RMAG meeting, the initiative aims to foster greater public familiarity with heat pump technology by allowing people to experience its benefits firsthand. Plans are underway to expand this effort in 2025.

### [Home Energy Rebates Phased Rollout](#)

Courtney discussed the phased rollout of the Home Energy Rebates under the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA), deployed earlier this year. The rollout received attention from both the governor and the secretary of energy, positioning New York State as the first in the nation to allocate IRA funding to consumers.

### [Key Program Design and Implementation Objectives](#)

The program design process began with core principles aimed at maximizing impact and utilizing existing infrastructure. Key objectives include:

- Leveraging current programs to avoid starting from scratch and streamlining offerings.
- Reducing market confusion by directing consumers through a unified gateway to view available rebates.
- Providing homeowners with tools to make informed decisions.
- Ensuring equitable distribution of funding, guided by Department of Energy (DOE) requirements.

Existing programs, such as EmPower+ and Comfort Home, are expected to be leveraged in this rollout, with funds anticipated to serve approximately 50,000 to 60,000 households over an estimated three-year period.

#### [Equitable Service Rules for Low-Income and Disadvantaged Communities](#)

Courtney outlined guidelines ensuring equitable service for low-income and disadvantaged communities:

- At least 41% of funds must be allocated to homes with income below 80% of the Area Median Income (AMI).
- A minimum of 10% of rebate funding is dedicated to low-income multifamily buildings.

#### [HEAR Program](#)

Courtney explained that the Home Electrification and Appliance Rebate (HEAR) program focuses on electrification and appliance upgrades, with a prescriptive approach outlined by the Inflation Reduction Act. The program includes air sealing, insulation, heat pumps, and water heaters, and more, all targeted toward home electrification. HEAR is available to households below 150% of Area Median Income (AMI).

#### [Income Eligibility Screening \(AMI/SMI\)](#)

Courtney addressed questions about income eligibility, explaining that eligibility has traditionally been based on 60% of the State Median Income (SMI) for the EmPower and EmPower+ programs. This aligns with similar programs, such as the Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP) and the Weatherization Assistance Program, with which NYSERDA closely collaborates.

#### [Available Incentives Pre/Post-IRA HEAR Deployment](#)

Courtney noted that program rules are being adjusted in light of the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) deployment. Specifically, changes have expanded eligibility, particularly in relation to Tier 3 (60-80% AMI) requirements.

### HER Deployment

The Home Efficiency Rebate (HER) deployment will target the multifamily market segment, including buildings with two or more units and low-rise housing types. These small multifamily housing types have traditionally been challenging to serve within existing program offerings.

### Appliance Upgrade Program

Courtney shared that the Appliance Upgrade Program was launched on October 28, with eligibility up to 150% of AMI. This program began with a soft launch, making New York the first in the country to offer this initiative within retail stores. Six retailers participated at the outset, with additional retailers expected to join. Currently, the program is limited to heat pump clothes dryers.

### MyEnergy Portal

Courtney introduced MyEnergy Portal, a new feature that will support future program expansions. Initially rolled out as part of the Appliance Upgrade Program, MyEnergy Portal offers a platform for customers to apply for rebates. The long-term vision is for the portal to support home and building owners, as well as renters, in beginning their energy upgrade journey.

## Single Family Residential Q&A

Question Asked	NYSERDA Answer
Did the 17% figure apply specifically to 2024 projects? <b>(Slide 12)</b>	Yes, the 17% is specific to 2024. Historically, around 20% of projects were located in NYC before the pandemic, but during and after the pandemic, this rate dropped, with last year's figure closer to 15%. The rate has since increased to 17% this year.
Is there tracking of customer satisfaction regarding comfort and maintenance costs after receiving a heat pump?	Efforts are underway, including a survey currently in progress for EmPower+ participants.
The HER program requires proof of a 20% home efficiency improvement to qualify for incentives. How is it being tracked, and is it based on a post-install survey? <b>(Slide 28)</b>	It is based on an energy simulation of the home, comparing the existing condition with the post-install condition. This modeling is conducted at the beginning of the project.
Who is responsible for conducting the modeling of home efficiency improvements in HER? <b>(Slide 28)</b>	The modeling is part of the energy auditing process, which is standardized throughout.

Are IRA rebates applied at the end of the year? <b>(Slide 27)</b>	Rebates are point-of-sale. Although the HEAR program requires point-of-sale rebates, HER does not, but both are processed as point-of-sale.
How quickly are point-of-sale rebates processed for contractors? <b>(Slide 29)</b>	Contractors receive the rebate within two weeks after invoicing.
Is there an option for non-instant rebates, such as a mailed coupon?	In the HEAR program, rebates are only point-of-sale. For HER, it is theoretically possible, but the program is not currently designed that way.
What does “Tier 3” mean in relation to available incentives before and after the IRA HEAR deployment? <b>(Slide 27)</b>	Tier 3 refers to households with incomes between 60% and 80% of the Area Median Income.
Is the Appliance Upgrade Program available only through retail, and are there plans to allow contractors to sell through distribution? <b>(Slide 29)</b>	Contractors who perform installations can participate, and there is a program notice opportunity for contractors to sign onto the program.
Are there opportunities for cross-promotion with other electrification measures?	Cross-promotion with other electrification measures is the program’s intent.

## Multifamily Updates

### Multifamily Residential Program (5+ Units)

Brian Cabezas, Program Manager of the Multifamily team at NYSERDA, described the current market collaborations with affordable housing agencies, which provide technical assistance and incentives for additional scopes of work in multifamily residential buildings with five or more units. These collaborations aim to support energy efficiency upgrades and broader adoption of clean energy solutions within the affordable housing sector.

### New Program Launches for IRA Multifamily Programs

Brian discussed the upcoming launch of the Multifamily Residential Energy Pathways (MREP) program, which will serve as an umbrella program designed to standardize processes across multiple multifamily energy programs. MREP will unify various elements, including a common application, an incentive award letter, and standardized terms and conditions, where applicable. This program is scheduled for launch in early 2025.

