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# Helping Customers complete home energy projects

History, Context, Opportunities

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What do customers tell us they need?

Navigation in VT: a history

What are other states doing?

Current state

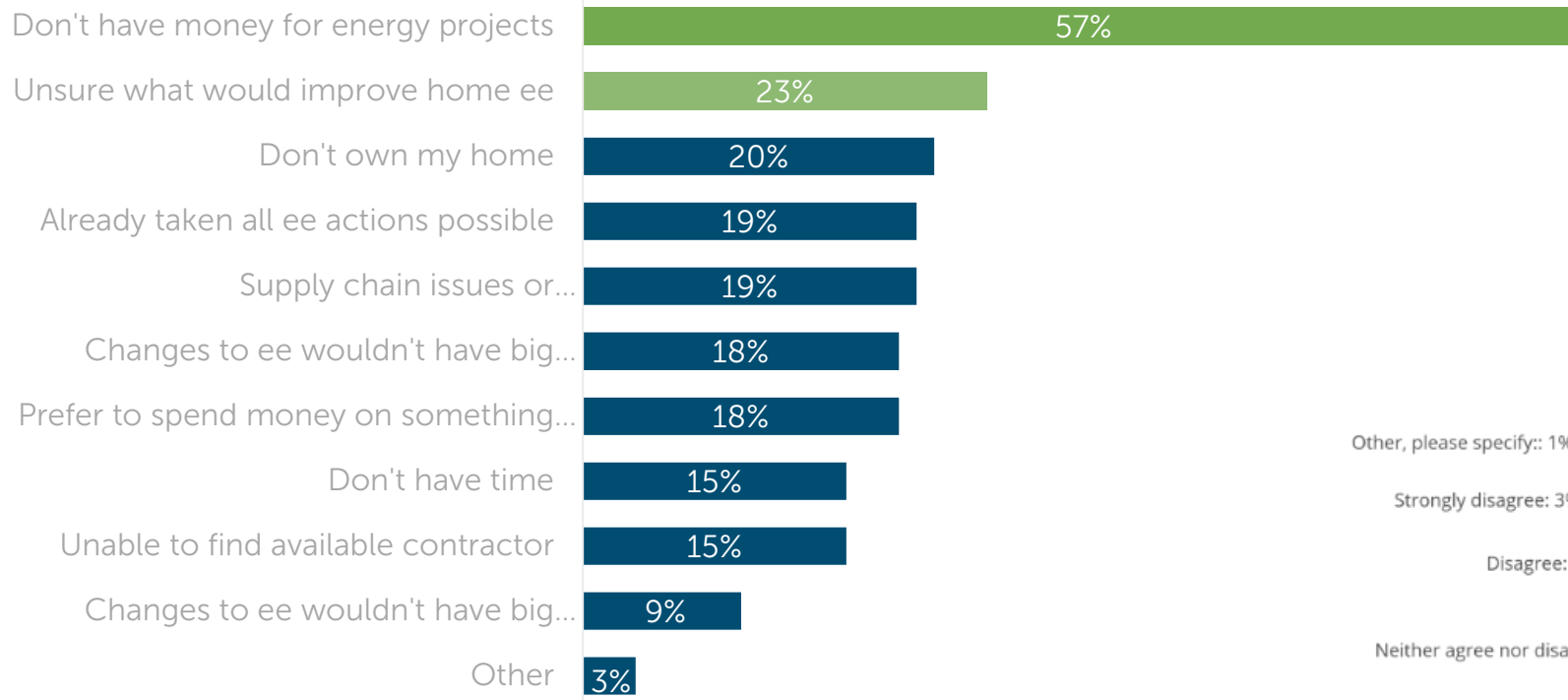
Risks & Opportunities

Our next steps & final thoughts

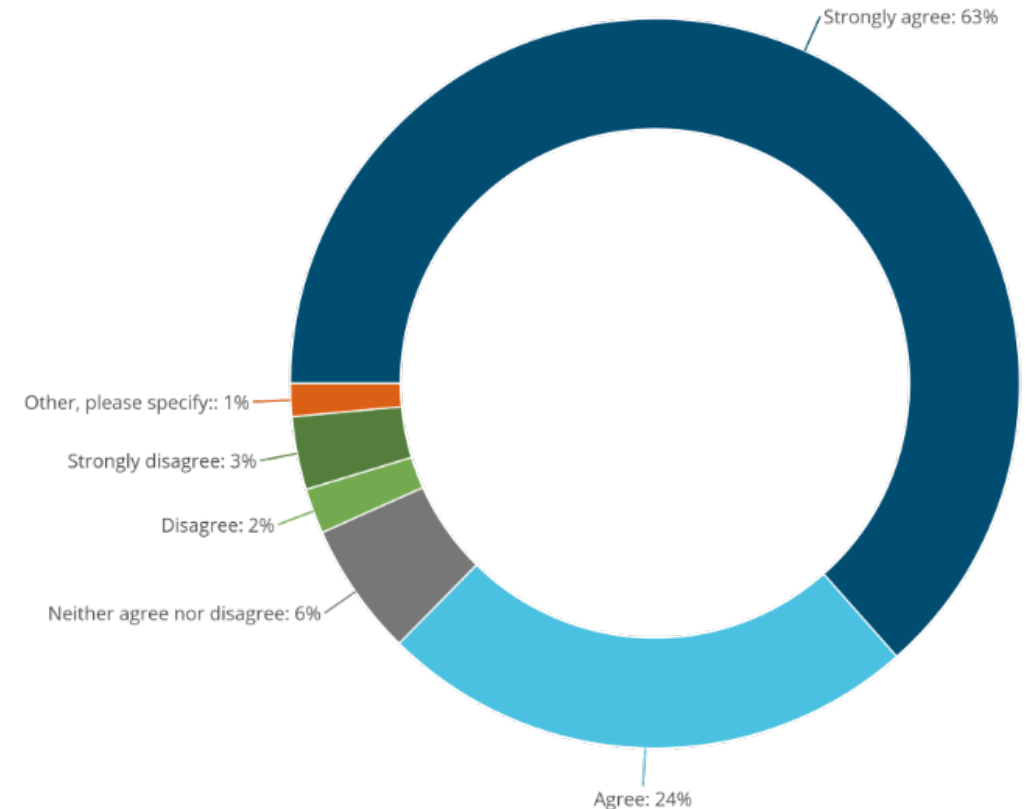
# Agenda

# What do Customers tell us?

## Biggest Barriers to completing projects?\*



Importance of 'an independent organization – which does not benefit from the sale of energy, technologies or services – in identifying and completing projects that can reduce energy costs'\*\*\*



\*2024 Efficiency Vermont annual residential customer survey (percentage of respondents citing each barrier)

\*\*2025 Stakeholder survey for Demand Resource Plan Proceeding

# Completing an Energy Efficiency Project

Customer process:

