Low-Income Multi-Family Building Rebates

Nick Mark
Manager, Conservation & Renewable Energy Policy
Background & Context

• **Ongoing stakeholder discussions of EE in multi-family affordable housing**
  • 71% of households in MF buildings have income < $40k/year
  • Most utility low-income EE offerings target single-family weatherization
  • Multi-family customers require targeted programs
  • Significant savings opportunity in MF sector going unrealized

• **CenterPoint Low-Income Programs**
  • All focused on residential customers
  • Buildings with more than 5 units are metered on commercial rates
  • Small “multi-family” (duplex, quads) eligible for existing programs, but nothing for larger buildings
Multi-Family Participation in CIP

- **Eligible for wide variety of rebates**
  - Boilers, water heaters, steam traps, tune-ups, etc, etc
  - No programs specifically targeting affordable housing

- **Potential for savings is there**
  - ~7% of commercial customer count
  - ~20% of commercial gas sales
  - Average ~550 CIP participants per year (excluding audits)

- **Per ACEEE:**
  - “Natural gas heating systems (and associated building improvements to reduce heating demand) likely offer biggest energy savings potentials, but can represent substantial investments.”
What’s the Easiest Answer?

More Money!

• Extra 25% on rebates for all prescriptive measures
  • Boilers, water heaters, steam traps, tune-ups, etc, etc

• Remains cost-effective – all these measures already pass the societal test
  • Slight decrease in utility test score will hopefully be offset by higher participation

• Doesn’t address – or try to address – all the issues surrounding low-income multi-family market
Eligibility

- Commercially metered building (5+ units)
- Non-owner-occupied property serving primarily low-income tenants
- Operated by a recognized low-income housing provider
  - Government entities
  - Non-profits
  - Project-based Section 8
  - Other (case-by-case)
- Minimum 66% of units occupied by low-income households
  - DOE WAP eligibility
  - MN LIRC
  - Use Restrictions
  - Possibly others
Results?

- **Too soon to say**
  - Program started January 2013

- **Reasons for optimism:**
  - Immediately got attention when proposed – joint comments from MHFA, NHT, ACEEE, Aeon, CommonBond, MHP, MGC, Greater MN Housing Fund, Family Housing Fund
  - Working with MN Housing and others to promote to building owners, project developers
Next Steps

• **Delivery & Evaluation**
  • Program results will help us understand what, if any, changes are needed
  • Collecting more targeted data to improve future planning

• **Continued LI Policy Development**
  • DER Guidance has been helpful so far
  • As implementation proceeds, we’ll learn what’s working

• **Conversations with Participants**
  • How well do rebate programs meet their needs?
Direct Install Pilot

- Pilot Project in Collaboration with CEE

- Aiming for completion in Q3 2013

- Findings may help inform future of low-income multi-family efforts
Contact Info

Nick Mark  
CenterPoint Energy  
Manager, Conservation & Renewable Energy Policy  
(612) 321-4613  
nick.mark@centerpointenergy.com

www.CenterPointEnergy.com/LowIncomeMultiFamily