### MREP Participating Contractor Network

A new contractor network will be established for MREP, expanding the pool of contractors across various service categories. This network is set to launch in fall 2025.

### HEAR and HER Eligibility Criteria for Multifamily Programs

- To qualify for HEAR (Home Energy Assistance Rebate) and HER (Home Energy Rebate) incentives within multifamily programs, NYSERDA anticipates the following criteria:
  - Statewide Availability: Funds will be available statewide regardless of System Benefits Charge (SBC) status, provided the income threshold is met.
  - Funding Integration: Programs are designed to allow for “braiding” or layering with other funding sources, where applicable.
  - Scope of Work: The heat pump system must cover at least 50% of the building's heating load, with the project scope encompassing the entire residential space.
  - Eligible Customers: Program participants will include building owners and property management companies.
  - Mixed-Use Buildings: Upgrades must exclusively service the residential portion of a mixed-use building, with rules prohibiting upgrades to commercial spaces.
  - Cost Considerations: In compliance with DOE requirements, supported work should not pose an “unacceptable risk of raising utility bills” when transitioning to electric heating.

Brian emphasized that these multifamily programs are structured with building owners in mind, considering the full building and ensuring upgrades are holistic and financially viable for residential tenants.

### Multifamily Q&A

Question Asked	NYSERDA Answer
How do multifamily programs interact with the Clean Heat program? <b>(Slide 20)</b>	This is currently an active issue. Refer to the utilities involved, as there has been a recent change. Previously, funds could be layered across programs, but this policy has recently shifted. Program materials are being updated to reflect these changes.
Why were architects and engineers not listed among various roles and occupations for the MREP Participating Contractor network? <b>(Slide 21)</b>	The list represents roles based on required certification, labeled under the term "energy assessor."

### Presentation Q&A

Question Asked	NYSERDA Answer
How is electrical work for heat pump installations addressed, given that installers often exclude it from their proposals? How does the point-of-sale rebate program help customers find electrical contractors, and who handles performance-based calculations?	For electrical service upgrades, some participating retailers have in-house staff available through the program. For single-family projects, contractors conduct modeling and calculations, while technical assessments for multifamily projects are performed by energy assessors. The cost of assessments for HER projects is

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	covered by the program, with a linear approach applied for extended projects.
Are EmPower+ applications necessary, or are existing clients automatically included?	EmPower+ is integrated, so previous applicants are already eligible. There is no retroactive application option; new applications open on May 3rd.
How does the point-of-sale program facilitate customer access to electrical contractors, given that heat pump contractors often exclude electrical work?	Some onboarded retailers have staff to manage electrical upgrades. Heat pump installations through EmPower+ are included as part of a comprehensive proposal, which may involve subcontractors or retailer staff.
Who handles performance-based project calculations?	Contractors manage HER and HEAR audits for single-family homes, while multifamily projects receive additional services. For projects extending beyond assessments, a linear implementation approach is applied.
What challenges do contractors face in joining the EmPower program, and can heat pump opportunities be accessed directly?	Participation in EmPower is required, and there is no heat pump-only path. Cross-referral opportunities exist for heat pump and shell contractors, but heat pumps cannot be installed independently without accompanying shell improvements.
Are there alignment requirements for home assessments in HER and multifamily programs, especially when multiple assessments may be needed?	FlexTech energy audits can be used without needing a Level 2 assessment. Contractors already in the EmPower+ network have fewer technical requirements for HER and weatherization assessments.
Can contractors without back-office operations use aggregators in HER and HEAR programs?	A responsible contractor must oversee the project. Aggregators may work as subcontractors if they assume responsibility, but the primary contractor remains accountable.
What is the timeline for point-of-sale rebates, and is there assistance for customers facing extra costs?	Point-of-sale rebates require pre-application income verification. Customers can receive a coupon upon approval, and an implementation contractor handles this process. A pilot program for last-mile assistance, targeting 2,000 homes, is planned for next year.
Have processes been streamlined for third-party contractors?	NYSERDA has made improvements to simplify processes, supporting customers and clarifying funding allocations. For heat pump-related panel wiring work, retailers can confirm eligibility, and customers may qualify for rebates based on financial criteria.
How can the ground-source heat pump community, with additional construction needs like drilling, be engaged?	This topic may be addressed through a dedicated working group or climate forum. While air-source heat pumps are prioritized in IRA, support for ground-source heat pumps is being explored.
Can Con Edison programs be combined with NYSERDA offerings for low-income customers expecting heat pumps at no cost?	Due to a recent policy change, Con Edison programs cannot be combined with HEAR. Previously, supplemental funding was available for lower-income customers, but this has shifted with HEAR deployment.

Are there natural gas inclusions for low-to-moderate-income (LMI) customers?	This rule is still in place, but further discussions are needed to assess the impact on homeowners’ energy bills and to manage budget constraints.
Is the program’s pricing model, based on historical prices, viable for the next 15 years, and can it include a 20% savings?	The shared goal is to make heat pumps accessible to some gas customers, but further dialogue is necessary.
Do IRA rebates add funds beyond EmPower+, and are eligibility requirements tied to project costs?	Contractors conduct an energy audit with customers to define the project scope, which is evaluated through NYSERDA’s workflow system. This determines final eligibility, and a portal is being developed to help contractors make preliminary estimates.
Is NYSERDA satisfied with levels of HVAC contractor enrollment given challenges in encouraging enrollment?	The program is maintaining a good pace. It focuses on full-load improvements for entire buildings, not just partial-load upgrades.
How are contractor cash flow issues being addressed, particularly with payment delays and NYC-specific challenges?	NYSERDA aims to process payments within two weeks, though efforts are underway to explore gap financing options for small contractors. Discussions are focused on addressing challenges in urban environments, including the needs of small multifamily buildings, through ongoing market assessments.

