

ENERGY EFFICIENCY PROGRAM

2021 ANNUAL REPORT

THE ECOLOGY ACTION CENTER COMPLETED THE FOLLOWING ITEMS DURING CALENDAR YEAR 2021 IN FULFILLMENT OF THE ENERGY EFFICIENCY PROGRAM AGREEMENT OF MAY 1, 2018.



2021 TOTAL REACH: 207,842 INTERACTIONS

DIRECT (PROGRAMS, EVENTS, PHONE INQUIRIES): 634

MEDIA (NEWSPAPER, RADIO, SOCIAL MEDIA, WEB): 207,208

ENERGY ASSESSMENTS

The EAC continued the BN Energy Bright Program with low-cost energy audits – resulting in increased energy efficiency literacy and energy savings. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the EAC offered a combination of virtual energy audits and in-person audits.

- Conducted nine virtual home energy consultations for Bloomington and Normal residents; two in Normal and eight in Bloomington.
- Conducted eight in-person home energy consultations; three in Normal and five in Bloomington.
- Provided detailed energy efficiency consultations via phone and email for an additional 41 Bloomington-Normal households.

Community Impact

- Based on figures from the Department of Energy, if residents implement the majority of the easier to accomplish efficiency recommendations (sealing air leaks, setting thermostat back 7-10° for 8 hours a day, replacing frequently used light fixtures with LED bulbs, lower water heating temperature, insulating hot water pipes and the heater tank) they can save a low estimate of **\$555 annually** on energy costs. Using these figures, participating households will cumulatively save as much as \$9,435 in the first year after implementation of recommended energy saving measures.
- The average Illinois household uses 129 million BTUs of energy per year. Based on the energy equivalents of the monetary savings estimates above, implementing the basic efficiency recommendations means a **savings of 34.6 million BTU per household.**
- This is the equivalent to **removing 3.7 metric tons of greenhouse gas** emissions per household.

PROGRAM PARTNERSHIPS AND EXPANSION

The EAC continues to leverage its energy efficiency program and expertise to create partnerships that expand efficiency and renewable energy services to the community.

- Illinois Solar for All Grassroots Education Program Year 2020-2021
 - EAC conducted outreach to non-profits and churches on the west side, and to other non-profits in the community that likely serve residents that meet the 80% Area Median Income qualification.
 - EAC staff gave a presentation about Illinois Solar for All opportunities to three Habitat for Humanity residents.
 - Provided an in-service to seven Bloomington Township staff members about Illinois Solar for All and the Ameren-Nicor pilot program.
 - Presented to 15 members of the McLean County Property Committee about Illinois Solar for All options for qualifying public facilities.
 - EAC sent out a newsletter to 3000 West Bloomington at the end of June. The newsletter contained information about ILSFA community solar opportunities, the EAC's energy efficiency program, and about the Ameren-Nicor program. Had follow-up conversations about these program options with 8 residents.
 - Mid-June received notification of selection as partner to provide a third year of grassroots education for the ILSFA program.
 - EAC spoke with Habitat for Humanity about ways to connect Habitat residents with the ILSFA program.
 - Participated in the Bloomington Cultural Festival at Miller Park, sharing information on energy programs with 23 residents.
 - Staff presented to Boys and Girls Club about ILSFA options for solar on their new building.
 - Connected with the new local office for Tazwood Community Center and arranged a meeting in the new year to plan methods to disseminate ILSFA information to LIHEAP recipients.
 - Connected four residents with approved installers for potential single-family solar projects for their homes.
 - Helped 21 residents sign up for ILSFA community solar subscriptions.

- Ameren-Nicor Pilot Program
 - EAC was selected to help with community outreach to promote the Ameren-Nicor pilot program which aims to provide free energy efficiency kits to income qualifying (80% Area Median Income) residents in Bloomington-Normal that are serviced by Ameren and Nicor, and to provide full energy assessments with weatherization services for up to 80 eligible homes.

- In 2021 the program completed a total of 107 energy efficiency projects for residents in Bloomington-Normal. 37 projects included a comprehensive energy assessment and direct installs of LED bulbs, water-saving equipment, hot water pipe insulation, window and door weather stripping, and smart plug strips. 70 projects included a comprehensive energy assessment, direct installs like the ones listed above, and additional retrofit measures such as air sealing, added insulation and/or upgrades or replacement of water heating or furnace mechanicals. 493 households also received energy savings kits in the mail. All of these services were free for participating residents.

ENERGY EFFICIENCY MARKETING, OUTREACH, EDUCATION

Throughout 2021, the EAC continued to promote the BN Energy Bright program and related energy programs to increase community awareness about the benefits of energy efficiency through diverse methods of outreach and promotion.

