

Energy Trust of Oregon Services Available to Low- and Moderate-Income Customers

April 1, 2021

Energy Trust of Oregon is a nonprofit organization dedicated to helping utility customers lower their energy costs, invest in energy efficiency and renewable energy, and contribute to a cleaner, healthier environment. We are required by legislation to invest in cost-effective energy efficiency, and the Oregon Public Utility Commission oversees our implementation of this cost-effectiveness requirement.

Within that requirement, we serve low- and moderate-income utility customers through programs targeting affordable multifamily housing, increased cash incentives for qualifying customers and no-cost energy-saving solutions. Serving low-income customers aligns with our Diversity, Equity and Inclusion objectives, and is part of broader efforts to deliver benefits to underserved customers in rural communities and communities of color.

We also coordinate with agencies, nonprofits and organizations serving low-income Oregonians to ensure these customers are directed to the best resources and services. For example, separate from Energy Trust, Oregon Housing and Community Services (OHCS) administers low-income programs, including weatherization and energy bill assistance programs. Many OHCS programs are delivered through local community action agencies. We have begun co-funding projects with OHCS and community action agencies to reach more customers.

Since 2002, Energy Trust has provided :

- \$23 million in free Energy Saver Kits to 328,000 Oregon households
- \$7.4 million in Savings Within Reach enhanced incentives for moderate-income customers at 9,000 single-family homes and apartments
- \$9.6 million in no-cost energy-saving products for multifamily residents, including renters
- \$11.1 million for no-cost upgrades at 23,000 manufactured homes
- \$3.7 million for fixed priced heat pumps and ductless heat pumps in manufactured homes
- \$8.3 million in upgrades to existing affordable multifamily housing and businesses serving people with low and moderate incomes
- \$3.1 million for new construction or major renovations of affordable multifamily buildings
- \$2.2 million in upgrades for single-family rentals and small multifamily rental units
- \$2 million for affordable energy-efficient new homes
- \$395,000 to replace 34 inefficient manufactured homes with new, efficient models
- \$81,600 in low- and moderate-income solar innovation grants
- \$701,500 in Solar Within Reach enhanced incentives for low- and moderate-income homeowners

Note: Energy Trust has not historically received income data from most customers; participation analysis based on income using third-party data sets is in its early stages. This document is a conservative estimate of services, incentives and benefits to low- and moderate-income customers. Results data are through 2020.

SERVICES FOR LOW- AND MODERATE-INCOME CUSTOMERS

The rest of this document describes current incentives and approaches:

- No-cost and low-cost solutions, like free products, LED bulb giveaways, discounted products at retail and home energy assessments
- Energy efficiency incentives and solutions, like Savings Within Reach enhanced incentives, heat pumps in manufactured homes, manufactured home replacements, affordable housing retrofits, affordable housing construction and community partner funding
- Solar incentives and solutions, like Solar Within Reach, innovation grants, and grants for tribal governments, nonprofits and affordable housing providers

NO-COST, LOW-COST SOLUTIONS

Free energy-saving products for multifamily residents, including renters

Since 2011, we have provided energy-efficient lighting, faucet aerators, showerheads and advanced power strips to multifamily tenant units at no cost through direct installation programs. A percentage of these are provided to affordable housing customers. When COVID-19 forced installations to pause in 2020, we sent equipment for free to property managers for tenants to install. To date, we have provided \$9.6 million worth of free energy-saving products to multifamily residents statewide.

In 2021, the direct installation approach will continue to be paused and shifted to a kit delivery model. While these kits are available to all multifamily customers, our outreach team targets low-income properties to help mitigate energy burden on these customers.

LED bulb giveaways

As part of our response to COVID-19, we launched a website where community action agencies, food banks and other social services providers can order free LED bulbs in bulk to distribute to communities they serve. Together they distributed 50,000 LED bulbs. While the market shows signs of broad adoption of LEDs, this approach ensures these efficient products reach all customers, including low-income customers.

Discounted products available in stores

We offers enhanced discounts on lighting and showerheads at stores that serve large populations of low- and moderate-income people. Participating stores include Dollar Tree, Walgreens, Goodwill, Grocery Outlet, Dollar General and Habitat for Humanity ReStore locations.

Home Energy Assessment

In 2020, we launched a Home Energy Assessment to inform residents of energy-saving opportunities and learn more about where their homes are consuming energy. These assessments are available for people with low and moderate incomes, living in rural areas and members of communities of color. This approach leverages in-home services provided by community-based organizations and trade ally contractors by paying an incentive to capture housing characteristics to inform energy saving efforts that can lower utility bills.

ENERGY EFFICIENCY SOLUTIONS

Savings Within Reach and on-bill repayment

Energy Trust's Savings Within Reach offering provides enhanced incentives for qualifying home energy improvements to moderate-income customers. Customers can also access low-interest financing to install select energy-efficiency upgrades. This offering to households earning 80-120% of the state median income; customers with incomes lower than this can opt into Savings Within Reach enhanced incentives through an informed consent process that makes them aware of services they might qualify for through alternative low-income weatherization programs, such as federally funded Weatherization Assistance Program and the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program.

We have provided \$7.4 million in Savings Within Reach incentives since the offering launched in 2009. We expanded eligibility in 2019 to include small multifamily properties and in 2020 to temporarily include customers receiving unemployment benefits or other financial assistance as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Heat pumps for manufactured homes

Working with trade allies, we offer enhanced incentives for installing heat pumps and ductless heat pumps in manufactured homes. While not an income-qualified program, this offering can reduce the heating burden for manufactured home residents by 50%. This also includes coordination with OHCS and community action agencies, so they are aware of this offering and can prioritize appropriate customer sorting based on income and customer need.