## Breakout Session #1: Downstate Barriers Breakout Session

### Breakout Room 1: Session 1

*Trevor introduced the 5 Whys analysis approach, guiding participants through a structured problem exploration to identify root causes behind challenges in program design for residential electrification.*

#### Problem Statement

Program design lacks sufficient consideration for the complexity of challenges faced by landlords and residents in small multifamily buildings.

#### 5 Whys Analysis

**First Why:** Why aren’t landlords motivated to implement electrification and efficiency improvements?

- Landlords, particularly in smaller buildings, often perceive limited financial benefit from these upgrades. The “split incentive” issue means that while landlords bear the upfront costs, tenants primarily benefit from reduced utility bills, making it difficult to justify investment.
- Many landlords, especially those managing smaller buildings, are unfamiliar with the intricacies of electrification. Unlike larger property managers, they may lack the resources to navigate complex processes.

- Regulatory complexities in areas like NYC further discourage participation. With numerous requirements and potential costs related to compliance, landlords face additional financial and logistical hurdles.
- The high cost of living in New York adds to the reluctance, as landlords face ongoing financial pressures that may take priority over energy upgrades.
- Existing incentives are often inadequate to fully offset the high upfront costs for these upgrades, particularly for low-to-moderate-income (LMI) properties, leaving landlords with a significant financial burden.
- Many landlords also experience confusion and lack guidance on how to begin the process of electrification, further diminishing engagement.

**Second Why:** Why are incentives perceived as insufficient?

- Current incentives often don't fully cover the actual costs of electrification projects, especially when they involve additional expenses like electrical upgrades or deferred maintenance issues, which are common in older buildings.
- Landlords need a clear financial case, including projections on long-term cost savings, to justify participation. For many, the return on investment is unclear, with concerns that savings may not be enough to offset the initial expenditure.
- The process is burdensome from start to finish, with complex paperwork and unclear steps, discouraging those who might otherwise participate. The lack of straightforward support exacerbates the challenge.
- Marketing materials are often left to contractors, meaning the program's value isn't communicated effectively to potential participants. Contractors may not have the resources or motivation to deliver a consistent message.
- Many participants view the incentives as one-time benefits and question the long-term value, especially if incentives are reduced or removed in the future. This uncertainty about continuity affects decision-making.
- Technology risk, including concerns over the reliability and longevity of new equipment like heat pumps, further deters participation. If systems fail or require costly repairs, landlords may be left with increased expenses.

**Third Why:** Why does the application and participation process create additional challenges?

- The steps to qualify for incentives are often lengthy and complex, deterring landlords who lack the time or resources to manage a complex application. Automation could simplify access, particularly for LMI households.

- Communication gaps mean that many landlords aren't fully aware of what the programs offer or the specific steps they need to take. Inconsistent messaging further reduces engagement.
- The burden of explaining program benefits frequently falls on contractors, who may lack training or incentives to advocate for the program effectively. This limits the consistency and accuracy of the information reaching property owners.
- Landlords may perceive the program as overly complicated and inflexible, as current incentives don't allow for phased upgrades that align with typical capital planning cycles.
- The unpredictable nature of incentives also makes planning difficult, as landlords are wary of committing to a project if they fear future funding might change or be reduced.
- When buildings require extensive retrofitting, landlords face hidden risks, as opening walls often reveals additional costly issues like outdated wiring. The inability to spread these costs over time makes them difficult to manage.

**Fourth Why:** Why aren't contractors better equipped to advocate for electrification and efficiency upgrades?

- Contractors face financial challenges due to narrow profit margins and high costs in certain areas. Without better financial incentives or support, they may not have the resources to promote the program to landlords effectively.
- Certification requirements, such as those from the Building Performance Institute (BPI), can limit the number of available contractors, particularly in regions like Long Island where demand outstrips supply.
- Contractors often lack the autonomy to shape project decisions. They tend to focus on client demands rather than pushing for upgrades, especially if the process is more time-intensive and costly than traditional options.
- In high-cost areas, contractors may find it challenging to sustain their businesses on the limited incentives provided, which are not always sufficient to cover the full scope of work.
- Due to these barriers, most heat pumps installed in New York are outside of these programs, as contractors find the required process too time-consuming, further reducing program adoption.

**Fifth Why:** Why is there a lack of community-level engagement and support for these upgrades?

- Current programs focus on individual buildings rather than a community or block-level approach, which could improve buy-in by fostering collective motivation and shared benefits among neighbors.

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- A community-based model would allow for aggregated costs and efficiencies, such as bulk purchasing and coordinated vendor vetting, which could reduce overall project expenses.
- Community involvement could help overcome contractor shortages, as organized projects would draw in contractors with the promise of larger-scale jobs, incentivizing better quality and more efficient installations.
- Word of mouth within communities could drive further engagement, as residents would feel supported by peers who have already adopted these upgrades.
- A community-based approach could encourage utility involvement, as utilities might invest in areas with higher participation rates, reducing maintenance on outdated infrastructure.

### Key Takeaways

- **Develop a Business Case:** Landlords require a clear, long-term financial incentive, and program design should include competitive pricing, phased funding options, and simplified processes to encourage participation.
- **Streamline Processes:** Simplify and automate application steps for LMI households, and improve messaging materials to ensure consistent, clear communication of benefits and requirements.
- **Enhance Contractor Support:** Expand contractor incentives, adjust certification requirements to match regional demands, and provide additional support for contractors in high-cost areas.
- **Community-Based Model:** Shift toward neighborhood or block-level engagement to aggregate costs, streamline vendor selection, and drive participation through collective buy-in and utility support.
- **Policy Adjustments:** Consider both incentives and mandates, such as utility rate reforms and potential mandates on electrification, to create a more compelling environment for adoption, balancing “carrot and stick” approaches.

### Breakout Room 1: Session 2

#### Problem Statement

Program design lacks consideration for the complexity of challenges faced by landlords and residents in small multifamily buildings.