- Social media advertising and promotion
 - Weekly Facebook #EnergyTipTuesday energy posts promoting energy audits and useful Do-It-Yourself energy efficiency tips received 42,507 impressions.
 - Weekly Twitter #EnergyTipTuesday energy posts promoting energy audits and useful Do-It-Yourself energy efficiency tips received 13,754 impressions.
 - Multiple paid promotions on Facebook encouraging people to register for home and then virtual energy audits 4,910 impressions.
- Radio promotions
 - Radio Bloomington
 - Advertised virtual energy audit services in February on WJBC, WBNQ, and WBWN reaching a cumulative of 78,900 listeners
 - Ran spots in December on WJBC, WBNQ to 22,300 listeners promoting energy audit services.
 - Interviewed by Marc Strauss on WJBC about community solar options for Ameren residents reaching approximately 1,000 listeners.
 - WGLT
 - Ran spots in December on WGLT to 25,000 weekly listeners promoting energy audit services.
- Website traffic

- The BNenergyBright.org website pages which contain the energy audit sign-up form, energy efficiency information, and resources for people interested in solar received 9,022 visits.
- Ecology Action Center Newsletters
 - The January electronic newsletter featured an article on virtual energy audit services. The e-newsletter was sent to 848 households.
 - The February electronic newsletter featured an article on energy efficiency misconceptions. The e-newsletter was sent to 845 households.
 - The March member newsletter featured an article on community solar. The newsletter was sent to 113 member households.
 - The August e-newsletter contained an article about EAC's energy programs. The e-newsletter was sent to 520 households.
 - The September member newsletter contained an article on community solar billing. The newsletter was mailed to 109 households.
 - The October e-newsletter was sent to 1,531 households and contained an article about combatting rising natural gas prices with increased home energy efficiency.
 - The November e-newsletter was sent to 1,541 households and contained an article about decorating with LEDs for the holiday, and how to read LED packaging to make sure you get the effect you want.
 - The December member newsletter was mailed to 115 households and contained an article promoting home energy audit services using diagnostic equipment.

Community engagement and outreach

- Direct Inquires
 - Responded to 80 phone calls, emails and visitor inquiries about energy efficiency and renewable energy issues.
- Organizational involvement
 - Energy Program Coordinator served as an at-large board member at bi-monthly Central Illinois Association of Professional Energy Consultants educational meetings
- Energy Efficiency presentations and informational booths
 - EAC staff gave presentation about Illinois Solar for All opportunities to Habitat for Humanity residents with 3 attendees.
 - EAC staff led a virtual discussion with members of the Moses Montefiore Temple about the film David Attenborough: A Life on Our Planet with 21 attendees. The group discussed methods for reducing environmental degradation including the need to focus on Environmental Justice, lifting up marginalized communities through access to energy efficiency and

renewable energy to enhance community health and reduce energy burdens.

- EAC staff gave a presentation to the community Interfaith Green Team about community solar options with 25 attendees.
- EAC staff gave a presentation to the Illinois Habitat for Humanity Board of Directors about Illinois Solar for All options for Habitat organizations and residents with 10 attendees.
- EAC staff gave a presentation about our energy efficiency program and solar programs to the Youth Conservation Conference with 13 attendees.
- The EAC hosted a virtual evening with Dr. Sandra Steingraber in honor of the EAC's 50th anniversary. The event, "Toward a fossil-fuel free future: food, farming, fracking, climate, & justice" had 114 attendees.
- EAC staff gave a presentation about the BN Energy Bright small business program and about solar options for non-profits and residents at an event at the Moses Montefiore Temple to celebrate their new solar array (the EAC helped the Temple with its solar process). The audience of 30 attendees consisted largely of area church members considering similar projects.
- The EAC set up an information table at the Bloomington Cultural Festival at Miller Park and spoke with 23 attendees about our energy efficiency program and Illinois Solar for All.
- The EAC participated in the Sweet Corn Circus in Uptown Normal and spoke with 15 residents about our energy efficiency program and renewable energy options.
- The EAC participated in the ISU Horticulture Center's Autumnal Festival. Spoke with four attendees about our energy efficiency program and renewable energy options for residents.
- Staff had an information table at the McLean County Chamber Non-profit Showcase. Spoke with 23 attendees about solar and energy efficiency.
- Staff gave a presentation to eight students in Chris Miller's Sustainability and Renewable Energy class at Heartland Community College providing information about our energy efficiency program, training opportunities for individuals interested in pursuing energy efficiency or renewable energy careers, and about the Illinois Solar for All program.
- Staff gave a presentation to five members of Boys and Girls Club leadership and employees at Farnsworth Group about solar options for their new building through Illinois Solar for All.
- Presented to 40 individuals at the NAACP October Chapter meeting about the Ecology Action Center's energy programs, including the Ameren-Nicor and ILSFA income qualifying programs.

- Staff hosted weekly Facebook Live EAQs chats on varying topics (reach numbers are included in Facebook numbers).
 - In May we promoted energy efficiency tips.
 - In June we reviewed community solar options through the Adjustable Block Program and Illinois Solar for All.
 - In September we talked about community solar options.
 - In December we talked about ways to have a “green” holiday including tips on ways to keep holidays energy efficient by decorating with LEDs.