



October 2012

Organizing a Home Energy Saving Workshop*

Implementation Guide

A) Overview

Efficiency Vermont is offering free workshops designed to help Vermont residents understand how their homes lose energy and how they can be made more energy efficient. Efficiency Vermont will arrange for a certified energy professional to deliver a prepared slideshow (at no expense to the community) and will provide educational materials for distribution to participants. Local partners are responsible for organizing the workshop for interested residents, undertaking logistical arrangements, publicizing the program in their communities, and distributing educational materials.

B) Workshop Format

We propose that your home energy saving workshop consist of a slideshow presentation and local speakers on energy-related topics of your choosing. These components are described in more detail below.

- **PowerPoint slide presentation:** We have prepared a 60 minute slideshow that will be delivered by a certified energy auditor who has been trained in the presentation. Please encourage your presenters to bring weatherization equipment and materials for display, e.g. a blower door, spray foam guns, and weather-stripping.
- **Local speakers:** We suggest that you consider inviting individuals with knowledge on various energy topics to give short presentations. You might also want to invite speakers and local businesses to set up display tables with information and products. Some suggestions for local speakers are described below.

Topic	Potential Speakers
Low-income weatherization assistance/fuel assistance program:	Community action agency
Wood stove safety	Local fire department
Solar hot water/electric systems	Solar installers
Weatherization materials	Local retailers
Wood pellet/cord wood stoves	Local retailers
Home weatherization retrofit	Local resident who has gone through the Home Performance with ENERGY STAR® program

* This program was originally developed by Central Vermont Community Action Council in partnership with Efficiency Vermont under the "Button-Up Vermont" banner.

- **Local homeowner that has completed home efficiency improvements:** We encourage you to invite a member of your community to the workshop who has recently completed efficiency improvements with a Home Performance with ENERGY STAR® (HPwES) contractor. HPwES is a national program from the U.S. EPA and U.S. Department of Energy and is overseen locally by Efficiency Vermont. It offers a comprehensive, whole-house approach for improving energy efficiency and comfort in your home. We encourage you to find someone who has completed a project under the HPwES program to share their experiences. We suggest that you ask the energy contractor that will be giving the presentation to contact individuals with whom they have performed a comprehensive energy retrofit to see if they might be interested in speaking about their experiences. Alternatively, Efficiency Vermont can help identify individuals in your community who might be willing to share their experiences.

C) Steps for Organizing a Home Energy Savings Workshop

We suggest that you consider undertaking the following steps in organizing a home energy savings workshop in your community:

- **Workshop Presenters:** Contact Efficiency Vermont to secure a date for your workshop, and we will then arrange for a presenter to come to your community. To schedule a workshop, please contact Kathleen Brown at kbrown@veic.org or call 888-921-5990 ext. 7740. We will provide you with the presenter's contact information so that you can make necessary logistical arrangements with him/her.
- **Site Logistics:** As a local workshop organizer, you are responsible for securing a meeting location, arranging food, finding audio-video equipment, and displaying educational materials. Any costs associated with site logistics will be borne by local organizers. These site logistics are described below.
 - **Meeting space:** We suggest finding a meeting room that can comfortably seat the anticipated number of participants from your community – which could range between 30 -50 people. The room should be handicap accessible, if possible. You should plan on conducting a walk-through of the space prior to the workshop to be sure the lighting and other mechanical details are in full working order. We suggest that the workshop be the only activity taking place in the room at the time to minimize distractions.
 - **Food:** We propose that you provide refreshments such as drinks and snacks, which can often be provided by local volunteers or through local business donations.
 - **Audio-video equipment:** You will need a laptop computer, a projection screen, and LCD projector for the workshop. Please be sure to have a relatively recent version of "Powerpoint" (a slide presentation software) on the laptop that you bring. The presenters will bring an electronic version of the presentation to use on your computer. In some cases, the presenter will be able to bring their own laptop computer and/or screen; please be sure to check with the presenter when you contact them.

