

DEIJ: More than a Residential Framework, it's a Roadmap for Energy Efficiency

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ABSTRACT

For the past five years, there have been remarkable movements in the area of equity. Unfortunately, many of these movements have come as a result of events that have harmed or negatively affected people across our communities. Promisingly, many energy programs in the government and utility spaces have begun to take action on diversity, equity, inclusion, and justice (DEIJ). However, the preponderance of these programs have been in the residential space, with far less attention served to energy equity in organizations and the buildings where they operate.

Over the past several years, a select set of regional energy efficiency organizations have begun to integrate the tenets of DEIJ into their work, namely Energy Trust of Oregon and Southeast Energy Efficiency Alliance (SEEA). Some of this has come through discarding the status quo, about assuming that more can be done through our energy efforts and that our programs can be tools for powerful change across communities and to begin to address injustices built into systems of oppression. Stillwater Energy built on the leadership of these organizations integrating DEIJ into program design and delivery and developed a DEIJ Integration Continuum, a tool to understand where DEIJ fits within commercial and industrial (C&I) programs and from this to then chart meaningful pathways forward. This paper will describe the Continuum and the application of it with specific programs to guide how other program administrators, implementers, and evaluators may think about and incorporate DEIJ into their work. The audience will be both informed and motivated by useful thinking and tools that they can apply and lift all of our efforts and communities.

DEIJ Background

What is DEIJ?

The term Diversity, equity, inclusion, and justice (DEIJ) describes an organizational process and set of policies that guide an organization to integrate DEIJ into the day-to-day operations of a business. Each piece of DEIJ adds up to a holistic approach to create an organization where employees and customers feel a sense of belonging and where individuals understand they have an important role to play in helping the organization achieve its mission, vision, and values.

The following definitions are an adaptation from Clifford Jones of the Portland-based consultancy Capacity Building Partnerships (2020):

- **Diversity** is about difference. The differences among people and their perspectives of the world. When talking about diversity, difference, and underrepresented groups, this does not just mean racial or ethnic diversity, it also means gender and sexual orientation,

language and culture, or physical ability. People with different lived experiences bring different perspectives, different ways of problem solving and different creative thinking. Difference can challenge and broaden our thinking. It's important to note that a diverse workplace does not necessarily mean an equitable one, nor does the presence of underrepresented groups mean a workplace is inclusive.

- **Equity** is when advantage and disadvantage are not distributed based on social identity groups like race, ethnicity, and gender. Equity does not mean doing the same thing for everyone. It is about how people are engaged and in the way they need to be engaged. It is about meeting them where they are and providing the tools, information, and resources they need to meet a stated goal.
- **Inclusion** is reflected in the ability of people from underrepresented groups to raise their perspectives authentically, and for those voices to matter and impact decisions. Inclusion is about the voices that are heard and who holds power. It is about people being able to show up as their full selves without checking part of themselves at the door. Inclusion is an important organizational process goal, but it does not guarantee equity.
- **Justice** addresses the distribution of wealth, opportunities, and privileges within a society (Social Justice, n.d.). To address justice at a societal level, it must also be addressed at the organizational level. Organizations of all types have a role to play in pursuing justice for those harmed by systems of oppression.

DEIJ is not new. For decades, organizations have focused on making their workforce more diverse, their business processes and procedures more equitable and have strived to create inclusive work environments. The murders of George Floyd, Ahmaud Arbery, Breonna Taylor and so many others forced the United States and the world to have a reckoning with a collective history of systemic racism and oppressive systems. For many organizations this is when justice became an explicit organizational goal. The racial justice movement of 2020 spurred many organizations to take a closer look at their business practices and how various businesses within the public and private sectors perpetuate racist and oppressive systems.

A Framework for Change

The Organization Development Network states that organizational development is a "... is guided by strong values such as humanistic, organization-wide, inquiry-based and collaborative, developmental-focused, systems-oriented, and research- and evidence-informed" (What is Organization Development?, 2021). Organization development is ultimately about how organizations change. DEIJ at its core is a framework for change. It defines how organizations and people within those organizations center black, indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC), create more equitable systems and inclusive environments, while also positively impacting racial justice.

Change management is the people side of change and it's important to remember that change happens at the individual level. With any type of change management, there are key

ingredients that ensure success. Table 1 below describes the key components of change management as applied to DEIJ.

Table 1. The Change Management components of DEIJ

Organizational commitment to DEIJ	Executive leadership commits personnel time, such as a DEIJ Lead, funding a DEIJ training budget, and other resources needed to ensure effective change.
DEIJ Policy	A DEIJ Policy outlines organizational goals for DEIJ and how those align with the organization's mission, vision, and values. It clearly articulates metrics and measurements of success, and outlines who is accountable for implementing and measuring DEIJ changes.
DEIJ Lead and Team	The DEIJ Lead and team are responsible for leading implementation of the DEIJ change initiatives. The Lead also communicates regularly with organizational leadership.
DEIJ Training	Dedicating time and resources to DEIJ training is critical to ensure change is implemented organization-wide and awareness and education are provided to individuals across the organization.
DEIJ Assessment	There are various DEIJ assessment tools available. By understanding the current state of DEIJ-related biases, knowledge and practices, an organization can identify areas for growth, improvement, and change, and dedicated the necessary resources to address those gaps.
DEIJ Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) & Goals	Once an organization understands the focus areas for DEIJ, they can develop KPIs and goals to measure success and use data to inform an interactive, continuous improvement process.

Survey of ACEEE Papers on DEIJ in Energy Efficiency

Over the last ten years, increasing numbers of energy efficiency programs have begun to integrate DEIJ into their program goals and processes. Through a review of ACEEE Building Summer Study papers published in 2018 and 2020, most papers focus on low-income utility programs, affordable housing and hard-to-reach groups, which are for the most part programs focused on residential customers. There are patterns of note and opportunities to accelerate DEIJ beyond residential to then apply into C&I energy efficiency programs.

Table 2. ACEEE papers from 2018 and 2020 focused on equity and specifically residential programs fall into the following five areas.

Paper Topics	Number of Papers
Low-income utility programs , (e.g., weatherization and energy burdened populations)	17
Community engagement , (e.g., residential programs for affordable housing and hard-to-reach groups)	14

Equitable energy funding and financing	4
Market transformation, (e.g., workforce development and equity measurement)	11
Decarbonization and electrification, including climate equity and health impacts	9

Based on the review of papers from 2018 and 2020, there is a lack of papers that address C&I utility customer groups and their employees. Similarly, there are limited papers that discuss DEI within utilities themselves or applying DEIJ practices in energy efficiency programs that are not residential focused. Within the paper that focus on workforce development, there is a gap in papers that touch on DEIJ practices within energy efficiency organizations and companies to support diverse workforce development.

Practices of Energy Efficiency Leaders

In the energy sector, there are organizations in the US who have made DEIJ an organizational priority. Similarly, energy efficiency organizations have recognized the need to focus more intentionally on underserved communities, including low income, BIPOC communities and rural communities. To create systemic change, organizations must first look inward and set the example for how to center issues of DEIJ.

In 2017, Energy Trust of Oregon (Energy Trust) established their organizational commitment to DEI and developed a policy to guide their energy efficiency work. The policy states how Energy Trust will focus on DEI both internally and externally to better serve customers, the intent to develop a DEI operations plan and DEI lens, and the need to establish and maintain a Diversity Advisory Council (DAC) (Energy Trust of Oregon, 2017).

In 2019, Energy Trust formed the Diversity Advisory Council (DAC) to help increase participation of underserved communities in their programs. Energy Trust identified both customers and contractors among the groups that were underserved and underrepresented in the past. They further refined who these underserved communities are, including people with low and moderate incomes, communities of color and rural communities.

The organization also dedicated resources to elevate their DEI efforts. Notably Energy Trust created a full-time, senior management position for a DEI Lead to further support their efforts to reach underserved communities. In addition, Energy Trust developed requirements for awarding contracts to ensure a certain percentage of the contract spend goes to underrepresented contractors (Energy Trust of Oregon, 2020). Energy Trust reports twice a year publicly on their progress toward DEI goals. In 2021, “Energy Trust met 17 of 22 targets identified in the 2021 Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Operations Plan and partially met three of the remaining five targets” (Energy Trust of Oregon, 2022).

The Southeast Energy Efficiency Alliance (SEEA) formally started their work on diversity, inclusion, and integration (DII) in 2018 to develop an organizational culture where all people feel welcomed and valued to positively impact systemic change in the energy industry. SEEA openly shares their DII journey on their website through blog posts, webinars, and resources. SEEA appointed a DII Lead to head the organization’s efforts and create a strategic plan. SEEA has a DII board subcommittee to intentionally build a more diverse network and ensure the organization is centering DII.

SEEA is transparent about their process and journey to create real change within their organization and set an example for the industry on how to create change toward a more diverse,

equitable, inclusive and just energy sector. In a webinar recorded in July 2020, the organization outlines their journey both from the board and staff perspectives with stories of their experiences of racism and oppression, and how that has informed their work as individuals and as an organization (Southeast Energy Efficiency Alliance (SEEA), 2020).

There is much the public and private sectors can learn from these two non-profit organizations and their journeys to elevate DEIJ. They started internally and then started to look outward to identify ways they could influence their region and the industry.

DEIJ Applied to an Energy Efficiency Consultancy

In 2019, Stillwater Energy began the process of integrating DEIJ into the company's own internal processes as well as how Stillwater engages with program administrator clients and end-use customers. Figure 1 shows this continuous improvement framework.



Figure 1: Stillwater Energy DEIJ Continuous Improvement Framework

This framework is similar to how many organizations address other initiatives such as sustainability or safety. Each component of the continuous improvement framework is described below and how Stillwater applies each component:

- **Commit Organization**
 - Focus on DEIJ both internally and externally – Through statements made publicly on Stillwater's website and in job postings, the organization makes it clear DEIJ is a focus both organizationally and in client work.
 - DEIJ Lead who heads all DEIJ efforts, including internal training and facilitating DEIJ conversations with clients – Stillwater designated a DEIJ Lead who is responsible for internal training and facilitates conversations with clients about integrating DEIJ into specific programs.

- Enhance DEIJ in internal operations in support of the organization’s mission and vision – Stillwater management uses a DEIJ lens for all decision-making and hold each other accountable.
- Provide DEIJ professional development and training opportunities to employees – Stillwater dedicates time and funds to DEIJ professional development for the DEIJ Lead and training for staff.
- Develop Inward
 - Build and maintain a diverse workforce – Stillwater continues to develop diverse professional networks and has increased hiring of diverse candidates with 30% of staff coming from BIPOC communities and 50% of staff are female.
 - Implement equitable processes and practices intentionally designed to promote opportunity and rectify disparities – Stillwater continues to examine internal process and procedures, and recently developed a transparent process for distributing bonuses.
 - Create and propagate an inclusive work environment – As part of onboarding new staff, Stillwater dedicates two sessions to describe how we DEIJ is prioritized internally and externally with clear expectation setting that the work environment is a safe space for all.
- Engage Outward
 - Design and deliver programs with DEIJ lens using tools such as DEIJ Continuum – Detailed in the following section is how Stillwater developed and applies the DEIJ Continuum to program work.
 - Build a diverse network of professionals and community-based organizations (CBOs) – Stillwater continues to develop diverse professional networks and outreach to CBOs.
 - Lead by example and share lessons learned – A focus on DEIJ is not just beneficial to Stillwater as an individual organization, there’s an opportunity influence real change in the energy sector. Stillwater openly shares DEIJ frameworks through speaking engagements and publication of papers.
- Measure Results
 - Develop SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Time-based) goals for Commit Organization, Develop Inward and Engage Outward (Doran 1981) – On an annual basis, the Stillwater DEIJ Lead meets with management to develop SMART goals internally and program managers to identify SMART goals for specific programs.
 - Review goals quarterly with program managers – Quarterly review of DEIJ goals allows Stillwater to raise opportunities for improvement both internally and externally with clients.

