

ENERGY EFFICIENCY PROGRAM

2023 ANNUAL REPORT

THE ECOLOGY ACTION CENTER COMPLETED THE FOLLOWING ITEMS DURING CALENDAR YEAR 2023 IN FULFILLMENT OF THE ENERGY EFFICIENCY PROGRAM AGREEMENT OF MAY 1, 2022 – APRIL 30, 2025.



2023 TOTAL REACH: 104,676 INTERACTIONS

DIRECT (PROGRAMS, EVENTS, PHONE INQUIRIES): 784

MEDIA (NEWSPAPER, RADIO, SOCIAL MEDIA, WEB): 103,892

ENERGY ASSESSMENTS

The EAC continued the BN Energy Bright Program with low-cost energy audits – resulting in increased energy efficiency literacy and energy savings. The EAC’s Building Performance Institute Certified staff provides energy audits with diagnostic testing for Bloomington-Normal residents and small businesses.

- Conducted 26 energy consultations for Bloomington and Normal residents; 14 in Normal and 12 in Bloomington.
- Conducted 2 energy audits for small businesses; Normandy Village and Illinois Art Station.
- Provided detailed energy efficiency and solar consultations via phone and email to an additional 101 Bloomington-Normal residents.

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, adding insulation to the attic and basement, using programmable thermostats, installing LED fixtures, sealing ductwork, etc.) they can save a low estimate of **\$605 annually** on energy costs. Using these figures, participating households will cumulatively save at least \$16,940 in the first year after implementing recommended energy saving measures.
- According to data from the U.S. Energy Information Administration, Illinois households use an average of 99.3 million BTUs of energy each per year, with an average total cost of \$1,720 per household. Based on the energy equivalents of the monetary savings estimates above, implementing the basic efficiency recommendations means a **savings of 34.8 million BTU per household.**

- This is the equivalent to **avoiding 7.2 metric tons of carbon dioxide** emissions per household.
- Last year, staff conducted an energy audit for Bloomington resident living in a mobile home that had essentially no insulation. There were no existing utility or state/federally funded programs available to assist the resident, so the Ecology Action Center reached out to the community Interfaith Green Team and raised funds to use for emergency weatherization projects. In November, the EAC staff, with the help of a volunteer from Faith in Action, used the funds raised to purchase and install insulated trailer skirting on the resident's home.



ENERGY EFFICIENCY MARKETING, OUTREACH, EDUCATION

Throughout 2023, 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 energy efficiency tips received 35,726 impressions.
 - Weekly Twitter #EnergyTipTuesday energy posts promoting energy audits and useful energy efficiency tips received 1,321 impressions (stopped using Twitter after the second quarter)
- Radio promotions
 - Radio Bloomington
 - Interviewed by WGLT about door-to-door energy solicitors reaching 25,000 listeners.
 - Interviewed by Todd Weinburner on WJBC about rising energy costs and municipal aggregation reaching an average of 1,000 daily listeners.
- Newspaper
 - Full-page ad in the Pantagraph for Earth Day highlighting all of the Ecology Action Center's program areas, including details about our energy efficiency and renewable energy offerings reaching 19,250 readers.

- 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 7,912 visits.

- Ecology Action Center Newsletters
 - The EAC January e-newsletter was sent to 1,487 households and featured an article about winter window behavior in the home.
 - The EAC February e-newsletter was sent to 1,487 households and featured an article about predatory energy solicitors.
 - The EAC April e-newsletter was sent to 1,468 households and featured an article about summer energy efficiency tips.
 - The EAC May e-newsletter was sent to 1,494 households and featured an article about how air conditioners function.
 - The EAC June member newsletter was mailed to 302 households and featured an article about new Ameren and Nicor energy prices for the summer.
 - The EAC July e-newsletter was sent to 1,512 households and featured an article about community solar options.
 - The EAC August e-newsletter was sent to 1,505 households and featured an article about natural gas.
 - The EAC September member newsletter was mailed to 304 households and featured an article about reducing winter energy costs with efficiency upgrades.
 - The EAC October e-newsletter was sent to 1,908 households and featured an article about ways to save energy and lower bills in the winter.
 - The EAC November e-newsletter was sent to 1,903 households and featured an article about water heater backdrafts.
 - The EAC December member newsletter was mailed to 313 households and featured an article about energy efficiency steps homes can take for winter.