You might also need some type of audio system with speakers or public address system that is appropriate for the room size – depending on the space. We strongly encourage you to test all audio-video equipment well before the start of the workshop to ensure that it is working

properly. We suggest finding a community member knowledgeable in audio-visual equipment and PowerPoint to assist in your efforts.

Home Energy Saving Workshop

Proposed Agenda

6:45 Refreshments, Registration

7:00 Welcome and Agenda Overview (*local organizers*)

- Welcome participants
- Review agenda for the evening

7:10 Workshop Presentation (*presenter*)

- Why efficiency is important
- How your home loses heat and how to address heat loss
- Low-cost/no cost conservation and efficiency opportunities
- How an energy audit and energy improvements can help you improve the health and comfort of your home
- Action steps you can take to improve energy efficiency in your home
- Available financial and technical resources

8:10 Local Speakers Panel (*local speakers*)

8:30 Complete Evaluation Forms/Wrap-Up/Adjourn

- **Educational Resources:** Once you schedule a workshop, we will provide you with educational materials for distribution to workshop participants, including copies of the PowerPoint Presentation and information on Home Performance with ENERGY STAR. We encourage you to familiarize yourself with the materials and to refer to the materials during the introductions and closing of the workshop.
- **Registration:** We ask that you set up registration table at the entrance to the room. Please ask all workshop attendees to sign in and provide their contact information (particularly email addresses and phone numbers). This information can be valuable in case you want to follow-up with participants. Further, we ask that you provide us with this contact list so that we can undertake follow-up evaluation of participants. We suggest that you set up several tables near the entrance to display educational materials.
- **Outreach:** We encourage you to use a broad range of approaches for reaching out to residents in your community. It is important that community members hear about the workshop from a variety of sources. Publicity professionals often refer to the “Rule of Three” which states that people must hear about an event three times before it makes its way onto their calendar! We suggest using the following outreach methods, including:
 - **Personal contact:** The most effective means for getting people to a workshop or meeting is personal contact – either through phone calls, giving announcements at other organizational

meetings, or face-to-face conversations. Also, consider sending invitations to certain participants who you think might benefit greatly from the workshop.

- **Network:** We encourage you to network with other organizations in your community, such as the local Area Agency on Aging, local food shelf, conservation commission, offices of the Center for Independent Living, civic groups like Rotary and Kiwanis Club, and town officials. An effective avenue for reaching out to these groups is to attend their meetings or send them notices about the workshop and asking them to inform their members. If these groups also have a web site or e-newsletter, you can provide them with an announcement, electronic flyer, or other content for them to post and distribute within their list serves.
- **Posters:** We will provide you with a few copies of an 11" x 17" poster that announces the workshop and provides space for specific information about the date, time, and location of your workshop, along with contact information. You might also want to consider making mini-posters/flyers and placing stacks on the counters of local stores, businesses, library, post office, and other public locations.
- **Media:** We encourage you to contact both local newspapers and radio stations to publicize the workshop. We are providing you with a sample press release and calendar announcement. (See Attachment A: Sample Press Release and Calendar Listing.) Some information about placing media is provided below:
 - Notices in community publications: You will want to place notices about the workshop in community publications, including school newsletters, and monthly community newspapers. Be sure to ask your local paper to put an item in their calendar section. You should also consider sending your local papers a press release announcing the workshop and then following up with a reporter about doing a story. Note that deadlines vary, but deadlines can be six weeks or more in advance of the event.
 - Radio and TV: We encourage you to send local radio stations a calendar listing of your workshop. We also encourage you to coordinate with other towns in your region to contact radio stations about doing short interviews on energy savings and workshop times.
 - Social Media: Utilize a range of social media tools, including Facebook, Front Porch Forum, and Twitter.