Manufactured home replacement pilot

In 2017, we launched a two-year manufactured home replacement pilot to retire old, inefficient manufactured homes and replace them with energy-efficient new models. The pilot, which was later extended, aims to establish a replicable model that integrates energy, poverty alleviation and affordable housing investments and involves work with multiple community partners. To date, we have provided \$395,000 in incentives to support replacement of manufactured homes, including 21 manufactured homes at Oak Leaf Park in Northeast Portland.

Upgrades for renters of single-family homes and small multifamily units

We offer increased incentives for installation of new energy-efficient gas furnaces, heat pumps, ductless heat pumps and insulation in single-family rental properties that improve tenant comfort and reduce tenant energy costs. To date, we have provided \$2.2 million in incentives to rental properties for the benefit of renters.

Energy-efficient upgrades for affordable multifamily housing and businesses, government entities and nonprofits that serve low- and moderate-income populations

We have delivered energy savings and \$8.3 million in cash incentives to people who own, manage and live in affordable multifamily housing and businesses, and to government entities and nonprofits that serve low- and moderate-income populations, including housing authorities, social services nonprofits and Habitat for Humanity. In addition, we collaborate with housing authorities across the state to provide expertise, support and cash incentives to customers served by:

- Clackamas County Housing Authority

- Home Forward
- Housing Authority of Jackson County
- Housing Authority of Umatilla
- Housing Authority of Washington County
- Housing Authority of Yamhill County
- Marion County Housing Authority
- Oregon Housing Authorities
- Salem Housing Authority
- West Valley Housing Authority

In 2020 the OPUC approved the co-funding strategy proposed by Energy Trust and the Oregon Housing and Community Services' (OHCS) Multifamily Energy Program (OR-MEP). The co-funding seeks to expand the scope and number of energy-saving projects by jointly serving income-qualified customers eligible for funding from both organizations. The collaboration lowers cost barriers for eligible energy efficiency upgrades, allowing agencies and owners to meet funding requirements for projects otherwise not met separately through Energy Trust or the OHCS OR-MEP program. The OPUC approved a test phase from August 2020 – July 2021 for up to 8 projects and \$300,000 in joint funding. So far, this initiative is driving interest from four income qualified customers across a variety of measures and delivering on the intent to expand project scopes and grow savings.

New construction or major renovations of affordable multifamily buildings

We have provided \$3.1 million in incentives to new construction or major renovations of affordable multifamily housing, including subsidized apartment buildings, subsidized nursing homes, government-owned housing, housing authorities and transitional housing.

Community partner co-funding and educational outreach

Energy Trust created Community Partner Funding in 2020. Groups serving communities of color, rural customers, low-to-moderate income customers, people with disabilities and veterans can offer higher incentives to their clients for energy-saving upgrades. Incentives remain within cost-effectiveness guidelines. In 2020, we provided \$351,000 in cash incentives to four organizations. Through early 2021, 11 community-based organizations and community action agencies have enrolled.

Community Action Organization of Washington County co-funding pilot

We wrapped up a successful co-funding initiative with the community action agency in Washington County to do home weatherization upgrades and energy audits in mid 2020. We received OPUC approval to expand co-funding for electric measures in Washington County through 2021 and with up to four additional community action agencies. We also have approval to negotiate with all three gas utilities to develop proposals to co-fund gas measures with community action agencies.

From 2019-2020, results of the Community Action Organization of Washington County co-funding pilot include 112 sites served with new energy-efficient windows, insulation, heating system upgrades and other HVAC improvements. The upgrades saved nearly 450,000 kilowatt hours and we contributed \$383,000 in incentives.

No-cost heat pump water heater installations through Community Energy Project

We contract with Community Energy Project to reach underserved customers through installation of heat pump water heaters in low-income homes at no cost to participants.

Community Energy Project do-it-yourself workshops

We fund Community Energy Project's do-it-yourself attic insulation workshops to help homeowners get training to properly install insulation and pass Energy Trust's quality verifications to receive incentives for weatherization upgrades. In 2020, we supported do-it-yourself cooling workshops, which were delivered virtually to renters of affordable multifamily housing. According to Community Energy Project, all of its clients are low- and moderate-income, with 56% earning less than 30% of the median family income. In addition, 59% of Community Energy Project clients identify as people of color.

SOLAR SOLUTIONS

Solar Within Reach enhanced incentives for income-qualified customers

In 2019, we launched a Solar Within Reach offering to provide higher incentives for low- and moderate-income homeowners. The incentive is up to five times the standard residential solar incentive and offsets a greater portion of the upfront cost of installing solar panels, increasing access to solar for more Oregonians. To date, we have provided \$701,500 in Solar Within Reach incentives.

Low- and moderate-income solar innovation grants

In 2019, we awarded \$81,600 in solar innovation grants to nine organizations to inspire community-based approaches to more equitable solar deployment. Grant recipients designed, developed and tested innovative models for constructing solar projects that directly benefit low- and moderate-income households. They used grant funds to offset solar program development costs such as staff time, energy studies and professional services such as grant writing.

Recipients included:

- African American Alliance for Homeownership (Portland Metro and Washington County)
- Mid-Columbia Economic Development District (The Dalles and Columbia Gorge)
- NeighborWorks Umpqua (Douglas County)
- Oregon Clean Power Co-op (Portland)
- Seeds for the Sol (Benton County)
- Solar for All (Portland Metro)
- Sustainable Northwest (Lake and Klamath counties)
- Verde (Portland Metro)
- Wallowa Resources (Wallowa County)

Commercial solar grants

In late 2020, we launched new solar incentives for tribes, affordable housing providers and nonprofits that provide services to underserved communities. The offering was well received, with 2020 funds for qualifying projects in Pacific Power territory fully reserved within two weeks.