Dear Partners:

Thank you for expressing interest in the Climate-Forward Efficiency Initiative, ACEEE's ongoing effort to realign utility programs to scale energy efficiency programs and focus them on meeting the climate challenge. We are writing today with recent updates about the project. Read on for project news, updates from leaders taking action in this community, ways you can engage, and some relevant resources.

Best,

The ACEEE Climate-Forward Efficiency Initiative Team

Workforce Development Workshop Recap

In August, ACEEE hosted a special virtual workshop to discuss strategies for building up a climate-forward efficiency workforce. Fourteen experts representing utilities, program implementers, and advocacy organizations joined ACEEE to:

- Create a vision of what a workforce capable of executing climate-forward efficiency programs looks like
- Understand the most important elements of a strategy for strengthening the workforce for climate-forward efficiency
- Understand which elements are unique to climate-forward efficiency (as opposed to general energy efficiency workforce issues)

A common theme was the need for standardized worker classifications and requirements. According to one participant, agreement on common skills was necessary for preventing the energy efficiency workforce from becoming "a Wild West show" with "everyone

teaching their own Wild West curriculum." Participants also highlighted the importance of ensuring the workforce remains engaged for years to come, in part by providing a pathway beyond entry-level jobs toward long-term, rewarding careers.

Upcoming Report Publication

In early December, ACEEE will publish the first of two upcoming reports on climate-forward efficiency. *The Need for Climate-Forward Efficiency: Early Experience and Principles for Evolution* details the need for new approaches to efficiency that elevate greenhouse gas mitigation and climate change adaptation as core outcomes. The report identifies a variety of policy and programmatic approaches that leading states are taking to equitably align energy efficiency with GHG reductions, including the adoption of “next-generation” energy efficiency resource standards and metrics, utility business model reforms, modifications to demand-side resources’ eligibility for public funding, changes to cost-effectiveness testing, and new approaches to resource planning and procurement. It also introduces principles that should guide the selection of new GHG metrics. Stay tuned for more details!

News Spotlight

- Illinois – The state's new Climate and Equitable Jobs Act commits Illinois to achieving a net-zero-emissions electricity sector by 2045 and a net-zero-emissions economy by 2050. The bill's passage brought together labor groups, environmental and climate justice activists, and utilities. Among the bill’s provisions are new workforce development hubs for training low-income and underrepresented communities, and workforce transition assistance for helping previous fossil-fuel industry employees find work in the clean energy sector. The bill also incorporates fuel switching as part of broader electrification efforts.

- Multiple states – Xcel Energy announced plans to deliver net-zero-emission gas operations by 2050. This new goal makes Xcel the first American utility to pledge net-zero emissions in both its electricity and gas delivery. As an interim target, Xcel plans to reduce its gas-related emissions 25% below 2020 levels by 2030, starting by cutting leaks in current gas distribution systems and purchasing gas from certified low-emission suppliers. Xcel also plans to reduce customer gas consumption through additional support of efficiency and appliance and heating electrification programs. These new plans can help Xcel work toward decarbonization while continuing to serve 2.1 million customers across eight states.

- Washington, DC – After months of debate, Congress passed the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (also known as the bipartisan infrastructure bill). The new law directs billions of dollars toward improving the nation’s transportation, power infrastructure, and buildings. Notable aims include building electric vehicle charging stations in rural and disadvantaged areas and weatherizing low-income residences. The law also contains multiple workforce provisions, such as new funding for Building Technology Assistance Centers, energy auditor training, and career skills training for energy efficiency building technologies. The law’s ambitious scope and range of programs make it a promising new federal funding source for climate-forward efficiency projects.

Resource Spotlight

ACEEE's state policy team published a new research report, *Meeting State Climate Goals: Energy Efficiency Will Be Critical*. The report is targeted at states that have passed a clean electricity standard (CES) or have established a goal of reaching 100% clean electricity generation by a certain year. While these goals are commendable, many of them lack provisions for energy efficiency. The researchers recommend that states incorporate energy efficiency targets into their CES to make the energy transition easier, more cost effective, and more equitable.

VEIC commissioned Synapse Energy Economics to study the historic and projected utility costs and benefits of energy efficiency from 2010 to 2030. The resulting report notes that energy efficiency has successfully achieved energy savings from technologies like lighting and appliances, but that funding for efficiency programs has flattened, leading some stakeholders to question its ongoing value. However, the study found that efficiency programs resulted in $4.1 billion in national net savings between 2010 and 2016, and it predicted that all states would see savings from energy efficiency through 2030. In an associated blog post, VEIC's Emily Levin notes that these monetary savings did not even include the additional benefits of energy efficiency, such as reduced carbon emissions, better air quality, and improved health. Levin also describes how VEIC advances the value of energy efficiency by updating energy efficiency goals to match decarbonization targets and integrating energy efficiency with electrification and demand flexibility.

Opportunities to Engage

ACEEE will host a webinar in early December to accompany the launch of our report *The Need for Climate-Forward Efficiency*. Stay tuned for more details!

ACEEE is convening an advisory group for the Climate-Forward Efficiency Initiative and is seeking sponsors to support the Initiative. The advisory group will provide input on research, partnership opportunities, and events to promote the Climate-Forward Efficiency roadmap across the country. Please contact Charlie Herron at cherron@aceee.org for more information about the advisory group and Climate-Forward Efficiency sponsorship opportunities.

Do you have feedback on the climate-forward efficiency initiative? Would you like to offer knowledge or services that can advance climate-forward efficiency? If so, please reach out to Jasmine at jmah@aceee.org to share your input!

Save energy, save the planet, support ACEEE today with a tax-deductible contribution!

Connect with us on social media:

Support Us

Our mailing address is:
ACEEE, 529 14th Street., N.W., Suite 600, Washington, DC 20045

Sent by aceeenews@aceee.org