- **Working with Local Retailers:** We suggest that you consider working with local retailers to ask them about providing weatherization materials at discounted rates. By participating, retailers can realize several benefits, including publicity, good will, and bolstering their image as a good “citizen” of the community. Materials to consider asking your local retailer to discount include: window kits, caulk and caulk guns, foam guns and cans of foam, interior storm window kits, and other weatherization materials. Retailers can offer discounts in a number of ways, including “Buy 2 – Get 1 Free,” or receiving 10-20% off of specific items. We also suggest that you encourage local retailers to attend the workshop to confirm the promotional efforts that they are offering.

Many retailers are already participating in a program to sell discounted compact fluorescent light bulbs (CFLs) through Efficiency Vermont. These retailers may also be interested in offering discounts on weatherization materials. For a list of participating retailers in the CFL program, see www.encyvermont.com/pages/Residential/Marketplace.

- **Door Prizes:** In addition to discounts on weatherization products described above, you might want to consider offering door prizes to workshop participants and use this as a marketing tool to encourage people to attend the workshop. For example, you can offer door prizes for items such as free caulk guns, weatherization materials, interior storm window kits, or spray foam guns. Local retailers might provide these materials at no-cost in exchange for promotion of their store. Further, if your organization has funds available, you might consider subsidizing the cost of an energy audit and offering it as one of the door prizes.
- **Workshop Evaluation Forms:** We will provide you with workshop evaluation forms to distribute to workshop participants. These evaluation forms are designed to help us understand the effectiveness of the workshop, as well as get a sense of the actions that participants plan to take following the workshop. We ask for your assistance in reminding participants to complete the evaluation form before they leave the workshop. Further, please send back the completed evaluation forms in the self-addressed, stamped envelope along with the registration list.

D) Resources:

- **Efficiency Vermont:** For an extensive description of efficiency improvements and resources for helping improve energy efficiency in your home and business, see www.encyvermont.org or call toll-free: 1-888-921-5990.
- **Vermont Energy and Climate Action Network:** For assistance in forming a local energy committee or guidance in undertaking local energy projects, contact Johanna Miller at the Vermont Natural Resources Council at 802-223-2328 or jmiller@vnrc.org.

Attachment A: Sample Press Release and Calendar Listing

Sample Press Release

YOUR NAME
YOUR ORGANIZATION
YOUR PHONE

HOME ENERGY SAVING WORKSHOP TO BE HELD (DATE & PLACE) ORGANIZATION PRESENTS ENERGY EFFICIENCY FOR HOMEOWNERS

(Your town VT—DATE)—(ORGANIZATION) will be hosting a Home Energy Saving workshop on DATE at PLACE at TIME. This informational session is designed to help Vermonters learn the basics of building science and how to improve energy efficiency in their homes.

It includes an overview of why building efficiency is so important here in Vermont, illustrates how homes lose energy, and outlines clear steps that homeowners can take to address this energy loss. A certified energy professional is the main presenter and questions are encouraged.

Owners of homes and businesses in YOUR TOWN and the surrounding area are invited to attend the two-hour session to learn about actions they can take to lower energy bills and make their homes and businesses more comfortable and affordable.

“We’re offering this workshop in TOWN because with rising heating costs, everyone needs to be thinking about ways to make their homes more efficient,” said LOCAL HOST. “We hope that by sharing this information, we can help our residents be more comfortable in their homes and get more control of their heating expenses.”

Home energy saving workshops are being offered in communities around the state this fall and winter.

Sample Calendar Listing

HOME ENERGY SAVING WORKSHOP TO BE HELD (DATE & PLACE)

Free Home Energy Saving workshop for Vermonters who want to learn how to make their homes more energy efficient, comfortable and affordable. Presented by ORGANIZATION, certified presenter, Q&A, refreshments.

DATE: (day & date)

PLACE: (use street address, city, state, zip)

TIME: (begin & end)

ORGANIZATION CONTACT: if someone has a question, who do they call or email?

WEBSITE: what’s your website (make sure it is listed there!)

YOUR NAME:

YOUR ORGANIZATION:

YOUR PHONE: