

Community Action Council of Howard County Case Study

For the Maryland residents served by the [Community Action Council of Howard County \(CACHC\)](#), a more energy efficient home isn't just a more comfortable place to live. The lower utility bills often help stretch the family budget to better cover the most basic needs.

MEA's 2014 EmPOWER Clean Energy Communities Low-to-Moderate Income Grant Program has enabled CACHC to help almost 200 families in five counties save money and energy. The nonprofit's energy efficiency upgrades have created over 4,000 labor hours for Maryland workers and resulted in more than \$70,000 in annual savings. That provides each family with anywhere from \$200 to more than \$500 a year in saved income to help make ends meet.

CACHC also receives funding from the [Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development \(DHCD\)](#) administered weatherization programs (using Department of Energy funding) as well as [EmPOWER Maryland](#) utility funding. Combining these multiple funding sources enables CACHC to maximize its impact and meet the objectives of all programs. MEA's EMPOWER Clean Energy Communities Low-to-Moderate Income (LMI) Grant Program is able to expand the scope of work supported by other funding sources in the following ways:

- **Additional allowable measures:** The MEA LMI Grant Program supported the installation of cost-effective additional energy efficiency measures that are not allowed under other programs, such as heat pump water heaters, LED lighting, and mini split heat pump units.
- **Expanded areas of work:** The MEA LMI Statewide Competitive Grant Program enables energy efficiency work throughout the entire state. For innovative and entrepreneurial agencies like CACHC, it creates opportunities to serve residents in jurisdictions that might have otherwise gone unserved.
- **Economies of scale:** The MEA LMI Statewide Competitive Grant Program encourages economies of scale. For CACHC, this meant being able to solicit bids on bundled residential projects rather than individual houses. The larger job scope allowed for cost savings of approximately 35%.



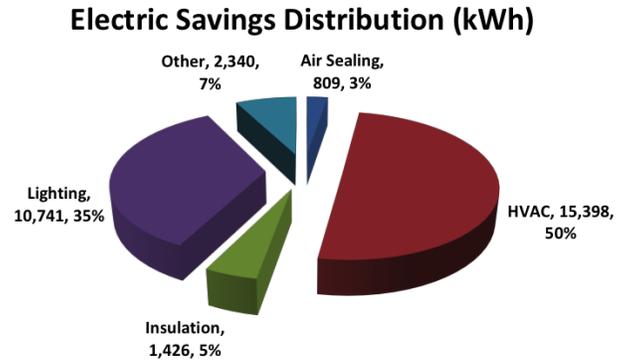
Gary Christopher, Director of Weatherization for the Community Action Council of Howard County, checks on 2014 EmPOWER Clean Energy Communities Low-to-Moderate Income Grant Program upgrades in Queen Anne's County.

CACHC Project Summary

| | |
|--------------------------------------|--|
| Total Cost | \$727,118 |
| Annual Energy Cost Savings | \$70,072 |
| Annual kWh Savings | 499,569 |
| Annual Therms Savings | 398 |
| Simple Payback | 9.1 years (net project cost without administrative, health & safety costs) |
| Labor Hours Generated for MD Workers | 4,001.5 |

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- Aggregated savings:** Whether a project involves a single unit or an entire building, the MEA LMI Grant Program allows for savings to be taken in aggregate, as long as bundled residential upgrades pay for themselves in ten years or less (excluding the audit cost, administrative charges and any health and safety costs). This approach allowed CACHC to upgrade specific measures or units in buildings that would otherwise have gone unserved. In multi-family buildings, it enabled more of a whole building approach with greater gains in weatherization, resulting in increased health, safety, and energy efficiency for all units.
- Flexible housing type:** The MEA LMI Grant Program does not place restrictions on the type of residential building eligible for upgrades. While some programs exclude multi-story units and manufactured homes that are not on a foundation, and others are open only to homeowners, the MEA LMI Grant Program allows for rentals, manufactured homes, and [Home Performance with ENERGY STAR](#) upgrades on multi-story units. This flexibility allowed CACHC to help many additional households than would have been possible under their traditional funding sources.



Community Action Council of Howard County – 7 Homes in Frederick County

| Implemented Measures | Estimated Electric Savings (kWh) | Estimated Annual Energy Savings | Installed Cost | Estimated Payback in Years |
|----------------------|----------------------------------|---------------------------------|-----------------|----------------------------|
| Air Sealing | 809 | \$109 | \$1,768 | 16.2 |
| HVAC | 15,398 | \$2,074 | \$33,900 | 16.3 |
| Insulation | 1,426 | \$192 | \$3,116 | 16.2 |
| Lighting | 10,741 | \$1,447 | \$1,323 | 0.9 |
| Other | 2,340 | \$315 | \$927 | 2.9 |
| Total | 30,713 | \$4,137 | \$41,034 | 9.9 |