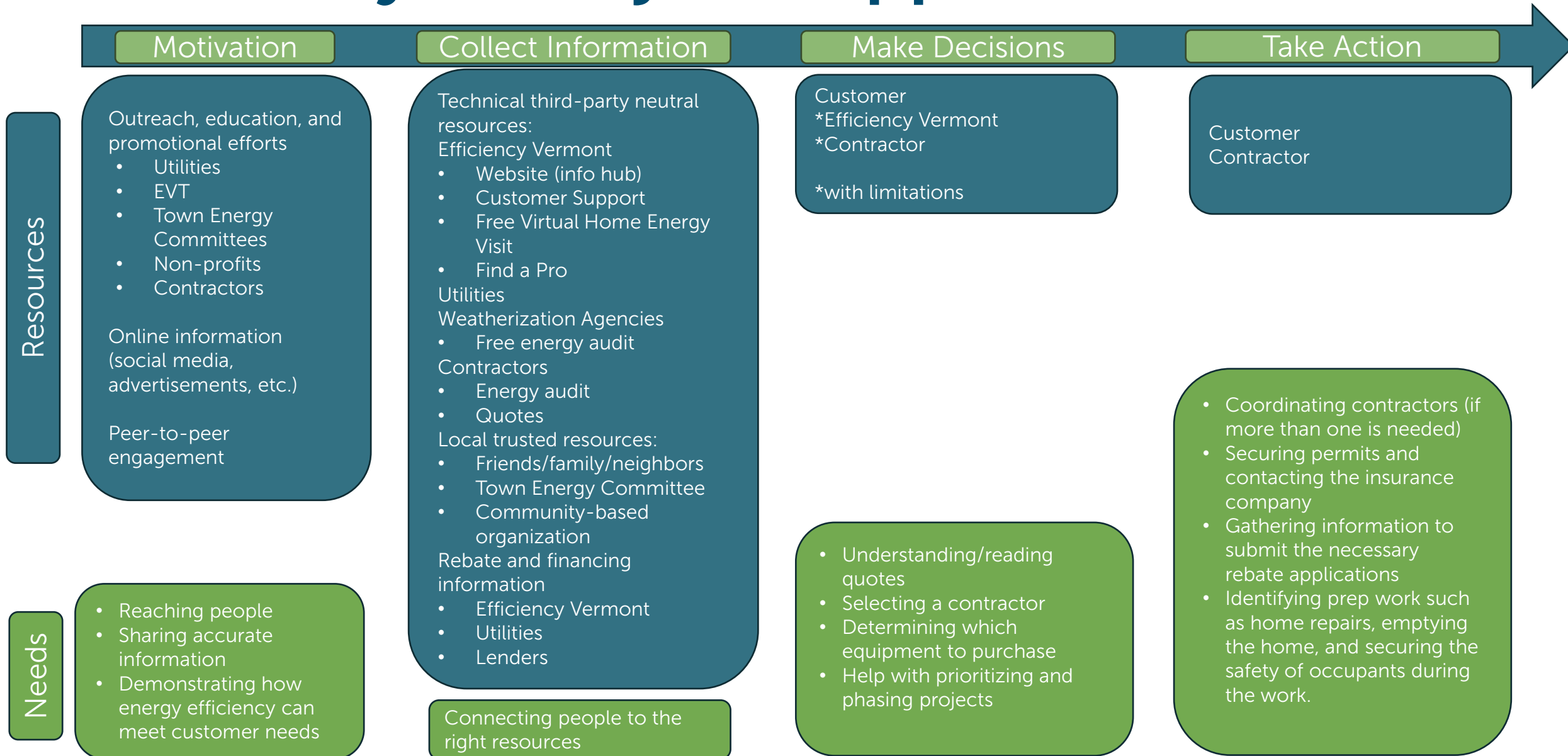
Get Motivated

Collect Information

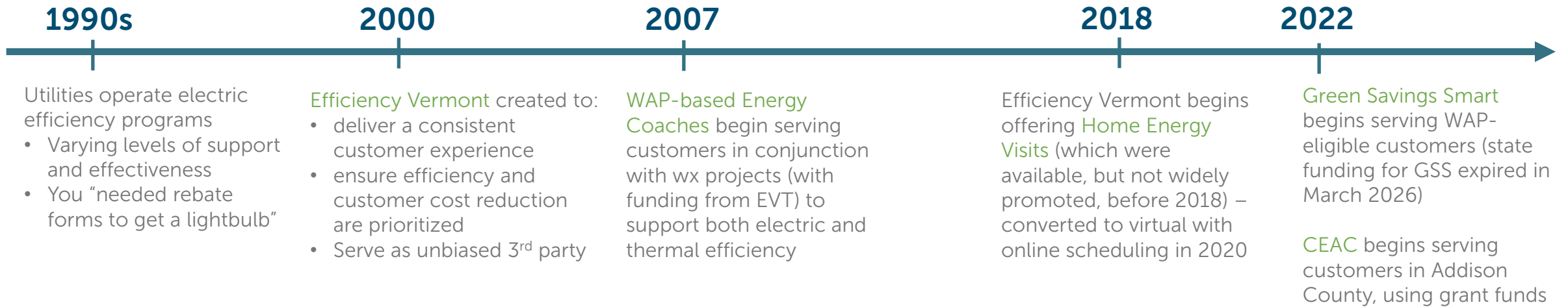
Make Decisions

Take Action

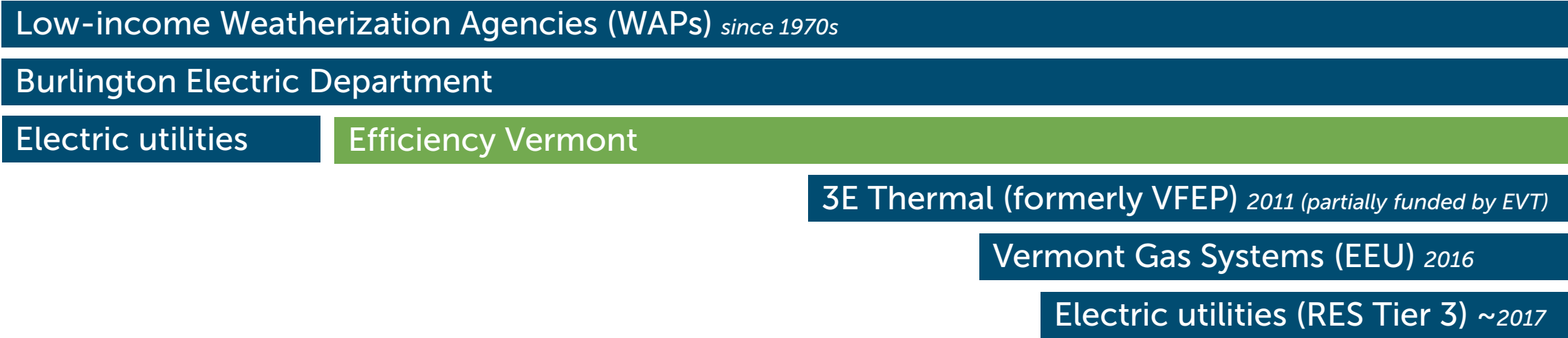
# Summary of Project Support Resources



# A brief history of “energy navigation” and energy programs in VT



Energy Program Administrators



# Relevant recent reports and findings

## Energy Savings Counseling Report

*Pursuant to Act 74*  
2021

## Energy Burden Investigation

*PUC Docket 25-0443-INV*  
2025

## Energy Navigation Network Action Team

*Energy Action Network*  
2026

### Consistent findings:

1. The cost of taking action and/or the lack of financial resources is the top barrier to completing energy efficiency projects for customers.
2. Renters are the hardest demographic to serve, as they lack the control to make upgrades to their own space, and property owners are not always motivated to invest in their properties.
3. There are already a lot of resources and tools available in Vermont to help households make energy and financial decisions.
4. It is important that anyone providing support to households in making energy upgrades has the right technical qualifications and deep knowledge of programs.

# What is happening in other states?

## Maine

Several local volunteer energy-coaching programs are active but in early stages and seeking funding.

The 2025 DOER report to the Legislature proposed three Home Energy Coaching pilot models:

- Estimated pilot costs: \$275k–\$300k for energy-coaching staff (2-year pilot) \$50k–\$100k to develop and manage a statewide resource hub

## Massachusetts

HeatSmart Alliance

