Exploration of solutions: What policy and program tools do we have available to us locally?

American Council for an Energy-Efficient Economy (ACEEE) case study & equitable decarbonization toolkit

Alexander Jarrah
Research Analyst, Local Policy
American Council for an Energy-Efficient Economy
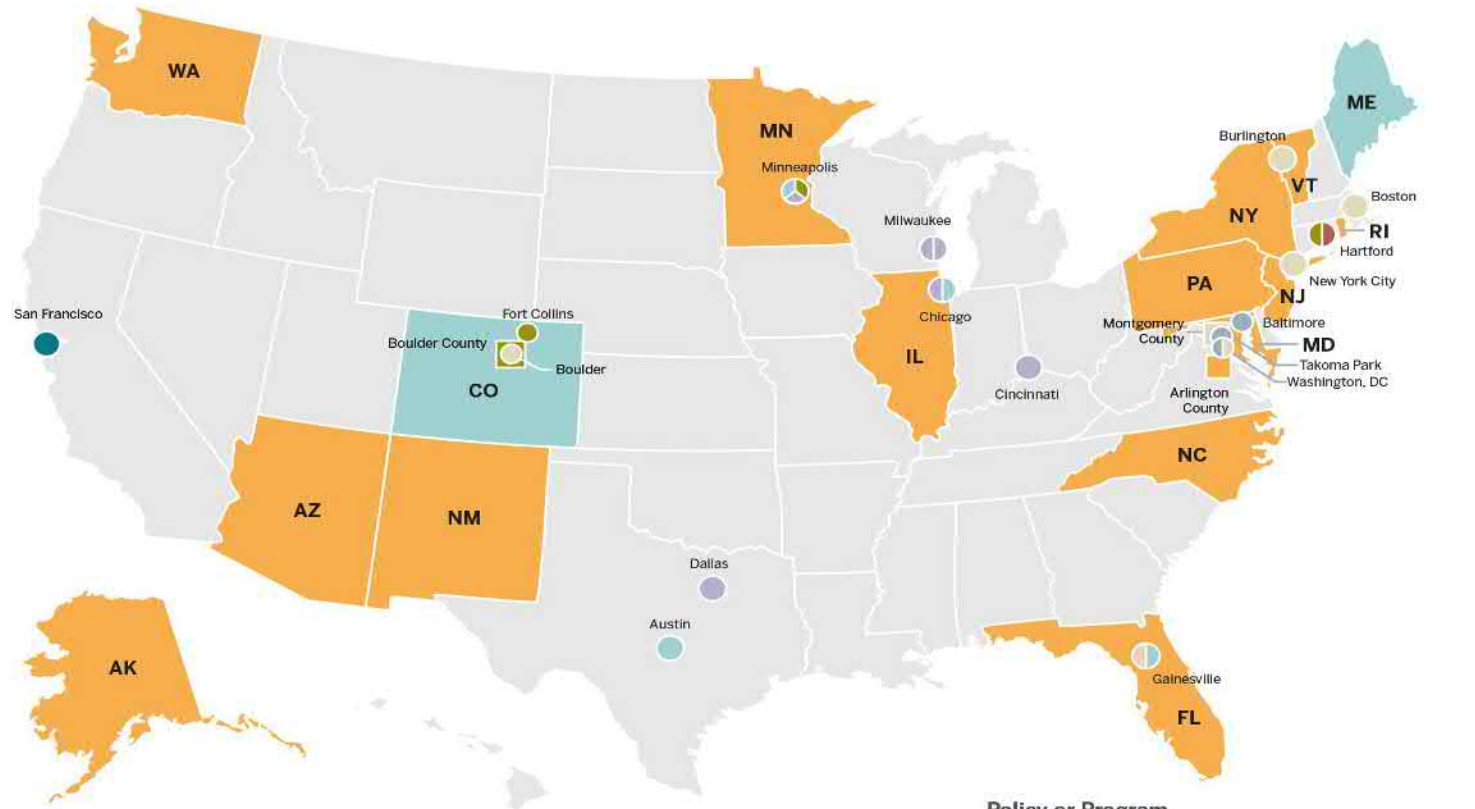
Energy Equity for Renters Toolkit

Alexander Jarrah

Local Policy Research Analyst

ACEEE

Smart Energy. Clean Planet. Better Lives.