As part of the DEIJ Framework, engaging outwardly with clients intentionally and with clarity is important. It is one of the areas Stillwater has direct influence on the industry to make it more diverse, equitable, inclusive, and just. To help connect the dots between DEIJ as a change

management framework and how to apply DEIJ within energy efficiency programs, Stillwater developed a DEIJ Continuum, a tool used with clients to understand where DEIJ fits within C&I programs and how to chart a meaningful path forward to create greater impact and greater savings through DEIJ.

Engaging Outward Leveraging the DEIJ Continuum

The Continuum is a tool Stillwater Energy has used in specific energy efficiency programs and can guide how other program administrators, implementers, and evaluators think about and incorporate DEIJ into their work. The framework shown in figure 2 below was inspired by Portland-based DEIJ consultancy, Future Work Design (Augsburger, 2021). The Continuum represents the various phases of a DEIJ journey where an energy efficiency organization might find themselves, provides a description for each level and helps an organization identify and align to how they might reach another level on the Continuum. The Continuum is a conversation starter to help program administrators self-identify where they think their organization and programs are within the Continuum. This tool drives a discussion to identify appropriate levers and strategies to progress along the Continuum.

Continuum	Level	Definition
Awareness	1. Compliance	Awareness of importance of DEI. No policies or processes in place beyond compliance with local and federal laws.
	2. Intention	Recognize DEI is important but haven't made any structural changes. Intention to be more diverse, inclusive and equitable.
Practice	3. Business Case	Organizational buy-in that DEI leads to more savings. Understanding that energy reduction comes through how people are engaged.
	4. Belonging	Actively shift policy, procedures and behaviors to support inclusive culture and engage people meaningfully in energy management.
Systemic	5. Operational	Fully operationalized DEI, integrated into business practices, and as strategically important as finance, marketing, etc.
	6. Leading	Active outward leadership through communications and industry influence. Transparent sharing of best practices.

Figure 2: Stillwater Energy DEIJ Continuum

Awareness – Level 1: Compliance

Organizations that find themselves at the beginning of their DEIJ journey, may recognize this early stage of *awareness*. Where an organization and/program may be aware of the importance of DEIJ, however, they have not taken any steps to proactively address DEIJ internally. At this stage there are no policies or processes in place beyond compliance with local and federal laws governing discrimination and equal opportunity. Individuals within an organization may be aware of a need to do more related to DEIJ, but support for DEIJ is not explicitly expressed at the highest levels of leadership within an organization.

Awareness – Level 2: Intention

Another common place for organizations to start their DEI journey is awareness and intention. Here an organization may recognize DEI is important and intend to make changes to achieve this organizational goal, but no structural or process changes have occurred. There is an explicit intention stated by leadership to be more diverse, inclusive, equitable and just. This might look like an equity statement on a company website or other internal communication explicitly noting an organization's intention to focus on DEI. Additionally, there may be awareness and intention to bring a DEI lens to program design and implementation, but a lack of process or action toward that goal.

Practice – Level 3: Business Case

At the *business case* level of the Continuum, organizations have demonstrated organizational commitment to DEI. They may have an organization wide DEI policy in place or have designated a DEI lead to head their efforts. Once they have made this organizational commitment and start to dedicate resources to DEI, an organization starts to develop a business case for DEI. This business case describes how DEI efforts and achievement of DEI goals directly supports the organizational objectives. For energy efficiency organizations, the business case is how DEI leads to more savings and more engaged end-use customers. This comes from an understanding that energy reduction is achieved through how people are engaged. To achieve the greatest energy savings, organizations need to engage as many people as possible using messaging that connects to them and their needs.

At this stage an organization understands the need to invest in culturally and linguistically tailored program content. They start to emphasize the need for diversity within programs. For instance, encouraging Strategic Energy Management (SEM) participants to foster diverse energy teams. Diverse perspectives on a team lead to greater impact and energy savings.