- Volunteer-led non-profit that offers energy coaching/education focused on heat pumps

Mass Saves Community First Partnerships

- EEU run program that leverages local leaders for outreach and education.
- **Up to \$85k per year/per program participant.**

## New England Heat Pump Accelerator

CT, ME, MA, NH, RI joint effort to build the market for heat pumps

- Will issue 20-40 community grants of \$100k-\$400k through 2029, including for outreach and education on heat pumps & efficiency for LMI households
- Administered by VEIC for client CT Dept. of Energy and Environmental Protection

## Colorado

Power Ahead Colorado (PACO)

- Program design underway – one key goal is to provide enhanced Energy Advising and support for low-income households
- Administered by VEIC for the Denver Regional Council of Governments

Vermont has a core network of partners that work hand in hand to provide customers with the information they want and need.



# Current state in VT

Provider	Efficiency Vermont	Burlington Electric	Vermont Gas Systems	Weatherization Agencies	Electric Utilities
Customer Segments Served	All	All	All	Low-income (<80% AMI)	All
Geographic Limitations	Statewide (except BTV)	Burlington	Vermont Gas Customers	Statewide	Utility territories
1:1 Technical Assistance (engineering, HVAC, & electrical guidance, project scope review)	X	X	X	X	X
Language Translation	X	X	X	X	X
Home Energy Assessments	X		X (high-use only)	X	
Project Incentives	X	X	X	X	X
Utility Bill Evaluation	X	X	X		X
Support Securing Incentives (referrals, application preparation, etc.)	X	X	X	X	X
Project & Contractor Management			X (high-use only)	X (incl. sub-contractors)	