#### 5 Whys Analysis

**First Why:** Why is downstate New York slower to adopt efficiency and electrification?

- The cost of implementing electrification and efficiency upgrades is a significant deterrent, especially in a high-cost area like downstate New York, where landlords and homeowners are wary of the large upfront investments required.
- The permitting process, right-of-way issues, and navigating multiple agencies create additional burdens. This fragmented regulatory landscape is difficult for property owners to manage and adds both time and cost to project completion.
- The prevalence of multifamily properties in downstate New York introduces unique barriers, such as the “split incentive” issue, where landlords bear the costs of upgrades, while tenants benefit from energy savings. Smaller landlords in particular may lack the resources or sophistication to navigate these upgrades, leading to lower adoption rates.

**Second Why:** Why is there a lack of confidence in electrification and heat pump technology?

- Failures of heat pump technology in the 1970s and 1980s have left many residents with a deep-rooted belief that these systems will fail, especially during cold weather. This legacy has become culturally ingrained, particularly among long-term NYC residents.
- Many residents question whether the economic benefits of electrification are worth the investment, leading to skepticism. This perception can be both real and perceived, as the potential savings and reliability of the technology aren’t always clear.
- Although the concept of a green economy is more prevalent in downstate than upstate, skepticism surrounding heat pump reliability and efficiency remains strong. This skepticism becomes a cultural phenomenon that affects public perception, as past failures fuel current doubts.
- Clear and straightforward consumer marketing on the benefits and performance of these technologies is lacking, meaning many residents do not feel confident in electrification. Without consistent information, it is difficult to overcome these ingrained doubts.

**Third Why:** Why is there an over-reliance on contractors for program information and adoption?

- Contractors are expected to both install and educate, but this dual role isn’t always effective. Contractors may not have the resources or expertise to serve as both educators and installers, leading to inconsistent messaging and gaps in consumer understanding.
- The duality of contractors means some prioritize cost over quality, while others may deliver high-quality installations but at a higher price. This inconsistency creates a lack of trust, as residents wonder if they are receiving the best service or simply the cheapest option.

- Currently, there is no systematic method of delivering consistent messaging about electrification. NYSERDA, as a government agency, could potentially serve as a trusted source, but without a coordinated approach, the messaging remains fragmented. Residents may not know whether to trust contractors, media, grassroots organizations, or NYSERDA itself.
- Many homeowners and landlords need validation from multiple reliable sources before making decisions. The absence of consistent information from diverse sources leads to confusion and reinforces skepticism. Hard-selling approaches often backfire, as residents are more receptive to a suggestive, supportive approach.

**Fourth Why:** Why is there insufficient cross-sector engagement to streamline messaging and support?

- Utilities, which have established relationships with customers, could play a significant role in educating consumers about the financial and environmental benefits of electrification. However, their involvement in consumer education has been minimal, leaving contractors as the primary communicators.
- Messaging lacks clarity and simplicity. Effective communication would include transparent bill comparisons and an energy breakdown in the home, helping residents understand where savings could occur. Without these insights, consumers find it difficult to see the tangible benefits of electrification.
- The current structure places the responsibility of program communication almost entirely on contractors. Programs like EmPower can be difficult for contractors to navigate, and expecting them to also educate consumers can dilute the message.
- In the absence of a unified advisory or working group, stakeholders lack organized support to ensure consistent, aligned messaging. This gap creates an environment where each group—utilities, agencies, contractors—acts independently, leaving consumers with mixed messages.

**Fifth Why:** Why does the lack of a strong advisory or working group hinder electrification efforts?

- There is a need for a central group that includes utilities, NYSERDA, contractors, and community organizations to ensure coordinated outreach and engagement efforts. Without this, the fragmented approach leaves consumers confused and skeptical.
- Utilities, NYSERDA, and contractors need clear roles in influencing and educating consumers about electrification. A cross-sector body would provide a framework for these roles, ensuring accountability and preventing overlap or gaps in messaging.

- Utilities have a vested interest in modernizing energy usage but lack structured incentives to encourage electrification adoption. By working with other groups, utilities could support neighborhood-based outreach and even structure rates to reward electrification efforts.
- Without a coordinated body to back up messages with credibility and authority, consumers struggle to trust that electrification measures will benefit them economically. An advisory group could serve as a unified voice, increasing trust and ensuring that electrification is presented as a reliable, community-endorsed option.
- A centralized group could promote community-level adoption initiatives, allowing residents to feel a sense of collective involvement and reducing costs through economies of scale. This approach would encourage both utility involvement and a stronger sense of community, increasing adoption rates by fostering a supportive network.

## Key Takeaways

- **Develop Clear, Accessible Communication:** Create simple, direct marketing materials and consumer education campaigns that clearly explain the benefits, reliability, and potential savings of electrification. Avoid placing the burden solely on contractors for this messaging.
- **Engage Utilities as Key Educators:** Use utilities' established customer relationships to provide comparative billing and community-level energy assessments. This will make financial benefits more tangible and reinforce the advantages of electrification.
- **Establish a Cross-Sector Advisory Group:** Form a central advisory group with representatives from utilities, NYSERDA, contractors, and community organizations to ensure aligned, consistent messaging and provide a trusted, unified voice.
- **Address Historical Skepticism with Trust-Building Initiatives:** Launch targeted campaigns to overcome past technology failures by showing how modern systems differ and are more reliable, thereby addressing culturally ingrained skepticism.
- **Promote Community-Based Electrification Programs:** Adopt a neighborhood-level approach to drive adoption through cost-sharing, local engagement, and the support of a broader community. This method would increase buy-in, particularly in dense areas like NYC, by normalizing electrification through shared goals and collective benefits.