As an organization develops the business case for DEI, each program or program manager will start to establish DEI goals for each program, a roadmap for how to achieve those goals and way to monitor progress. This is the beginning of developing and putting into action a plan and practice of DEI. This practice and business case are the first step to implementation.

Practice – Level 4: Belonging

At the *belonging* level, an organization moves into implementation. Here an organization takes the practice of DEI to the next level and actively shifts policy, procedures, and behaviors to support an inclusive culture and engage people meaningfully in energy management. At this stage, implementation is both internal and external, by necessity. An energy efficiency program cannot effectively engage diverse stakeholders externally if they have not first done the work internally.

With belonging, organizations and programs are proactively and regularly engaging community-based organizations and individuals from underrepresented communities to inform program design and implementation. Program development is informed by cultural values and the needs of different communities. Rather than a one-size-fits-all approach, energy efficiency programs could develop and offer different programs for different communities, with equitable processes that meet end-use customers where they are, including different measurement and verification (M&V) approaches and cost-effectiveness thresholds. M&V and cost-effectiveness

should not be defined one way across all programs if the community wants to meet the needs of different customers, such as small-to-medium commercial customers or multifamily.

At this stage, programs meet the needs of a more diverse customer base and create greater impact, because they have adapted their policies, processes, and behaviors to be more inclusive and equitable.

Systemic – Level 5: Operational

At the *operational* level, organizations, and the programs they offer, are creating systemic change. They have fully operationalized DEIJ within their organization and programs. This means DEIJ is integrated into their daily business practices and is as strategically important as other business functions (i.e., finance, marketing, etc.).

All departments have clear and specific DEIJ strategies for their work. Each program has clear DEIJ goals and metrics to measure progress.

As relates to energy efficiency program delivery, each relevant department (i.e., legal, marketing, finance, account management, Energy Efficiency /Demand Side Management) have implemented changes related to their process, procedures, and behavior. A few examples are:

- Program participation agreements are modified to be less cumbersome and intimidating to customers
- Organizations shift insurance liability from contractor to program administrator to enable contacting with smaller delivery firms
- Marketing departments invest in transcreation to support development of culturally and linguistically tailored program materials for both outreach and implementation

Systemic – Level 6: Leading

At the highest level on the Continuum, organizations *lead* systemic change by actively and openly sharing their journey and best practices. Through communications and industry influence, these organizations and their programs demonstrate their commitment to systemic change and the steps they have taken to positively impact individuals within their organization and beyond. Transparency is key here to truly be a thought-leader.

An organization and program openly and proactively share their DEIJ lessons learned with the public in a spirit of “doing the work” and always striving to do better. The organization and programs consistently, proactively, and visibly address all forms of oppression. They assume that oppression and inequity exist and actively address oppression and inequity from the C-Suite to customer-facing employees.

Leading is not a destination because the work of DEIJ and change management is continuous.

The DEIJ Continuum in Practice

The Continuum can be used in regular program review meetings with program administrators to self-identify where their organization and programs are and start to imagine where they could be. While program administrators are often open to discussing DEIJ, they often

ask: “Why is an implementer focused on energy efficiency program delivery talking about DEIJ?”

In discussing the Continuum with program administrators, Stillwater has found it useful to set the stage that about the urgent need to drive change across our communities and that the energy programs can be valuable mechanisms to drive this change at many levels. In addition, Stillwater’s position is that maximizing DEIJ integration into programs provides two core benefits to all programs, including C&I programs:

1. Programs with DEIJ optimally deployed will reach more organizations and more individuals within organizations.
2. Programs with DEIJ optimally deployed will cause more organizations and individuals to be engaged more deeply.

Together, these two benefits will drive greater energy savings than without the DEIJ-enhanced engagement.

The Continuum is a way to spark reflection and conversation for both program implementers and administrators. The Continuum has allowed Stillwater to address DEIJ in program implementation. There are three examples where using the Continuum in program discussions with three very different organizations: one public utility, one investor-owned utility, and a provincial energy utility.