Community engagement and outreach

- Direct Inquires
 - Responded to 92 phone calls, emails and visitor inquiries about energy efficiency and renewable energy issues.

- Energy Efficiency presentations and informational booths
 - Presented about energy efficiency and renewable energy options to 16 residents at the Normal Township Activity and Recreation Center
 - Spoke with 21 students at the IWU internship fair about opportunities for energy efficiency and renewable energy work with the EAC

- Presented to 8 community members on rising energy prices and ways to save energy through efficiency and solar at a Green Topics event at Green Top Grocery.
- Presented to 12 community members about ways to reduce energy costs with efficiency and renewable energy at a McLean County Chamber Lunch and Learn.
- Spoke with 33 ISU students about the Ecology Action Center's energy programs at an Environmental Economics class.
- Presented to 12 attendees at the Illinois Property Assessors Conference about ways to green their buildings, including through increased efficiency and investing in renewable energy.
- Spoke with 15 community members about the EAC's energy programs at the Interfaith Green Team Meeting.
- Spoke with 6 community members about the EAC's energy programs at an NAACP meeting.
- Spoke with 40 community members at the Buseum event at the McLean County History Museum about energy efficiency.
- Spoke to 73 community members at the McLean County Chamber's Twin City Showcase about energy efficiency and renewable energy programs.
- Spoke with 6 community members at the Second Presbyterian Church's Earth Care Fair about our energy efficiency and renewable energy programs.
- Presented to 23 residents at Wood Hill Towers about municipal aggregation and Illinois Solar for All community solar options.
- Presented to 10 community members about energy efficiency and ways to save energy at the McLean County History Museum's Lunch and Learn event.
- Presented to 7 residents about energy efficiency and Illinois Solar for All options at the Immigration Project.
- Presented to 15 residents about energy efficiency and solar options at the Unitarian Universalist Church of Bloomington-Normal.
- Spoke to 42 community members about energy efficiency and Illinois Solar for All at the Bloomington Juneteenth Celebration.
- Hosted an information table at West Bloomington Revitalization Project and spoke with 23 residents about energy efficiency and the Illinois Solar for All program.
- Presented to 12 residents at the Normal Public Library about energy efficiency and solar energy options.
- Presented to 8 residents at the Heyworth Public Library about energy efficiency and solar energy options

- Presented to 8 residents at the Bloomington Public Library about winterizing the home.
- Presented to 17 residents at the Normal Public Library about home electrification and the Inflation Reduction Act
- Presented to 63 attendees at the Bloomington-Normal Sunrise Rotary Club about home energy efficiency.

PROGRAM PARTNERSHIPS

The EAC continues to leverage its energy efficiency program and energy expertise to promote energy efficiency through other programs, and expand renewable energy adoption in the county.

- Illinois Solar for All Grassroots Education (ILSFA)
 - In 2023, the Ecology Action Center finished the second half of its fourth year as a grassroots educator for the program, and in August was awarded a contract to begin a fifth year. The Ecology Action Center is one of ten non-profits in the state to serve as grassroots educators for the Illinois Solar for All (ILSFA) program. ILSFA is part of the state's Climate and Equitable Jobs Act (CEJA) designed to increase access to solar energy for income-qualifying residents, environmental justice communities, and non-profits and public facilities that serve low-income communities.
 - The EAC reached 186 residents through 11 informational presentations about ILSFA to Habitat residents, for people served by the Immigration Project, for residents of the Bloomington Housing Authority, to residents at the Normal Township Activity and Recreation Center, to the Bloomington-Normal Water Reclamation District, to the Bloomington Public Library, and had 52 individual conversations with residents interested in the program.
- Nicor-Ameren Pilot Program
 - EAC continued to provide community outreach to promote the Ameren-Nicor energy efficiency program, which provides energy efficiency and weatherization upgrades to low-income (80%AMI) households in Bloomington-Normal.
 - During 2023, the EAC connected 93 residents to this program.
 - According to program managers, the EAC is the leading pipeline for this program.