



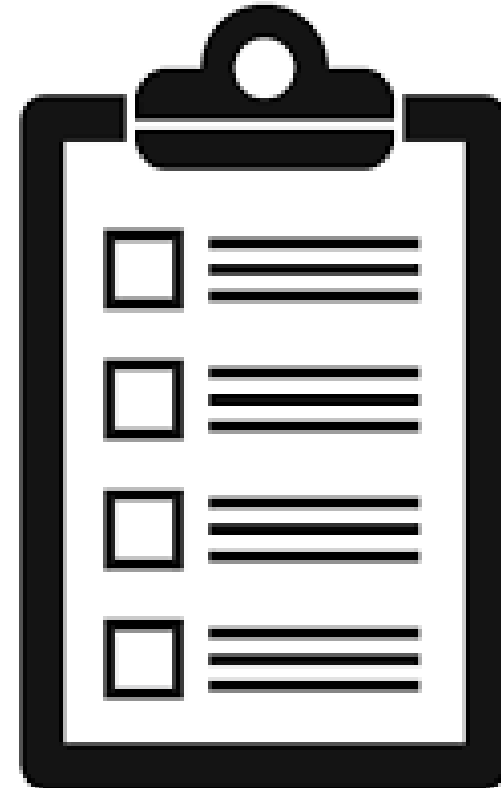
Green & Healthy Homes Initiative®

# Rhode Island Energy Efficiency Equity Working Group (RI EWG) Year 4 Kickoff Meeting

January 30, 2024

## RI EWG Year 3 Kickoff Meeting Agenda

- Welcome Back & Introductions
- Level Setting:
  - Role of the RI EWG & Process
  - 2024 Process Plan
- Recruitment Strategies
- Review & Prioritization of 2023 Strategies:
  - Brief Overview
  - Status to Date
  - Member Feedback
- Partner & Member Updates:
  - GHHI:
    - We're Hiring
    - RFP/NOFO Opportunities
  - Rhode Island Energy
  - Member Updates
- Next Steps
  - Scheduling Next Meeting
  - Other



# Meeting Logistics

- All meetings will take place over Zoom
- All meetings will be recorded for notes purposes
- Stay muted when you are not speaking
- If you have a question or comment, you can:
  - Post it in the chat
  - Raise your hand
  - Post “stack” into the chat to indicate your willingness to speak
- Please rename yourself to include your name, pronouns, and organization/affiliation

## About Green & Healthy Homes Initiative

- Vision: Advancing racial and health equity and opportunity through healthy housing.
- Mission: The Green & Healthy Homes Initiative is dedicated to addressing the social determinants of health and the advancement of racial and health equity through the creation of healthy, safe and energy efficient homes. By delivering a standard of excellence in its work, GHHI aims to eradicate the negative health impacts of unhealthy housing and unjust policies for children, seniors and families to ensure better health economic and social outcomes in low-income communities of color.
- Operating Value: Ensuring racial equity in all policies, practices and actions



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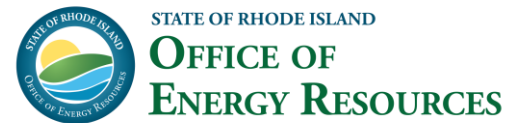
## Rhode Island Energy and Rhode Island Office of Energy Resource:

- Rhode Island Energy



We're committed to providing reliable electricity and gas to every community we serve throughout the state — in all the places we call home — while working to help Rhode Island meet its ambitious renewable energy goals over the next decade.

- Rhode Island Office of Energy Resources (OER)



Our mission is to lead the state toward a clean, affordable, reliable, and equitable energy future.

OER develops policies and programs that respond to the state's evolving energy needs, while advancing environmental sustainability, energy security, and a vibrant clean energy economy.

OER is committed to working with public- and private-sector stakeholders to ensure that all Rhode Islanders have access to cost-effective, resilient, and sustainable energy solutions.