## Breakout Session #2: Non-Technical Barriers to Heat Pump Adoption – Breakout Room 2

### Summary

#### Concerns Identified

- **Cost and Affordability:** Ensuring upgrades remain affordable is critical to driving adoption.
- **User Awareness and Trust:** Misconceptions surrounding program goals create barriers. Effective education and communication strategies are needed to build trust among potential adopters.
- **Application Complexity:** Multiple applications and gaps in funding create challenges for users trying to access programs and incentives. Streamlining this process is necessary.
- **Multifamily vs. Single-Family Trends:** Addressing electrification for both multifamily and single-family properties is complex. Even for NYSERDA, identifying and matching contractors to projects can be challenging, signaling a need for improved mapping and matchmaking tools.
- **Education Challenges:** Consumers often rely on contractor advice, which can be inconsistent. Some contractors may promote heat pumps enthusiastically, while others advise sticking with traditional furnaces. Neutral, unbiased advice is essential for informed consumer decision-making.
- **Contractor Considerations:** On-the-job training, managing workforce turnover, licensing concerns, and financial pressures are key issues. Legacy technology proponents sometimes undercut the market, complicating efforts for those promoting newer technologies.

#### Proposed Solutions

- **Education and Trust-Building:** Initiatives should target both tenants and homeowners, focusing on building science and offering educational resources. A trusted, pre-qualified list of contractors who can visit homes and explain the benefits and changes in systems would help increase confidence in adopting new technologies.
- **Funding Navigation Tools:** Development of a common application or comprehensive training programs for understanding funding options would be beneficial. This would support both those within and outside of existing funding structures.
- **Coalition Building:** Implementing neighborhood-scale initiatives to address electrification comprehensively would increase community buy-in and streamline efforts.

- **Addressing Costs:** Both capital expenditure (CapEx) and operational expenditures (OpEx) must be considered. Encouraging consumers to invest in long-term solutions is challenging given the fluctuation of commodity prices. Strategies like Massachusetts' heat pump winter rate could reassure adopters by reducing perceived cost risks.

### Visual Reference Tables from Activity

Matrices completed by participants during the conversation are included here for reference. Identifying details related to the participants are omitted. Some corrections for spelling and punctuation have been made for clarity.

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# Scenario Matrix

Top 4 Concerns Here ----->



Category for Enabling Solutions #1

People



Solution #1

Contractor network for building science education · These contractors work in partnership with utility representatives for onsite education for building tenants · System information + benefits · What's changing \_ Why · Tenant/Resident Resources

Category for Enabling Solutions #2

Policies



Solution #2

Tool to connect funding programs/sources · Trainings on what each program does · Overlapping programs/What can we couple up?

Category for Enabling Solutions #3

Market Support



Category for Enabling Solutions #4

Wildcard



# Scenario Matrix

## Top 4 Concerns Here ----->

I'd like to do something, but how do I know where to start and who to trust

Multifamily coops make decisions collectively. There is no consensus about what to do

Educate consumers on the benefits of electrification

On-the-job training. Current programs support new employees only

How do we engage neighborhoods, local governments, utilities, financial institutions to come together and promote electrification

Operating costs/Uncertainty

Cost of ownership - Utility rates

Category for Enabling Solutions #1

People

There are so few completed projects in buildings like mine that we can't see/feel how it would work

Who do customers get advice from?

Contractor: Don't want to deal with rebates

Bill increases and how to manage

How can I afford to do 'this?'

Is it cost effective? How long till it pays back?

Category for Enabling Solutions #2

Policies

Too many qualifications. How do we simplify to explain to the homeowner/contractor the qualifications of the program

Licensing for HVAC. Keeps pressure on the market with low cost alternates. Gas furnace and A/Cs that throw off HP benefits analysis

Category for Enabling Solutions #3

Market Support

Complicated process to participate in programs

Heat pump + Education + Limitations + Reliability + Cost of ownership

Tech hybridization

Product manufacturers - Programs come and go, should we invest in products for the market?

Category for Enabling Solutions #4

Wildcard

# Top 3 Solutions

Solution #1

Heat pump electrification

Solution #2

Utility rates that promote electrification special rates in winter

Solution #3

NYS HVAC · Licensing or other policy that levels the field for legit HVAC contractors

# Scenario Matrix

Top 4 Concerns Here ----->

## Contractor

Old open permits on homes

High cost of doing business in NY - from local time to labor and materials

Contractor training

Inconsistency in incentive availability creates different unacceptability risk to participation

Cost to contractors to participate in programs is too high

Repair current system vs replace (financing)

Too much confusion as to available incentives

Misconception about technological performance among contractors

Contractors comfortable with existing models

The home is a very personal intimate space, people don't want intruders

People are afraid of change

Cost vs Current Source

Heat pumps are more expensive to maintain + repair

Uncertainty about gas vs electric prices in the future

A lack of incentive program components that are standardized both within and across states

Long history of racism + disinvestment for LMI

Too much confusion as to the technology

Category for Enabling Solutions #1

People

Roadshow/C contractor engagement

Trainings (early on)

Change: People need a word of mouth - Success stories focused on numbers

Contractor must be early adopters

Category for Enabling Solutions #2

Policies

Solution: Implement workforce developmental programs for contractors

Role for aggregators in programs

Mini-splits not attractive on outside or inside of my home

Severe storms cause power outages but no disruption to my generator

Direct electrical credits for businesses inside or outside of home, specify energy efficiency incentives for electrification

Coordinate websites with other stakeholders

Uncertainty regarding policies or lack of continued support in DACs

Category for Enabling Solutions #3

Market Support

Program able to support higher velocity from contractors

Repair/Replace - Break fix

Market-cost concerns: Identify expensive heating houses

Knowledge about total cost of ownership + operation

No-cost loan to add solar to electrification projects

Category for Enabling Solutions #4

Wildcard

Program consistency over time

Electricity unreliable not supply

Maintenance needed

Heat pumps not being installed for weatherization

Electricity aggregators are working much more than just with HVAC service aggregators are being used

