

# ACEEE's Reaching Rental Property Owners to Advance Energy Efficiency

January 29, 2026

**Summary:** At the participants' request, ACEEE summarized key takeaways from the workshop breakout group activities. We also collected and included links shared by guest speakers.

## Breakout group notes

### 1. Breakout Group One: Incentive and Financing Offerings

- *What financial offerings or incentives resonate most with property owners?*
  - Property owners are attracted to incentives that cover the full cost.
  - A2's Zero Program braids funds from multiple places so the customers see an incentive that covers the full cost. The customer doesn't need to know where the funding came from, they just want to see the best financial savings.
- *What are innovative approaches to offering incentives that can be used for multiple upgrades?*
  - Braiding funds from multiple programs.
  - Direct-to-contractor incentives reduce the initial cost of equipment to the consumer. This approach is often used with LMI Utility Incentive Programs.
  - The [New England Heat Pump Accelerator – Midstream incentives](#) is a regional initiative that provides midstream incentives to heat pump contractors to reduce equipment cost to the consumer without a rebate. The Climate Pollution Reduction Grant (CPRG) funds this initiative.
  - Minnesota Power has a multi-family incentive program offering LED upgrades, fridge replacement, and much more. The Conservation Improvement Program (CIP) funds this program.
  - The City of Ann Arbor 's [Home Energy Rebates](#) supports landlords of single family and smaller multifamily to find and use rebates. The city plans to announce rebates for larger multifamily later this year.
  - MassSave has multifamily incentives and are income eligible.
- *Have property owners found the process for qualifying and applying for these offerings/incentives easy?*
  - We've struggled with a particular tenant-landlord challenge. The tenant qualifies for the low- and moderate-income program but the energy efficiency measure must be made by the landlord who does not qualify. Therefore, the tenant would need to go through a lot of work to apply for equipment they would not own.
    - Solution: Raise awareness about EE value to tenants.
    - Solution: Simplify the application process.

- On our end, we face issues with the tenant-landlord split incentive (i.e., the property owner is hesitant to pay for expensive improvements for which they will not receive benefits from).
  - Solutions: Approach property owners at the point of full-property renovations prior upon equipment failure.
- In Georgia, we are increasingly experiencing a high percentage of fraud scams. People are impersonating utilities staff to sign up customers for predatory loans or fake rebates. It has been very challenging to get this money back. A big investigation has just commenced.

## 2. Breakout Group Two: Effective Messaging for Owners

- *What messaging have you found effective in engaging property owners?*
  - RI Energy has done the following:
    - Hosted landlord listening session at local libraries. Results were used to inform flyers development
    - Hosted customer expos once a month
    - Spoke on local news station about programs
  - Elevate has done the following:
    - Listened to the needs of landlords. In Oregon, advocated for change in AC regulations
    - Reviewed tax assessor data for landlord and property manager contacts
    - Explored vacancy issues.
  - Missouri stakeholders have done the following:
    - Highlighted the extra benefits of electrifying as well as the return of investment
    - Expect difficulty in convincing landlord to put the money upfront
    - Educated landlords about the technology. Demonstrate how energy efficiency saves money by using formulas or explaining how their bills may be reduced
- *Does anyone have any questions?*
  - How can we work with corporate and large-scale property management?
    - ACEEE: Start with property managers. Look for their VP of Sustainability online.
    - MD-DEP: Larger property management have sustainability team contacts on their websites.
  - How are case studies most impactful in distribution?
    - CMC Energy: Make one-page flyers case studies

### 3. Breakout Group Three: Identifying and creating communication channels to reach owners

- *How to target smaller “mom and pop” landlords?*
  - Tailor messages to smaller companies and answer their questions. Keep in mind this will require long-term commitment.
  - Collaborate with trusted organizations to reach owners. For example, work engage universities to reach landlords who own properties in/near university campuses. Also, connect with realtors or relator associations as they have direct connections to owners.
  - Explore Eventbrite for landlord meet up events.
  - Reach out to local builder chapter and participate in their lunch and learn.
  - Facebook groups and landlord meet ups are a good opportunity to gather information.
  - Tap in with maintenance companies that have routine engagement with rental units.
  - Build relationships with tenant rights agencies.
  - Host a table at city/CBO hosted community events.
  - Canvass the neighborhood in your targeted community to gather landlord information.
  - Think about how a city government’s resources can be combined with your engagement efforts. For example, explore how you may add information about your program to utility bills.

### 4. Below is a list of links shared during our workshop.

- **Links shared by guest speakers:**
  - Xcel Energy’s Reaching 1-4 Unit Properties Toolkit: <https://xcelenergycommunities.com/document/reaching-1-4-unit-properties>
  - ACEEE’s Energy Equity for Renter’s Toolkit: <https://www.aceee.org/toolkit/2022/11/energy-equity-renters-toolkit>
  - City of Ann Arbor’s Green Rental Housing: <https://www.a2gov.org/sustainability-innovations-home/sustainability-me/green-rental-housing/>
  - National League of Cities’ Landlord Hub: <https://www.a2gov.org/sustainability-innovations-home/sustainability-me/resource-hub-for-rental-property-owners/>
- **Links shared by participants:**
  - Renter friendly portable induction cooktops. Has bonus health benefits if it replaces the use of gas burners: <https://homes.rewiringamerica.org/projects/cooking-renter>
  - Arlington’s Eco Ambassadors volunteer to install measures like LEDs and pipe wrap in multifamily homes: <https://www.ecoactionarlington.org/get-involved/ecoambassadors/>
  - Philly’s Rental Improvement Fund is a forgivable/deferred payment loan. Units must be affordable at 60% AMI to be eligible and can only raise rents a max of 3% annually during loan term (10-15 years): <https://phdcphila.org/rental-improvement-fund/>
  - A California example that stacked incentives for building electrification in Martinez, Calif: <https://mcecleanenergy.org/multifamily-savings/>