Stillwater had worked with a public utility for almost five years before introducing the Stillwater DEIJ Framework and Continuum. Shortly after, the utility program administrator approached Stillwater about bringing DEIJ into the curriculum for end-use customers. In this instance, the utility was clearly moving from Awareness and Intention on the Continuum (recognizing the importance of DEIJ) to Practice and the Business Case for DEIJ (understanding that energy reduction comes through how people are engaged). Specifically, the new end-user curriculum emphasized the importance of diverse energy teams, and how diverse perspectives make an energy team more effective and help drive more energy savings. SEM often emphasize the importance of recruiting diverse energy team members from the perspective of including different roles from within an organization. However, if an energy champion can create an inclusive team environment for a diverse team of people with different lived experiences, then the opportunities for creative problem-solving grow.

In another case, working with an investor-owned utility, Stillwater introduced the importance of DEIJ from the initial program design. This utility was squarely in the Practice and Business Case on the DEIJ Continuum and is moving toward Belonging (actively shifts policy, procedure, and behavior). Together with the utility, Stillwater identified under-resourced organizations that would benefit from additional support and resources through the program offering. Also, in collaboration with the utility, Stillwater proactively addressed the common barrier of an overly cumbersome and complicated participant agreement, simplifying the agreement and the amount of data asked for upfront. This allowed the program to bring more customers into the program more quickly.

With one provincial energy utility Stillwater has worked with for many years, the Continuum discussion helped identify an existing idea the program team had but that had not been prioritized. The person responsible for creating job descriptions for energy management interns had not seen a need for such stringent criteria for credentials and experience. They had

been making exceptions to fill intern positions on a case-by-case basis, but it wasn't standardized in the process. This example is again about moving toward Practice and Belonging, actively shifting policy, procedure, and behavior to support an inclusive culture.

Of course, in all these examples the prerequisite for a productive Continuum discussion and subsequent program implementation is organizational commitment. These individual program managers had the support of executive leadership, and their organizations are committed to DEIJ.

Opportunities for DEIJ in the C&I Sector

Based on the survey of recent papers, it is apparent the conversation of DEIJ needs to be pushed beyond residential programs and leverage change management to foster racial and social justice in and through C&I energy efficiency programs. Below are some topics that the C&I energy efficiency sector might consider as a focus for program development and research.

- *DEIJ in the C&I energy efficiency sectors, focusing on program design, implementation, engagement, and measurement*
 - How can energy efficiency programs and program administrators center underserved and BIPOC communities (customers and their employees) in C&I program design and implementation?
 - How can energy efficiency programs effectively and equitably engage diverse and underrepresented groups in the C&I sectors in meaningful and impactful ways?
 - How does one measure both energy and non-energy benefits resulting from a program's DEIJ efforts?
 - How do program administrators ensure an inclusive program design and implementation to achieve persistent energy savings?
- *DEIJ lens applied to utility practices internally*
 - How do utilities and other program administrators assess their internal organizational development toward a more diverse, equitable, inclusive and just organization?
 - How do utilities and program administrators lead by example?
 - What are the institutional and systemic barriers leadership need to address internally to create more equitable C&I programs?
- *DEIJ in the energy efficiency industry and companies*
 - How do energy efficiency companies delivering services to end-use customers assess their internal organizational development with a DEIJ lens?
 - How can the industry foster development of DEIJ through workforce development and organizational development?
 - How can these companies influence utilities to do more around DEIJ in relation to C&I programs specifically?

In addressing these gaps, there is an opportunity to elevate the topic of DEIJ and demonstrate how a focus and emphasis on DEIJ leads to more people (both the business's customers and employees) being engaged more effectively to drive persistent energy savings.

Summary

While much of the work of DEIJ has been applied in the residential space, a DEIJ lens can be applied in the C&I energy efficiency spaces. This holistic approach creates organizations where employees, customers and other stakeholders feel a sense of belonging and where individuals understand they have an important role to play in helping the organization achieve its mission, vision, values, and ultimately, energy savings.