# Top 2 Solutions

Solution #1

1. Program design
2. Customer eligibility
3. Data simplification

Solution #2

1. More collaborative market engagement. NYSERDA/CBO/Hub/Local efforts (Myenergy)

1. Finance + Add rebate \$

# Scenario Matrix

Top 4 Concerns  
Here ----->

Contractor concerns -  
equipment +  
differences - Admin  
burdens - Educating  
customers and calming  
customer fears

Expensive upfront  
mistrust in contractor  
recommendations -  
Programs available for  
LMI do not cover  
enough skill

Customers don't  
believe in  
technology.  
Have many  
misconceptions

Constant changes  
in policy,  
unpredictable,  
confusing  
programs

Category for Enabling Solutions #1

People

Category for Enabling Solutions #2

Policies

Category for Enabling Solutions #3

Market  
Support

Category for Enabling Solutions #4

Wildcard

CBOs and  
bottom up  
approach

Program  
design/Red  
tape

NYSERDA  
requirements

# Top 2 Solutions

Solution #1

Communication  
all

Solution #2

Transparency  
in program

# Scenario Matrix

Top 4 Concerns Here ----->

	<p>Need for electrification friendly electric rates</p> <p>Billing challenges for heating/cooling with heatpump installs</p> <p>Tenants resistance to taking on heating costs responsibility</p>	<p>Understanding installing heat pumps is not 1- to-1 replacement for fossil systems</p> <p>Lack of time or energy or access to gain knowledge insight about these systems (fundamentally different systems)</p>	<p>Technological challenges</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No maintenance contracts</li> <li>Need for more improved maintenance</li> </ul>	<p>Hard to find a trusted contractor</p> <p>One track of undercutting heat pump market by offering low cost traditional systems skews HP cost benefit equation</p>	<p>Uncertainty of risk/payoff and use of new tech</p> <p>Ability to control heat is new for many tenants – need education on temperature set points</p>
Category for Enabling Solutions #1	<p>Change in electrical rates</p> <p>Increased utility costs</p> <p>Increased operation costs</p>		<p>Education</p> <p>Educate contractors on short and long term heat pump functioning and their special licenses</p>	<p>Access to contractors</p>	<p>Unions!</p> <p>Fear of the unknown (wait and see)</p>
Category for Enabling Solutions #2		<p>Winter heat pump reduced electricity rate</p> <p>New rates for electrification</p> <p>Reduced rates for adoption</p>		<p>Maintenanc e/Contracts /Incentives</p> <p>Prioritizing of union work – lack of training for non-union shops</p>	<p>Workforce development programs for existing technicians</p>
Category for Enabling Solutions #3	<p>Marketing on CLCPA energy goals</p>		<p>Dedicated co-op funds geared towards education between homeowners/energy offhoo awareness (see the hub)</p>		
Category for Enabling Solutions #4	<p>Total cost of ownership consideration of many utility costs not enough discussion on potential value in 100 years</p>				

# Top 3 Solutions

**Solution #1**

CLCPA implementing agencies pass countering policies

**Solution #2**

The utility funding to phasing out fossil fuel infrastructure and build for transition future (thoughtfully)

**Solution #3**

Pass NY Heat

## Additional Insights and Key Takeaways

### Networks of Support

- **Vetted Contractor Networks:** Establishing networks similar to the Clean Heat contractor list and trade association collaborations can provide vetted, certified contractors to serve as consumer advocates. This would create a sense of security for customers and encourage cohesion and collaboration among contractors, instead of competition over market share. Building performance and HVAC expertise would be prioritized within these networks.

### Education Efforts

- **Person-to-Person Approaches:** Despite the prevalence of social media, traditional word-of-mouth remains highly effective. Personal interactions and community-based outreach can play a pivotal role in building trust and driving adoption.
- **Contractor Time Constraints:** Contractors often have limited time for extensive consumer education, underscoring the need for efficient and supportive educational tools and strategies.

### Advisory Role for Homeowners

- **Independent Advisory Support:** The goal is to serve as impartial advisors, providing reliable, unbiased strategies to homeowners. Ensuring that advice remains impartial builds trust and positions advisors as dependable guides in the decision-making process. Only about 40% of homeowners currently proceed with these solutions, highlighting the importance of this support.

## Breakout Session #3: Renter Barriers

The following summarizes responses provided across both sessions.

### Identified Barriers

- **Split Incentives for Renters and Landlords:** Renters often face challenges with split incentives, where investments in energy efficiency and electrification by landlords do not directly lower renters' energy bills. This creates a perceived lack of value and misaligned incentives.
- **Ageing Housing Stock:** Much of the housing stock, particularly buildings constructed before 1960, may require significant repairs, making upgrades infeasible. Landlords fear the potential for unforeseen issues, such as structural or historical compliance requirements, leading to increased costs.

- **Trust and Awareness Issues:** Misconceptions around program goals, limited trust, and a lack of awareness among renters—particularly in areas like Nassau County, where many low-to-moderate income (LMI) residents are unfamiliar with NYSERDA—contribute to disinterest or disengagement.
- **Complexity and Accessibility of Programs:** Engaging landlords, who vary widely in their interests, building ownership models, and levels of engagement, is challenging. Property managers, often separate from landlords, present another layer to navigate. The diverse needs and incentives for large versus small landlords further complicate efforts.
- **Contractor and Education Gaps:** Contractors may provide conflicting advice, with some endorsing traditional heating systems over modern clean energy options. On-the-job training, licensing challenges, and financial pressures also contribute to gaps in consistent, reliable contractor recommendations.
- **Board and Stakeholder Buy-In:** Co-op boards and other stakeholders often resist implementing energy upgrades, even after energy audits and recommendations. Barriers include concerns about upfront costs, complexity, perceived risks, and the irreversible nature of certain changes. A lack of real-world examples demonstrating success further hinders progress.
- **Consumer Education and Awareness:** Many residents are unaware of the benefits of energy efficiency improvements, including increased comfort, health, and safety. Outreach efforts must emphasize these tangible benefits and address common misconceptions, particularly in co-ops, condos, and low-to-moderate income (LMI) communities.
- **Economic Challenges:** The cost of meeting energy efficiency requirements, such as those under Local Law 97 (LL97), can be prohibitive for many residents and building owners, with average upgrade costs estimated at \$30,000 per household.

### Proposed Solutions

- **Education and Trust-Building Initiatives:** Developing resources that explain building science and system changes to both tenants and homeowners, supported by trusted, pre-qualified contractors who can educate in-home. Building trust and understanding of clean energy benefits is a critical step.
- **Funding Navigation Tools:** Tools that connect property owners with appropriate funding options, potentially through a common application process or tailored training, would help simplify decision-making.

- **Neighborhood-Level Coalition Building:** Targeting entire neighborhoods at once could streamline efforts, create economies of scale, and build community buy-in for energy upgrades.
- **Addressing Costs with Transparent Value Propositions:** Providing tools that clearly outline the potential savings and long-term value of energy investments would be beneficial. Massachusetts' heat pump winter rate was cited as a model to reduce the perception of a "green premium" and build consumer confidence.
- **Network and Support System Development:** Creating vetted contractor networks, including trade associations and consumer advocates, would help ensure quality work and provide confidence to consumers. Cohesion and collaboration among weatherization contractors and HVAC professionals are vital to this effort.
- **Energy Coach Model:** Rather than relying solely on contractors, employing "energy coaches" who can offer impartial, strategic advice to homeowners could increase adoption and trust.
- **Enhanced Consumer Education and Outreach:** Implement broad public education campaigns to increase awareness and understanding of clean energy initiatives. Efforts should use multiple channels, including utility websites, physical mailers, and in-person demonstrations, to reach diverse communities.
  - Example: New York City's successful curbside composting rollout, which used various communication methods, could serve as a model.
- **Tailored Incentives for Landlords:** Offering tax credits, simplified access to incentives, and targeted financing options can encourage landlords to participate in energy efficiency initiatives. Incentives should align with landlords' interests and demonstrate long-term value.
- **Transparent Utility Billing:** Requiring landlords to disclose expected monthly energy costs for rental units may drive energy efficiency efforts and increase tenant awareness of potential savings.
- **Leveraging Real Estate Transitions:** Engaging landlords during key moments, such as property ownership changes, offers strategic opportunities for promoting energy upgrades.
- **Community-Based Engagement Models:** Collaborate with community-based organizations (CBOs) to reach tenants and landlords, build trust, and address cultural and socioeconomic barriers. This approach can create a foundation of support and increase participation in clean energy programs.
- **Demonstration Projects and Real-World Examples:** Provide opportunities for stakeholders to see and understand the benefits of energy-efficient upgrades through open houses, building tours, and maintenance staff testimonials.

Additional Considerations and Themes:

- **Targeting and Engaging Landlords:** Direct outreach and resources tailored to landlords are necessary. Developing toolkits and worksheets to simplify energy upgrades and providing incentives tied to average rental prices or other metrics could make participation more attractive.
- **Concierge and Energy Coach Approaches:** Consider using community-based organizations (CBOs) for outreach to tenants and landlords, promoting sensitivity to unique community needs, such as undocumented populations. Concierge-style services could act as connectors between stakeholders and provide streamlined engagement.
- **Policy and Incentive Structures:** Exploring different incentive structures based on consumption and savings, rather than income, could encourage broader participation. Ensuring communication is clear, transparent, and emphasizes both comfort and financial benefits is key.
- **Overcoming Skepticism and Fear:** Addressing concerns about electrification reliability and costs, often exacerbated by negative media coverage or past bad experiences with scams, is critical. Building trust through targeted education and demonstration projects can help.
- **Leveraging Real Estate and Data Touchpoints:** Engaging property owners when properties change hands and accessing public data on building ownership and condition could create strategic opportunities for intervention.
- **Equity in Program Access:** Ensure that incentives and programs extend to all income levels, with a focus on moderate-income households who may be more inclined to participate due to tax incentives and other benefits.
- **Addressing Skepticism and Misinformation:** Combat negative perceptions about electrification and clean energy technologies through trusted messengers and consistent communication.
- **Data-Driven and Policy-Aligned Approaches:** Utilize available data on building ownership and condition to target outreach effectively and streamline policy requirements to align with program incentives.
- **Concierge/Energy Coach Models:** Employ dedicated energy advisors to guide building managers and homeowners through the process, providing impartial, strategic support.

Key Takeaways:

- **Incentive Restructuring:** Rethinking incentives to align with landlord and tenant needs, including tax credits and clear value propositions, is essential.

- **Targeted Education and Outreach:** Tailored messaging and trust-building, including engaging known community advocates and creating accessible resources, are necessary for success.
- **Engagement with Landlords:** Developing robust networks and incentives for landlords, property managers, and tenants will drive greater participation.
- **Next-Generation Installations:** Demonstration projects and direct install programs can showcase technology benefits, fostering wider adoption.
- **General and Specific Education:** Providing both broad educational initiatives and specialized training for contractors will support more consistent messaging and effective program delivery.
- **Restructure Incentives:** Align incentives with the unique needs of landlords, tenants, and other stakeholders to increase participation and program effectiveness.
- **Comprehensive Outreach and Education:** Develop broad public education initiatives, as well as targeted programs for specific groups, to raise awareness and drive engagement.
- **Engage Landlords Directly:** Use tailored outreach strategies and data-driven tools to connect with landlords and demonstrate the value of energy upgrades.
- **Next-Generation Demonstrations:** Increase visibility and credibility of clean energy technologies through demonstrations, tours, and real-world examples, making upgrades more relatable and accessible.
- **Equitable Program Design:** Ensure programs are accessible to all, emphasizing affordability, trust-building, and consistent support for all participants.