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## Equity Working Group Guidelines and Expectations

- Meeting attendees shall:
  - Make every attempt to attend every meeting on time
  - Share the oxygen – ensure that all participants who wish to have an opportunity to speak are afforded a chance to do so
  - Listen to other points of view and try to understand differing viewpoints and other interests
  - Maintain a focus on collaboration and solutions
  - Share information openly and respectfully
  - Make sure information given is accurate
  - Remain flexible and open-minded
  - Review meeting notes and documents prior to next meeting
  - Respect the privacy of the meeting
  - Meeting notes are for participants only
    - What is said during meetings is important, who said it is not
- We will be seeking feedback from other stakeholders outside of this EWG. These are individuals/organizations that were not able to commit to participate in a series of meetings.

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## Level Setting

## Level Setting

- Purpose:** The RI EWG gives impacted communities, and the organizations that serve them, a structured opportunity to provide input and feedback on equity for the planning, design, and delivery of Rhode Island Energy’s residential and income-eligible energy efficiency programs.
- Key Outcome:** A report outlining prioritized recommendations on equity for inclusion in the 2025 Annual Energy Efficiency Plan. The report will include recommendations, strategies, and metrics developed by members to improve the planning and delivery of Rhode Island Energy’s energy efficiency programs to better meet the needs of non or low-participating customer groups

Month	Activities
January	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>GHHI conducts additional recruitment for 2024 (Year 4) Equity Working Group</li> <li><b>Year 4 Meeting #1</b> – EWG strategies / metrics</li> </ul>
February	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Year 4 Meeting #2</b> – EWG strategies / metrics</li> </ul>
March	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Year 4 Meeting #3</b> – EWG strategies / metrics</li> </ul>
May	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Year 4 Meeting #4</b> – Discuss progress and challenges with implementing equity recommendations/workshop ideas and solicit feedback; intake new ideas and recommendations; feature guest presenters</li> </ul>
July	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Year 4 Meeting #5</b> – Discuss progress and challenges with implementing equity recommendations/workshop ideas and solicit feedback; intake new ideas and recommendations; feature guest presenters</li> </ul>
August	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Year 4 Meeting #6</b> – Review the first 2024 equity metrics report; review and compile EWG refreshed recommendations for 2025</li> <li>First draft of Year 4 EWG Report issued</li> </ul>
September	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Final draft of Year 4 EWG Report issued in early September</li> <li>RIE decides which equity strategies and metrics to adopt in 2025 plan</li> </ul>
Nov. & Dec.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The RI EWG will convene twice between October and December to hear from RIE on relevant progress to date and prepare to develop plans for 2025</li> </ul>
Jan, Feb, Mar 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>During the first quarter of 2025, GHHI RI will convene the RI EWG monthly between Jan-Mar to begin work to inform Rhode Island Energy’s 2026 Annual EE Plan</li> </ul>



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## EWG Recruitment Strategies

- **Background:** As we enter Year 4, GHHI RI and Rhode Island Energy have committed to growing the RI EWG to include the voices of members from underserved and underrepresented communities (e.g. low-income RIE customers, tribal representation, etc.).
- **Current Activities:** Bryan Evans continues to promote the RI EWG at various stakeholder meetings, including various Health Equity Zones throughout Providence, East Providence, Pawtucket, and Central Falls.
- **Other Potential Solutions?**
  - Community Action Partnership (CAP) Agencies
  - Rhode Island Energy's Consumer Advocates
  - Other?
- **Do you have anyone in mind?**
  - Each new member will have an opportunity to meet with Bryan Evans from GHHI RI, to receive background information related to the RI EWG to ensure all members can effectively participate
  - GHHI RI is offering stipends for 5 resident members per each meeting (\$75)