About the Energy Equity for Renters Initiative

For more: aceee.org/energy-equity-for-renters

Energy Equity for Renters Policy Map

WA
MN
  Minneapolis
  Milwaukee
ME
Burlington
VT
NY
Boston
RI
Hartford
New York City
PA
NJ
San Francisco
Fort Collins
Boulder County
Boulder
CO
Chicago
IL
Montgomery County
Baltimore
MD
Takoma Park
Washington, DC
Arlington County
Cincinnati
AZ
NM
NC
Dallas
Austin
AK
Gainesville
FL

Policy or Program

- Incentive programs with affordability covenants
- Rental energy disclosure policy
- Rental energy performance standard
- Renter right of first refusal
- Granting renters the right to make efficiency improvements
- Including energy efficiency in competitive affordable housing funding criteria
- Instituting limited-scope rental property retrofit requirements
- Promoting existing state and utility efficiency programs

ACEEE::
Smart Energy. Clean Planet. Better Lives.

Last updated 10/2022

The Energy Equity for Renters Toolkit

Guidance for local governments and partnering community-based organizations to reduce energy use and greenhouse gas emissions while preserving affordable housing

ACEEE

Smart Energy. Clean Planet. Better Lives.

Sections of the toolkit

01
Integrated energy efficiency and housing strategies

02
Filling financing and funding gaps for energy efficiency retrofits

03
Guidance on stakeholder and community engagement, marketing, and outreach

04
Tools for local governments to hold themselves accountable to equity

ACEEE
Smart Energy. Clean Planet. Better Lives.

