



COMMUNITY COOLING SPACES

Program Report
2022-2023

Submitted to the
OREGON LEGISLATURE

by the
**OREGON
DEPARTMENT OF
ENERGY and ENERGY
TRUST OF OREGON**

December 2023

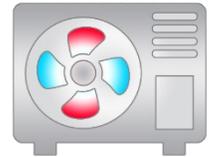


OREGON
DEPARTMENT OF
ENERGY


EnergyTrust
of Oregon

Executive Summary

The Landlord-Provided Community Cooling Spaces Program is administered by Energy Trust of Oregon at the direction of SB 1536, passed by the Oregon State Legislature in 2022. The program is overseen by the Oregon Department of Energy. SB 1536 followed the summer heat dome event of 2021, during which at least 100 Oregonians died of heat-related illness, many in their own homes. The legislation directed ODOE to provide a grant to enable the Energy Trust to assist landlords in creating or operating one or more private community cooling spaces during extreme heat events. This program supports ODOE’s mission by advancing equitable energy solutions that protect public health.



These Energy Trust incentives can cover up to 100 percent of the cost of purchase and installation of portable or non-portable air conditioning equipment that owners or managers purchase and install in a common-area cooling space on site. Funding can also be used to create a cooling space at a location within a quarter mile of the property. Qualifying equipment options may include window-based or portable air-conditioning units, heat pumps (including ductless), or hard-wired air-conditioning units. This program is for common-area cooling spaces only. Other organizations and programs are offering financial support to property managers to install in-unit cooling.

The grant agreement between ODOE and Energy Trust of Oregon was fully executed in July 2022. Energy Trust of Oregon then developed operational and marketing plans, which, per the grant agreement, were approved by ODOE. Deployment of cooling equipment followed, but uptake was slow due to weather transitioning to fall and winter along with the transition in interest from cooling to heating equipment. Energy Trust continued to deploy equipment through 2023; as of September 2023, 22 units had been installed. ODOE has since worked with Energy Trust of Oregon to develop marketing and operational strategies for increasing the rate at which equipment is installed. Further, ODOE has extended the program end-date to December 2025. This will allow Energy Trust of Oregon additional cooling seasons during which more installation can be performed.

This report is available online: <https://www.oregon.gov/energy/Data-and-Reports/Pages/Reports-to-the-Legislature.aspx>

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Program Background

In the summer of 2021, Oregon experienced a heat dome event that saw record high temperatures, during which at least 100 Oregonians died of heat-related illness — many in their own homes. Following this event, a coalition of more than 60 organizations formed to support legislative action to prevent such deaths in the future. With the coalition’s support, the Oregon Legislature passed Senate Bill 1536 in 2022. The bill had several components:

- The appropriation of \$25 million for the creation of two heat pump incentive programs: the Community Heat Pump Deployment Program and the Oregon Rental Home Heat Pump Program, both administered by the Oregon Department of Energy.
- A [Cooling Needs Study](#), which was released by the Oregon Department of Energy in December 2023.
- An emergency air conditioner deployment program administered by the Oregon Health Authority.
- A rebate program run by Energy Trust of Oregon to help landlords cool shared spaces.

This report outlines progress on the Landlord-Provided Cooling Spaces program, which targets benefits to Oregon renters in need of cooling during extreme heat events.

SB 1536 directed ODOE to provide a \$2,000,000 grant to Energy Trust of Oregon (the nongovernmental entity that administers public purpose charge funds under ORS 757.612 (3)(d)). Energy Trust is then directed to use the funds to assist landlords in creating or operating, — whenever there is a local extreme heat event, — one or more private community cooling spaces. The cooling spaces are to be on or near the premises and available to the landlord’s tenants during extreme heat events. The spaces must maintain a temperature of no higher than 80 degrees Fahrenheit. Allowed assistance includes financial grants to landlords, technical assistance, and promotion of related services. Energy Trust of Oregon is also directed to maintain separate accounting for the program, and to report these financials to the Oregon Public Utility Commission.

Program Operations

Energy Trust of Oregon consulted with trade allies, landlords, and other stakeholders ahead of finalizing marketing and operational plans. ODOE provided guidance and assistance, and gave final approval of the plans. Energy Trust of Oregon employed a variety of initial marketing efforts including web content, outbound calls to its existing multifamily housing network, and in-person site visits to previous project sites. Despite the multiple marketing channels, deployment of equipment remained slow through the first two quarters of 2023. As of July 2023, 16 units had been installed into community cooling spaces.

In August 2023, ODOE provided Energy Trust of Oregon feedback on program performance and recommendations for improvement. Both entities met to discuss a shift in strategy to serve more customers, deliver more incentives, and ultimately create more cooling centers. Possible changes include adjusting equipment requirements; increasing emphasis on deploying portable units; offering incentives to cover all or nearly all project costs for all customers; greater flexibility and support for both on- and off-site cooling spaces; and extending the program into 2025. These conversations are ongoing and will require approval from ODOE. In quarter three of 2023 the program team engaged with several properties about potential projects outside the original program design, including former motels that

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are being converted to multifamily transitional housing, emergency shelters, and shared housing for volunteers in a single-family home. While these sites initially seemed peripheral to the anticipated sites for this program, there is a demonstrated need for cooling in these cases and they do not fit into any other state or regional cooling offers. This may be a gap that this program can fill to serve these types of customers going forward.