# Current State: Low Income Fuel Switch

Program integration leads to a seamless customer experience

WAPs share customer leads



Efficiency Vermont identifies low income HPWES customer leads



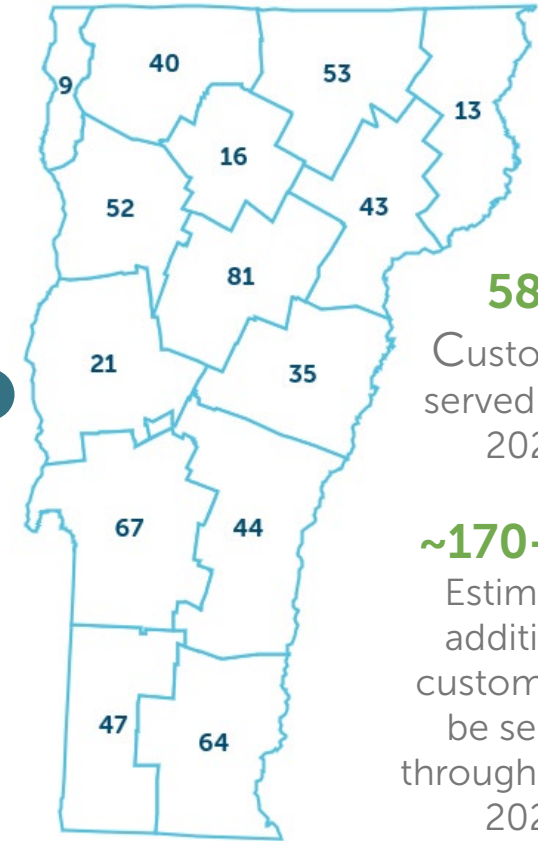
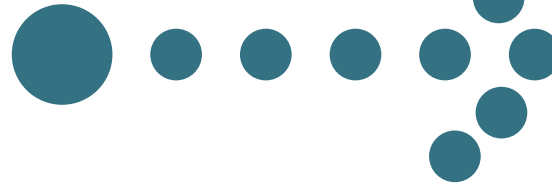
Utilities contribute Tier 3 low-income incentives (\$2500 per unit)



EEN contractors complete project & perform no cost first year system maintenance



With **one phone call**, a low-income customer who has already weatherized their home can access a heat pump to further lower their energy costs



**585**

Customers served since 2022

**~170-200**

Estimated additional customers to be served through end of 2026

# Current State: Collaboration is critical

## Why Efficiency Vermont works closely with local navigator efforts

### Risk:

#### *Negative Customer Experience Creates an Additional Barrier*

- Navigators inadvertently share incorrect program information
- Navigators share incorrect technical information
- Navigators create another step for customers in an already-complex process

### Opportunity:

#### *More customers can access programs & lower their costs*

- Navigators provide accurate program information and support the qualification process
- Navigators help more customers learn about and trust programs
- Navigators fill program gaps:
  - Scheduling and attending virtual home visits
  - Help customers obtain contractor quotes
  - Reach out proactively

### What does current collaboration look like?

- Monthly calls and trainings with nascent and established navigator programs across the state
- Provide ongoing program updates
- Help navigation volunteers address customer questions and scenarios
- Efficiency Vermont Community Engagement staff help various navigation programs connect with and learn from each other: "Navigating the navigators"

# Our Next Steps

## Collaboration will continue and evolve

- Regardless of the outcome of S. 219, Efficiency Vermont will continue to support and integrate with local and statewide partners wherever possible to ensure a seamless and supportive customer experience

## Further opportunities to improve energy program navigation and the customer experience

- We would love to explore opportunities for consolidated program qualification with WAPs, electric utilities, and others:
  - a fully optimized customer experience would likely require aligned program standards, data sharing agreements, and even coordination across CRM software
  - Partner, regulator and state government buy in to enable these improvements would be critical
- The state could take the lead on income qualification, enabling EEU and utility programs to leverage “pre-qualified” applicants for their programs and decreasing the burden on customers

# Final Thoughts for you

## Be thoughtful and careful

- When dealing with peoples' homes – particularly for vulnerable customers – we must prioritize health, safety, and the customer experience
- Respect for customer choices and privacy are also extremely important

## Please seek to address root causes – there are no easy fixes

- If: “Vermont has too many programs and they are too complicated” is your problem statement, then does creating another program really solve those issues?
- Is Vermont investing enough resources, across all energy programs, to meet its ambitious goals?