

ENERGIZE! HEAT PUMP PROGRAM: ADDRESSING BARRIERS REGARDING RENEWABLE ENERGY

Session: B, Breakout Room #8

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Decarbonizing buildings is an important piece in the fight to combat climate change, and one of the main sources of greenhouse gas emissions comes from home heating and cooling systems. One possible solution for efficiently heating and cooling our homes, while reducing those emissions, is heat pumps. The aim of this study was to identify potential barriers this program may face; best solutions and practices; and the potential cost- and GHG-savings from switching to high-efficiency electric heat pumps. Through the surveys conducted with 8 interviewees, the 3 barriers that were identified as the most impactful were: contractors not being available due to how busy they are, language barriers/using culturally language and equipment and supply delays due to supply chain issues. Some possible solutions to the barriers that we identified were to make sure that the outreach tools that are provided are translated into the primary non-English languages spoken in the pilot program, partnering with weatherization providers that install insulation for low-income homes programs which could save program funds, and programs that allocate money to secure local contractor training. This information could be used to inform other heat pump or weatherization projects of potential barriers they may face and the best ways to work around those barriers, as well as provide recommendations for how to promote their program. Heat pumps are also a way of supplying vulnerable populations with forms of climate resilience, which is important in preparation for heat waves which hit many parts of Washington hard last summer.