## Review & Prioritization of 2023 RI EWG Strategies

<b>Key Issue 1: Participation Barriers</b> <b>The Company’s energy efficiency programs continue to experience low participation rates among BIPOC and low-to-moderate income (LMI) residents</b>		
<b>Recommendations</b>	<b>Strategies to Implement Recommendations</b>	<b>Updates &amp; Progress to Date from Rhode Island Energy</b>
1) Increase participation rates from residents living in the 5 Equity Communities across the EnergyWise and IES Programs	1) Build a network of X community-based partners that provide programs and services in the 5 equity communities, with most of these partners being women or BIPOC-led	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Feasible to do – the Company needs to define the communities they want to track, gather baseline data, and potentially invest in automation</li> <li>• There are various ways the Company can track: first time participation, overall # of activities, year-over-year spending, etc.</li> </ul>
2) Offer Home Energy Assessments (HEAs) in at least 4 languages other than English with the resulting Home Energy Reports translated in the household's primary spoken language by the end of 2024	2) Develop a Marketing & Outreach Strategy with selected partners to outline opportunities and best practices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Spanish assessments currently do exist</li> <li>• The Company uses a translator service for other non-English or non-Spanish speaking households</li> <li>• Potential reporting: how often the translator service is used, how many Spanish assessments are used, etc. This can help decide the cost vs benefit of adding a language vs staying with the translator service.</li> </ul>

## Key Issue 2: Multifamily Barriers

Multifamily housing has always been a difficult area for energy efficiency program implementers to reach due to multiple issues including the split incentive issue between landlords and tenants

Recommendations	Strategies to Implement Recommendations	Updates & Progress to Date
<p>1) Increase participation rates among EnergyWise Multifamily and Income Eligible Multifamily Programs statewide, with a focus on the 5 Equity Communities and/or Justice 40/EJ Communities.</p>	<p>1) Develop a strategic plan with landlords/MF property owners with detailed examples of how RIE will serve and reach MF landlords                      2) Continue to work with the RI EWG to support the Equity Demonstration,                      3) Leverage additional funding to increase the funds available for partnering community-based organizations</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Carinel LeGrand will be leading a new Residential Equity Outreach Assessment initiative in Central Falls to increase engagement with MF landlords and renters.</li> <li>• The Company will continue to look for opportunities to scale and pursue outside funding sources</li> </ul>
<p>2) Increased focus on renter-specific resources, including but not limited to information on what is available for renters and renter-friendly DIY home improvements.</p>	<p>4) Partner with tenant-rights organizations to develop resources to better reach tenants                      5) Coordinate with RIDOH on the development of a rental registry</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Company needs to do more research and gain a better understanding of the cost-benefit as currently, there isn't an exhaustive list of measures renters can take without landlord involvement</li> </ul>

### Key Issue 3: Weatherization Deferrals

The presence of housing conditions that prevent or defer enrollment in weatherization programs in RI are common. RISE reported of the 11,930 homes receiving assessments through Q2 of 2023, 54 percent of those households had pre-weatherization barriers, and only 24.6 percent of those barriers were resolved.

Recommendations	Strategies to Implement Recommendations	Updates & Progress to Date
1) Close the gap in the Conversion to Weatherization ratio between EnergyWise and IES programs by XX% over the next XX months	1) Strategically align, braid and leverage additional Healthy Homes (e.g. lead), and other programs to address housing conditions that result in Wx deferrals  2) Work with partners to explore and secure new sources of housing rehabilitation funding (I.e. RGGI) that can be used to make units weatherization (and ultimately electrification) ready.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Company needs to do more research and are looking for ways to address pre-Wx barriers</li> <li>Data tracking is a lever: types of barriers, frequency, location, remediation money being spent on the IE side</li> </ul>
2) Continue to leverage and provide additional funding for pre-weatherization barrier remediation	3) Compare follow through rates by geographic area, income level, and other factors (e.g. language). This can help inform how new funding that is identified is allocated to high need areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Company is conducting tests with IE-heat pump work. They are coordinating with RI OER on additional IRA funding</li> </ul>
3) Engage with the new State Department of Housing, cities/towns code officers, and/or housing courts.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Company can look to begin engagement with the new State Department of Housing this year,</li> </ul>

