

CHAPTER 2: Starting the energy efficiency plan

There is no one-size-fits-all approach to developing a successful portfolio of energy efficiency programs, and the approach should be tailored to meet the utility's goals, available resources, and the needs of their customer base. However, there are several key steps that can be undertaken early in the planning stages that should facilitate greater success in the long run.

Step 1: Designate a manager for energy efficiency initiatives

Public power utility employees often wear multiple hats and it can be challenging to develop new initiatives while keeping up with existing responsibilities. In addition, a diverse skill set is required to administer energy efficiency programs, from marketing and public relations, to engineering and technical assistance, to general administrative functions. Even if resources do not permit dedicating a full-time staff position to overseeing energy efficiency program design and delivery, designating primary responsibility to a single individual will streamline administrative/management functions and help to ensure that planning and implementation proceed in a coordinated, timely manner. (See [Operational Challenges](#) chapter for information on hiring an energy efficiency coordinator, including a sample job description).

Step 2: Assess current efforts

In developing a new energy efficiency initiative, it is important to undertake a comprehensive review of efforts that are already available for utility customers. This could include federal or state-funded energy efficiency programs or existing utility programs that could complement energy efficiency offerings, such as pricing structures, power quality services and demand response initiatives. It is important to identify any existing utility resources that can be leveraged. For example, what avenues are available to communicate energy efficiency information to customers, such as the utility web site, newsletters, advertising and community events? How could energy efficiency information, incentives, and resources complement existing customer offerings?

Step 3: Leverage peer knowledge

Utility-administered energy efficiency programs have been around for more than thirty years, so there are well-established models that can be followed and a wealth of information on successful (and unsuccessful) strategies that can be gained from peers. Reach out to utilities that already have programs in place. Find out what strategies have worked best for them and what lessons they have learned. There is also a wide array of published information and online resources that address energy efficiency best practices. Some key resources include:



- **American Public Power Association (APPA)**: offers policy and advocacy resources, training, and technical information to help public power utilities promote energy efficiency. The [Energy Efficiency Resource Central](#) website is a clearinghouse for many informational resources, including a searchable [Database of Energy Efficiency Programs at Public Power Utilities](#).
- **Clean and Efficient Energy Program (CEEP)**: This nationwide initiative promotes public power investment in energy efficiency and clean energy. CEEP is building on the existing base of successful strategies and case studies of energy efficiency programs, refining them into topical "tool kits" for use by public power managers. These resources will be available on the web and deployed through regional workshops. CEEP is a partnership of [APPA](#), the [Large Public Power Council \(LPPC\)](#), and the [Alliance to Save Energy](#).
- **National Action Plan for Energy Efficiency**: The National Action Plan is a public-private initiative aimed at creating a sustainable, aggressive national commitment to energy efficiency through the collaborative efforts of gas and electric utilities, regulators and other partner organizations. National Action Plan activities are coordinated by the U.S. Department Energy (DOE) and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

- **National Energy Efficiency Best Practices Project:** Funded by California investor-owned utilities, this online resource provides energy efficiency best practices and also includes a benchmarking tool to help utilities identify strengths and weaknesses in existing programs.
- **Rapid Deployment Energy Efficiency (RDEE) Toolkit:** Developed with input from the National Action Plan for Energy Efficiency and coordinated by DOE and EPA, the toolkit provides detailed program design and implementation guides for ten broadly applicable energy efficiency programs. The toolkit is designed to help state and local governments choose successful programs as they respond to funding opportunities through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009.

Step 4: Conduct community outreach

With strong ties to the community and a proven role as a trusted source of energy-related information, public power utilities are uniquely positioned as leaders in energy efficiency. Once an energy efficiency plan is developed, obtaining community feedback on the plan lays a strong foundation for future outreach efforts and helps to ensure that program offerings are informed by community needs. Potential strategies for community engagement include reaching out to local elected officials, holding town meetings during the planning process, and assessing opportunities to partner with local businesses, community groups, churches, schools, and other organizations in bringing energy efficiency information and services to the community. Forming a formal community steering committee can be a useful mechanism for obtaining ongoing input and support.

Resources

- American Public Power Association: [Starting an Energy Efficiency Program for Your Utility and Community](#) 
- National Action Plan for Energy Efficiency: [Guide to Resource Planning with Energy Efficiency](#) 

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