Program Metrics and Outcomes

To date, Energy Trust of Oregon has deployed 22 pieces of cooling equipment across 20 sites. The following tables break down the installations by equipment type and region served.

Table 1: Cooling Equipment Installed by Type

Cooling Equipment Type	Total To Date
Ductless Heat Pump	13
Portable A/C	0
Window A/C	1
Other HVAC	8
Total	22

Table 2: Number of Sites Served per Region

Region Served	Total To Date
North Coast	1
Southern Oregon	2
Portland and Metro Area	15
Willamette Valley	2
Central Oregon	0
Eastern Oregon	0
Total	20

Energy Trust of Oregon strives to support ODOE’s mission by advancing equitable energy solutions that protect public health. The table below breaks down the community cooling projects by environmental justice groups. It is important to note that projects that serve multiple environmental justice communities appear in every category that applies.

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Table 3: Number of Sites Served in Environmental Justice Communities

Environmental Justice Community	Totals To Date
Black, Indigenous, and People of Color	1
Coastal	3
Disabled	5
Low-Income	19
Rural	2
Senior	10
Tribal	0

As shown in Table 4, work to date has also targeted agreed-upon priority housing types. It is important to note that projects that serve multiple priority housing types appear in every category that applies.

Table 4: Number of Sites Served by Priority Housing Type

Priority Housing Type	Total to Date
Affordable	17
Agricultural Workforce	0
Manufactured Home Park	5
Nonprofit Managed	11
Senior	4
Tribal	0

The following tables illustrate the financial aspects of the program, through September 2023, as reported by Energy Trust of Oregon. Both tables contain funds for technical assistance.

Table 5: Average Costs and Incentives of Cooling Projects

Number of Projects	Average Project Cost	Average Incentive Paid	Total Project Costs	Total Incentives Paid
22	\$7,243	\$5,280	\$159,350	\$116,155

Table 6: Total Costs by Incentive Type

Incentive Type	Total To Date
Equipment	\$115,575
Technical Assistance	\$580
Total	\$116,115

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In the program budget, Energy Trust of Oregon classifies their expenditures in two categories: Incentives or Non-incentives. The latter contains costs associated with administration, marketing, and customer education. Table 7 depicts expenditures across these two categories.

Table 7: Expenditures for Incentives and Non-Incentives

Expenditure Category	Total To Date
Incentives	\$116,155
Non-incentives	\$273,669
Total	\$389,823

Program Challenges

Since the launch of the program, deployment of equipment has been slower than initially expected by ODOE. Upon receiving a report depicting metrics for the first half of 2023, ODOE provided feedback to Energy Trust of Oregon relating to marketing channels and potential strategy shifts. The Landlord-Provided Cooling Spaces program is focused on health, life, and safety. As such, its focus falls outside of the usual energy efficiency-related business models of Energy Trust of Oregon and ODOE. Marketing efforts needed to pivot to more closely align with these program foci.

Energy Trust of Oregon made immediate changes and in the third quarter of 2023, uptake increased. Quarter three activities focused on rethinking how the program could be marketed and delivered to serve more customers while continuing to engage and serve customers under the current parameters. This led to the creation of six new cooling spaces in quarter three, with approximately 15 additional projects in various stages of development.

Three of these six cooling centers are at Big Creek Point, a senior affordable housing facility in Newport, Oregon. Residents have a variety of mobility challenges that would have made it difficult to go to a different floor for cooling, so the property owner worked with the team to get an exception to create cooling centers on each floor. The program initially didn't allow for multiple projects at one property, so this is a good example of a project that required flexibility and collaboration between the customer, the program team, and ODOE to create cooling centers that work for the property and its residents.

The program team conducted email marketing campaigns targeting affordable multifamily properties and market rate properties without in-unit cooling. Customers opened and clicked on links within these emails at an above-average response rate for similar programs, indicating a higher level of interest among recipients. In addition, a direct mailer was sent to more than 2,000 properties in September 2023.

The team participated in a variety of in-person events in quarter three of 2023 to support the program. These included a Multifamily NW Fair Housing for Maintenance webinar to gain insights into market needs and align program design with opportunities in the market; a Latino Business Alliance event to connect with small- to medium-sized businesses; and a Salem Rental Housing Association event on new landlord/tenant laws to ensure the program aligns with current legal requirements.

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Average project costs are higher than initially expected as customers pursue larger, site-specific equipment (for instance, ductless heat pumps instead of window or portable air conditioning units). This trend, along with lower-than-expected installations were motivating factors for a shift in program strategy.

Finally, management of the program within Energy Trust moved from the Commercial sector to the Communities and New Initiatives sector, which was created by Energy Trust to develop and manage non-traditional program offers and provide comprehensive energy solutions.

Program Recommendations

ODOE and Energy Trust of Oregon will continue to refine the shift in program strategy to ensure future success of the program. Through quarterly reports and meetings, ODOE will continue to monitor the progress of the program and provide feedback as needed. There are two additional cooling seasons left before the program ends to secure more installations, and Energy Trust of Oregon has plans in place to increase marketing efforts in a way that more closely resembles the targeted marketing used in the third quarter of 2023.

For More Information

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