1. Integrated energy efficiency and anti-displacement policies

Renter challenges

- Housing cost burdens
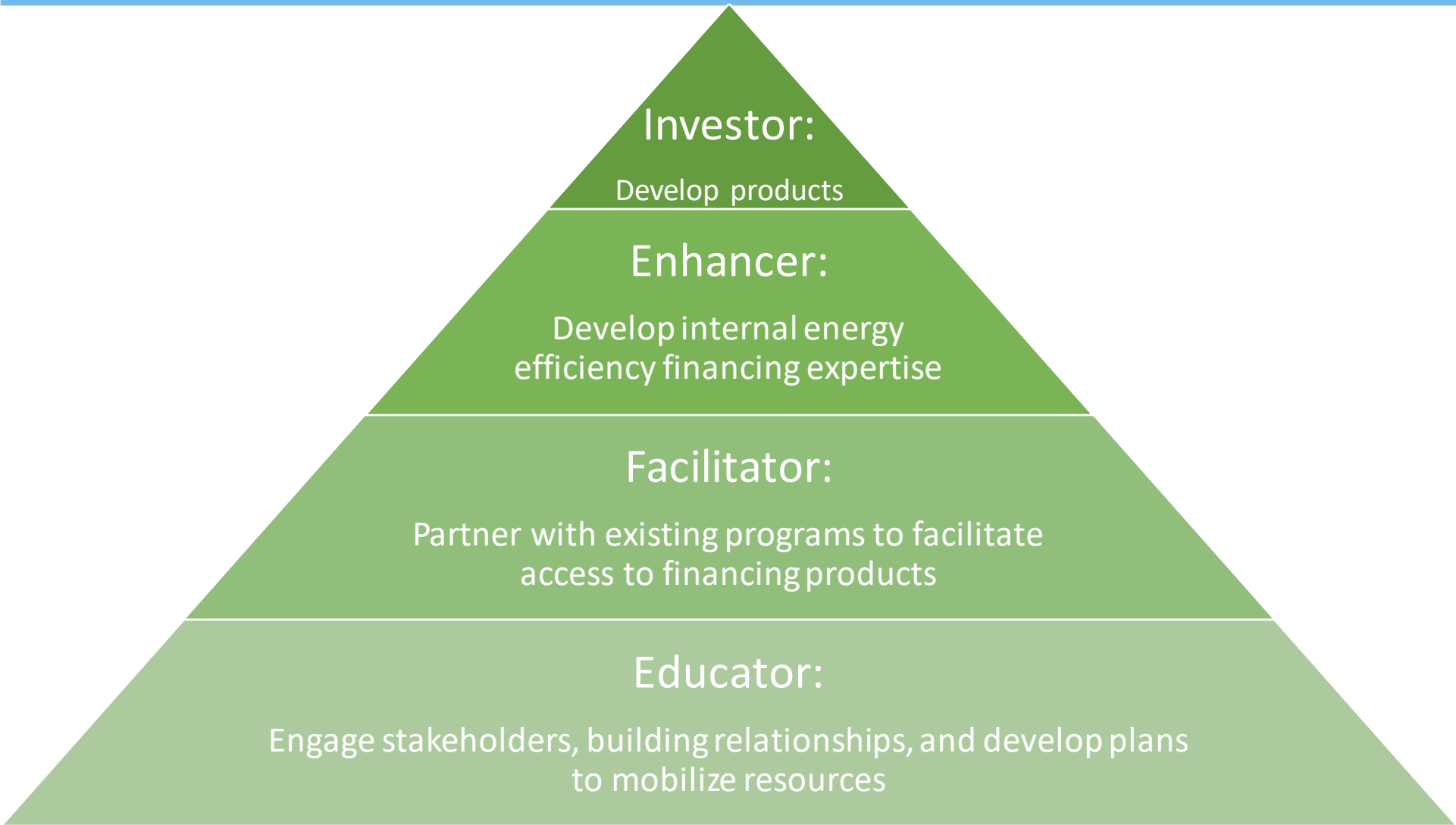- Poor housing quality
- Displacement

Response strategies

- Simplified access to rental and utility assistance
- Renter counsel assistance

Prevention strategies

- Affordable TOD
- Housing acquisition and rehab
- Opportunity to purchase acts
- Affordability covenant
- Just cause evictions

ACEEE

Smart Energy. Clean Planet. Better Lives.

2. Local government roles in filling energy retrofit financing and funding gaps

Investor:
Develop products

Enhancer:
Develop internal energy efficiency financing expertise

Facilitator:
Partner with existing programs to facilitate access to financing products

Educator:
Engage stakeholders, building relationships, and develop plans to mobilize resources

3. Guidance on stakeholder and community engagement, marketing, and outreach

Property owner engagement
- Engage local associations
- Simplify programs and marketing
- Target energy efficiency upgrades during other building improvements
- Present case studies of program successes

Property staff engagement
- Simplify programs and marketing
- Host regularly scheduled check-in calls
- Highlight direct install programs

Renter engagement
- Identify and engage interested property owners and managers
- Work with CBOs
- Provide communication materials to owners and managers
- Highlight nonenergy benefits

ACEEE

Smart Energy. Clean Planet. Better Lives.

4. Local government measures to institutionalize equity accountability

Equity measure	Description	Example cities
Structural equity assessments	Assessments that require local governments to determine how a proposed policy or program will support and create racial and social equity	Albuquerque, Minneapolis, Seattle, Washington, DC
Participatory budgeting	A process in which residents or an elected committee vote on how to spend portions of a local budget	Oakland, Seattle, Tacoma
Equity performance indicators	Reports that local governments use to collect data on equity and track progress against goals	Pittsburgh, San Diego
Residents play a formal decision-making role	Formal bodies that give residents the opportunity to affect city planning	Milwaukee, Providence

