EmPower New York Special Initiatives

LIFE Conference
May, 2014

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Responding to the needs of low-income households through EmPower

- Assistance to households affected by severe weather events
- Service to households in no-heat situations
- Enhanced service through coordination with Assisted Home Performance with ENERGY STAR®

Special Initiative:
Assistance to households affected by severe weather events

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Broome County 2011

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Long Island 2012

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Penn Yan 2014

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Special Initiative: Storm Assistance

With the increased frequency of severe weather events, NYSERDA initiated special procedures to serve low-income households affected by the disasters.

The procedures were developed in consultation with contractors, NYSHCR, community-based organizations and disaster-management experts.

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Storm Assistance Triage

- Household must be income-eligible for EmPower
- Repair costs covered by insurance, FEMA, or other sources are not eligible for EmPower
- Dwelling must be suitable for continued habitation
- Landlord storm repairs may count as “in-kind” contributions

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Storm Assistance Workscope

- As soon as possible, EmPower provides replacement:
  - Heating systems
  - Water heaters
  - Primary refrigerators
- When conditions allow, EmPower follows up with energy efficiency measures

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Storm Assistance Workscope Adjustments

- Check for mold and moisture issues prior to insulating
- Include building materials required for re-insulation
- If possible, move heating system to area less likely to flood
- Use resilient materials
- Avoid blower door or air sealing if mold is present

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Storm Assistance through EmPower

- **Tropical Storms Irene and Lee, 2011**: **343** households served
- **Hurricane Sandy, 2012**: **165** households completed or in progress
- **Mohawk Valley/Niagara County floods, 2013**: **68** households completed or in progress
- **Yates County, 2014**: Initial outreach has begun

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EmPower No-Heat Initiative (ENHI)

- Services to households in no-heat situations
- Implemented January 2014 with the early closing of the Heating Equipment Repair and Replacement Program
- Heating services combined with energy efficiency measures
- QA/QC
- Health and safety testing

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ENHI: Initial Process

- Local Departments of Social Services and other entities refer household to EmPower
- EmPower Implementation Contractor:
  - Verifies eligibility
  - Asks screening questions
  - Assigns to BPI-accredited participating contractor

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ENHI: Service to Renters

No-heat situations in rental properties must be referred to the landlord, unless:

- The building was affected by a severe weather event
- The landlord is HEAP-eligible

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ENHI: Contractor Inspection

- A comprehensive assessment of heating system
- CO and Gas Leak testing
- Evaluation of attic and wall insulation if time allows
- Documentation and photos
- Written itemized proposal

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ENHI: Installing measures

- Honeywell reviews proposal; depending on pricing and timeline, may require second bid
- Once approved, designated contractor proceeds with heating installation a.s.a.p.
- Depending on workload, condition of the home and other factors, additional energy efficiency measures may be installed immediately or at a later date.

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ENHI: QA/QC

- On site pre-inspections, in progress inspections
- Overall, most reports on work quality are very favorable.

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ENHI: As of 5/13/14

All work completed:	**218**
Heating systems installed, insulation in progress:	**127**
Typical response time:	**1-4 days**
Estimated total cost:	**$1,944,000**

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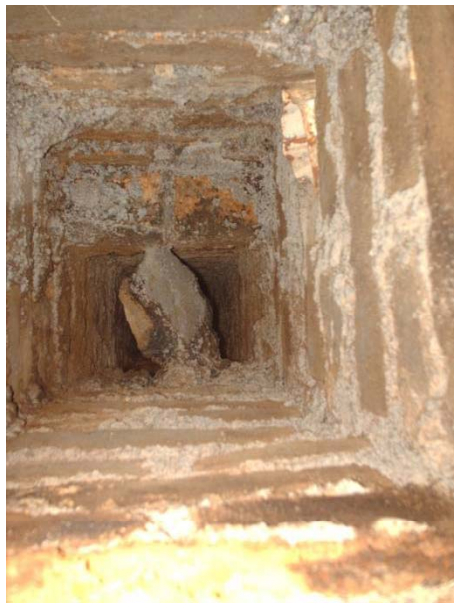
ENHI: Lessons Learned

- Repairs often solve the problem
- Educate household in maintenence
- Look at entire system: chimney, fuel line, etc.
- Lowest bids not always best: get the details
- Second and third bids are a challenge in rural areas
- Include the full scope in the proposal



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ENHI: The Future

- A plan for a response to no-heat situations in the coming heating season through the Office of Temporary Disability Assistance, NYSERDA, or other entities has yet to be determined.
- NYSERDA will notify interested parties once decisions have been reached regarding the use of EmPower funding to serve this need next year.

Assisted Home Performance (AHP) and EmPower

- EmPower serves households with the lowest incomes in the State, all of whom are also eligible for AHP
  - EmPower Income threshold: <60% of State median
  - AHP Income threshold: <80% of area median
- Households are provided with free measures through EmPower, but also the option of additional measures through AHP, with a 50% incentive from NYSERDA.
- EmPower services are offered for free and with no further obligation.

AHP and EmPower: Key Strategies

- Screen households up front
- Calculate energy usage
- Complete a comprehensive audit
- Submit the entire list of workscope options to the EmPower Program Implementer, Honeywell.
- Honeywell then identifies EmPower-eligible measures.

AHP and EmPower: Key Strategies

- Develop a workscope for AHP
- Carefully consider added value of additional measures and households' ability to pay 50%
- Discuss options with household
  - Free measures through EmPower only
  - Free EmPower measures plus AHP
- Notify both Implementers and proceed

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Have all of your questions been answered?

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Thanks!

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