**Key Issue 4: Workforce Development**

The RI EWG continues to have discussions and develop recommendations on equitable workforce development and training opportunities to better serve and work with Minority & Women Owned Business Enterprises (MWBEs). The Company must focus on building a skilled workforce that better reflects the communities that it serves

Recommendations	Strategies to Implement Recommendations	Updates & Progress to Date
1) Increase the % of BIPOC workforce training participants and contractors that reside in the 5 Equity Communities (or Justice 40/EJ Communities) year over year by XX%	1) Host biannual workshops for contractor businesses in order to increase support for vendors to become certified MWBEs 2) Connect w/ the Division of Equity, Diversity, & Inclusion to assess and address MWBE certification barriers 3) Continue to fund workforce development partnerships 4) Study the success in achieving retention in both training and job placement within the RCWP to ensure program effectiveness and address barriers 5) Assess the Company's relationship with MWBEs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Company needs to establish a baseline to track their vendors</li> </ul>
2) Increase # of and capacity of minority contractors by XX% in 2024 (create multi-year targets)		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Company needs to establish a baseline to track their vendors</li> </ul>
3) Increase the # and size of contracts awarded to MWBEs who conduct energy audits and weatherization services by XX% in 2024.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Company is looking into the feasibility of how PPL awards contracts. The Company will work with the Supplier Diversity Team.</li> </ul>

**Key Issue 5: Microbusiness & Small Businesses**

**Microbusinesses and small businesses (<250,000 annual kWh electric consumption) comprise the largest share of unique C&I customer accounts but have the lowest participation rates among C&I customers due to several challenges including split incentives, lack of technical capacity, and limited capital**

Recommendations	Strategies to Implement Recommendations	Updates & Progress to Date
1) Leverage findings from the 2023 Small Business Process Evaluation to improve program strategy	1) Increase the # of Main Street efforts conducted in zip codes with lower historical participation. 2) Include efforts to serve small businesses as part of the new Community-based initiative 3) Retain financing offers for small-business customers to overcome upfront cost barriers	• The Company leveraged the findings from the 203 SBPE to improve program strategy in its 2024 Plan
2) Conduct Main Street efforts in all five communities identified in the 2024-2026 EE Plan Narrative	4) Make concerted efforts to increase participation in programs by MWBE contractors 5) Continue to seek multilingual staff in all aspects of program implementation	• The Company increased Main Street outreach efforts in equity communities in 2024
3) Develop translated program materials, as suggested in the SBDI Process Evaluation	6) Translate all program materials to languages other than English which have a high prevalence in underserved communities. 7) Provide language access services, support, and materials during Main Streets	• The Company is currently seeking multilingual staff for Main Street outreach in 2024

**Key Issue 6: Metrics Tracking & Reporting**

**Based on RI EWG member feedback, the Company should significantly strengthen its equity-related data collection and reporting on key metrics ties to RI EWG recommendations**

Recommendations	Strategies to Implement Recommendations	Updates & Progress to Date
<p>1) Through Q4 2023, work with the RI EWG and the Company to come to an agreement on 2024 metrics and targets the Company can commit to tracking and achieving.</p>	<p>1) Develop a data and metrics reporting template to better track progress (e.g. side by side comparisons to highlight conversion rates, increase/decrease of participation over time and across geographic areas)</p> <p>2) Share the dashboard quarterly with key stakeholders</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Company will adopt selected metrics at the end of Q1 2024.</li> </ul>



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## Prioritization Exercise

Join at  
**slido.com**  
**#2720 073**





## Feedback & Report Outs

## Wrap Up & Next Steps

- **RI EWG Updates:**

- GHHI
  - We're Hiring!
  - RFP/NOFO Opportunities
- Rhode Island Energy
- RI OER
- Member Update?

- **Next Meeting Date:** February TBD

- **Next Meeting Topic:** Prioritization of EWG Key Issues & Metrics Discussion

If you have any questions or comments, feel free to reach out to Bryan Evans ([bevans@ghhi.org](mailto:bevans@ghhi.org)) or Bert Cooper ([bcooper@ghhi.org](mailto:bcooper@ghhi.org))