To create systemic change, organizations must first look inward and set the example for how to center issues of DEIJ. There are many organizations in the energy efficiency space actively and intentionally addressing DEIJ within their organizations and in their work with communities and businesses.

Through forums such as ACEEE, energy efficiency organizations can learn from one another, share best practices, and conduct research to elevate the topic of DEIJ and demonstrate how a focus and emphasis on DEIJ leads to more people (end-use customers and their employees) being engaged more effectively to drive persistent energy savings. The sector can use the tools of change management to engage individuals in the change necessary to create a positive impact.

A change management framework, combined with experience with Strategic Energy Management (SEM), can be used to apply a DEIJ lens to energy efficiency programs. First organizations can apply DEIJ to guide both internal and external business practices. Subsequently, organizations can use tools like the DEIJ Continuum to understand where DEIJ fits within programs and chart a meaningful path forward to create greater impact and greater savings through DEIJ.

Conclusion

The energy efficiency sector specifically has a role to play in ensuring our world is more diverse, equitable, inclusive, and just. Through intentional application of DEIJ, energy efficiency programs can be part of the solution to help correct centuries of injustice and dismantle systems of oppression. It is not enough to just look internally; energy efficiency organizations have a responsibility to apply DEIJ to their work with customers, businesses, and the larger community.

Systemic change does not happen without individual organizations and the people within those organizations actively and intentionally changing how they do business. Too often energy efficiency organizations use the excuse that DEIJ is not part of their core business or not within scope of an energy efficiency program. However, through authentically engaging diverse groups of people, with inclusive programs and equitable processes, energy efficiency programs can deliver better savings, while also playing an active role in building a future where everyone feels a sense of belonging.

For program administrators, implementers, and evaluators, there are growing opportunities to incorporate DEIJ into the work of C&I energy efficiency programs. As described earlier with the Energy Trust of Oregon, and their focus on serving BIPOC and rural

communities, as well as requirements for awarding contracts to underrepresented contractors, utilities, local, regional, and national governments, are all emphasizing equity in new program offerings. Recently the City of Seattle Office of Sustainability and Environment released a request for proposals (RFP) that explicitly names the goal “to focus the technical support on owners or representatives of buildings that have less organizational capacity to meet current and future energy or GHG-related mandates, scope and implement building upgrades, and obtain incentives and financing—especially buildings essential to and serving Black, Indigenous and people of color (BIPOC) populations” (City of Seattle, 2022). Increasing organizational capacity for DEIJ is no longer an organization development goal, but a business imperative to remain relevant with all customers and to achieve increasing energy efficiency savings goals. The following describe opportunities for different actors in the energy efficiency community to incorporate DEIJ into their efforts.

Program administrators can evaluate the various program elements they have at their disposal and apply a DEIJ lens:

- Assess program processes from sourcing contractors to contracting requirements
- Evaluate program design to make it more inclusive
- Reassess recruiting and outreach to BIPOC communities

Implementers can leverage their experience in consulting, change management, organizational development and experience working with various types of organizations and apply a DEIJ lens:

- Consult with utilities and program administrators on ways their organizations focus on DEIJ and how program implementation can align with those organizational goals
- Develop techniques for engaging BIPOC communities in program design
- Coach end-use customers to recruit diverse energy team members

Evaluators can work with program administrators and implementers from the beginning of program design and apply a DEIJ lens:

- Align non-energy benefits to DEIJ goals
- Develop an approach to measure the relationship between energy savings and DEIJ
- Prioritize and center BIPOC communities in program evaluations

The Continuum shared in this paper is one way to approach DEIJ in energy efficiency. The C&I energy efficiency sector has an exciting opportunity to develop other tools and resources for centering BIPOC communities. Program administrators, implementers, and evaluators do not need to be experts in DEIJ; there is a lot to learn from DEIJ experts and consultants, but DEIJ experts don’t need to do the work. Each person within the energy efficiency sector has a role to play in furthering the conversation, building organizational

support, and ensuring the necessary resources are made available to make the sector more diverse, equitable, inclusive, and just.

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