ACEEE
Smart Energy. Clean Planet. Better Lives.
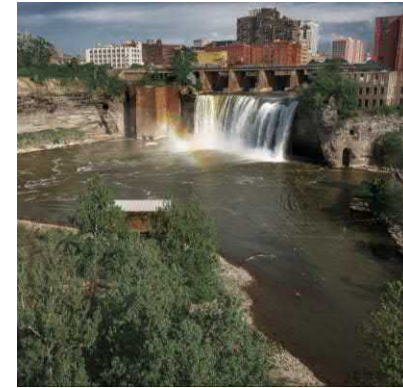
Examples of case studies in the toolkit

Denver, CO
Transit-Oriented
Development Fund
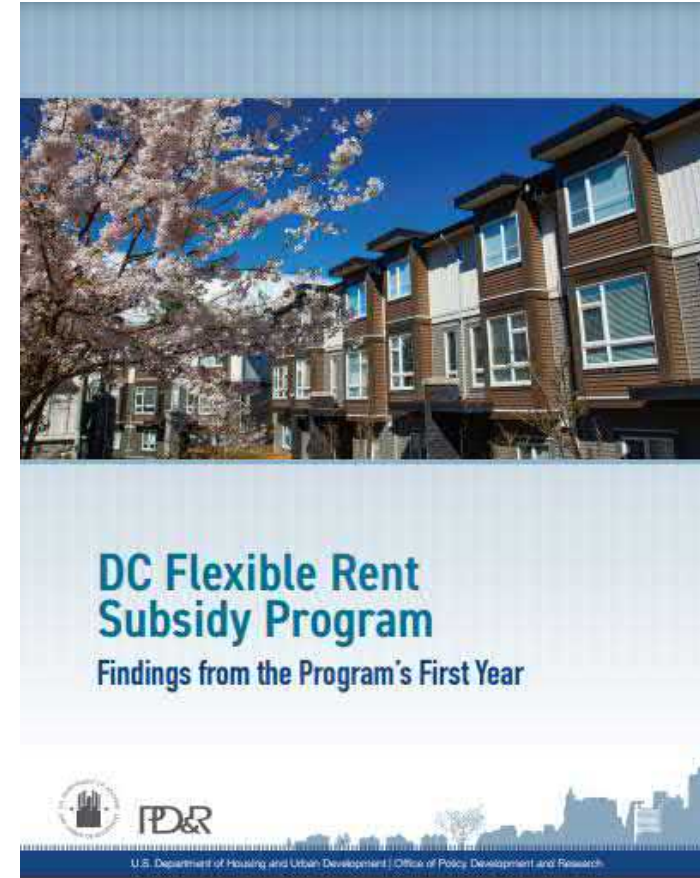Section 1

Minneapolis, MN
Pay-As-You-Save©
Section 2

Dane County, WI
Efficiency Navigator
Program
Section 3

Rochester, NY
Participatory budgeting
for affordable housing
Section 4

ACEEE
Smart Energy. Clean Planet. Better Lives.

Case study highlight: DC Flex

- Flexible form of rental assistance that allows participants to access rental assistance at their own discretion.

- DC established escrow accounts for participants of $7,200 per year

- Participants could withdraw as much as their monthly rent costs per month, and the money could be used only for rent

- The rent eats first: subsidizing rent costs frees up household income for other necessities and household expenses, such as energy costs

DC Flexible Rent Subsidy Program
Findings from the Program's First Year

U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development | Office of Policy Development and Research

Source: HUD 2020

ACEEE
Smart Energy. Clean Planet. Better Lives.

DC Flex: Challenges and Successes

- **Challenges**:
  - Identifying participants

- **Successes**:
  - 75 percent of program participants have been able to increase their incomes while avoiding episodes of homelessness
  - Due to program's incentive structure. It does not lower subsidy amount based on income

ACEEE

Smart Energy. Clean Planet. Better Lives.

Questions?

Alexander Jarrah
ajarrah@aceee.org