### Visual Reference Tables from Activity

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# Scenario Matrix

Top 4 Concerns Here ----->

Building owner invests but doesn't receive operating savings

Property sales. Time to reach owners

Sub-meter conversion cost

Concern about electricity, price, reliability and supply

Property energy, usage, disclosure, requirements

Category for Enabling Solutions #1

People

Landlord Engagement

Energy advocate: Landlord to landlord outreach (Article, speaker, one-on-one)

Work with private 3rd parties (trust, landlord returns)

Connecting people with resources

Tenant refer address to company

How to find + understand needs of landowners/landlords

Focus on how all parties can benefit, especially decision makers

Category for Enabling Solutions #2

Policies

Energy cost disclosure requirement

Category for Enabling Solutions #3

Market Support

Services that reduce hassle, especially for landlords/property managers as decision makers (little hassle for tenants)

Concierge trainings

Tax credits to reward building owner investments

Incentivize sub-meter conversion

Increase rent by expected energy savings for tenant

Inspection requirements - Records of what buildings were inspected

Payout for conversion/support landowner conversions

Rent includes upgrades minus incentives. Clarity in who is benefiting + how much

Eliminating split incentives

Landlord referral incentives

Different ways to incentivize

Solar data availability

Roof updates

Furnace install

Category for Enabling Solutions #4

Wildcard

Renter-focused solutions

Renter tech to reduce energy consumption

Kelvin steam heat corners with fans

Focus on ever resistance + oil changeouts for economic ease

# Scenario Matrix

Top 4 Concerns Here ----->

Uncertainty

Operating costs

Noise

Effectiveness

Category for Enabling Solutions #1

People

Shareholder + Co-op owner buy-in need information

Public education to prime change adjustment. Outreach, in person demonstration

Share connect to local 97

Connect environment + health factors to technology in home/Residence + flood protection

Connect to other kinds of remediation like lead paint

Unbiased energy advise/resource

Tenant education - How to use new tech - 'When it dies electrify'

New technology - heat pump alternatives

Category for Enabling Solutions #2

Policies

Restrictions on buildings/not apartment wide like local law 97

Income requirements - higher number - Area U.S. state levels

Income submissions could be anonymous - need verification process

Utility bill history disclosure requirements

Meter splits. Independent metering + smart meters

Category for Enabling Solutions #3

Market Support

Financial incentives for renters and landlords

Split incentives: Green lease (Split savings between landlord and tenant). Minimum energy efficiency standards.

Category for Enabling Solutions #4

Wildcard

EmPower+ for all buildings

## Report-Outs from Breakout Sessions

### Topic 1: Downstate Efficiency and Electrification

The discussion centered on the role of contractors in promoting clean energy upgrades. Participants debated how to create incentives that would make contractors more effective advocates for electrification and efficiency installations. The conversation addressed optimizing the contractor experience and what support structures are necessary for success. Another aspect explored was whether it is reasonable or effective to place the responsibility of educating consumers solely on contractors. Given challenges such as low public trust and a fragmented media landscape, there was concern over the feasibility of contractors serving as primary messengers. Suggestions included turning utilities into key, trusted messengers by providing structured communications, such as billing information that clearly conveys energy options and benefits.

While the group did not come to agreement on core assumptions about the challenges, the discussion highlighted how difficult it would be for an average consumer to navigate this complex space independently. Participants questioned how much responsibility should rest on a single actor, such as a contractor, and suggested creating a collaborative network of interlocking actors working together in forums to improve messaging and adoption rates.

### Topic 2: Non-Technical Barriers to Heat Pump Adoption

The discussions covered a broad range of issues, with three main themes emerging across both sessions:

- Theme A: Addressing Cost and Affordability – Solutions to increase heat pump adoption must focus on reducing costs and preserving affordability, considering not only consumer purchase decisions but also the contractor perspective and the associated installation and operational work. Ensuring that heat pumps are cost-competitive, both in terms of policy incentives and operational efficiency, is essential.
- Theme B: Building Trust and Awareness – Overcoming skepticism about adopting new technology requires a focus on trust-building through consistent and credible communications. Engaging key messengers and meeting consumers where they are can make a difference, as can coalition building and encouraging conversations with trusted community figures. Online resources, including reputable websites, may also serve as valuable sources of information. Participants acknowledged that building trust is a long-term effort, which may conflict with policy goals seeking rapid market transformation.
- Theme C: Leveraging Existing Successes – There is no need to reinvent the wheel; successful models and strategies from other states, such as Massachusetts, could be

adapted and implemented. Data sharing, on-the-job training, and certifications are examples of proven approaches that can increase adoption rates.

### Topic 3: Renters and Landlords

Discussions examined the unique challenges faced by renters and landlords in participating in efficiency programs. Landlords often struggle to access the necessary information to qualify for programs, while tenant trust is critical for information sharing. Public education and outreach efforts need to emphasize the availability and benefits of these technologies, with in-person demonstrations offering tangible examples of installations and their impact.

Data emerged as a key consideration, with suggestions to better connect available data about landlords and property characteristics to program outreach efforts. For example, solar installation data could be used to identify potential candidates for other clean energy upgrades, as these property owners may already be open to energy efficiency measures.

The split incentive issue, where landlords bear upgrade costs but tenants benefit from lower energy bills, remains a significant barrier. Approaches to address this included developing shared plans to demonstrate how incentives would play out over time and creating minimum efficiency standards for buildings to ensure progress regardless of cost-sharing dynamics.

### Closing Remarks

Trevor thanked attendees for their participation and emphasized that their discussions would shape planning for IRA programs and related initiatives, with stakeholder feedback playing a crucial role in ongoing and future efforts. He noted RMAG would use the input to inform 2025 activities and explore new collaboration opportunities. Trevor encouraged attendees to stay informed through the RMAG webpage on the NYSERDA site or by contacting the residential IRA email and referenced a slide with links to publicly available information to ensure consistency in data use. He highlighted ongoing efforts to create more stakeholder engagement opportunities and invited participants to complete the post-event survey to enhance RMAG's responsiveness and program design.