

Revalue.io

Supporting Local, Diverse Contractor Training Programs

Project Description

This project addressed three major barriers to the decarbonization of low-income housing. First, typical outreach and communication about home electrification, which usually focuses on environmental issues or clean energy, is not persuasive to low- and moderate-income households. Second, low- and moderate-income homes are often not prepared to directly install heat pump technology due to significantly deferred maintenance. Finally, the lack of diversity in the construction industry means there are few contractors committed to serving this market segment or who can engage with low- and moderate-income communities in a culturally relevant way. The Quick Start Grant recipient, Revalue.io, worked with TECH Clean California on an innovative approach to pair home electrification in low- and moderate-income communities while simultaneously repairing home health hazards. The project also included novel financing approaches and supported existing local diverse contractor training programs in collaboration with the Cypress Mandela Training Center. The project team collaborated with other home rehabilitation programs to identify targeted properties based on their existing code complaints, age, or operating expenses. It then layered different program funds to perform needed repairs and remediation and electrify water heating, space heating and cooling, and cooking. Over the course of the grant, Revalue.io rehabilitated and electrified 65 units. In addition, the team designed and led targeted, inclusive training on electrification for more than 26 contractors and 46 electrification trainees.



TIMELINE:

January 2022 –
October 2023



HOUSING TYPE:

Multifamily



EQUITY SEGMENT:

Disadvantaged
Communities



TECHNOLOGY:

Heat Pump Water
Heaters and Heat
Pump HVAC



LOCATION:

Oakland,
California

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This program is part of the TECH Quick Start Grants (QSG) program, designed to fund targeted, innovative projects that test approaches to overcoming market barriers to heat pump space and water heating adoption.

Key Learnings

- Working through existing housing rehabilitation programs is an effective way of reaching low- and moderate-income communities because it leverages the owners' established trust in these known programs.
- Existing housing rehab programs are not equipped to deal with all remediation items precluding electrification (such as asbestos) and need education and resources to support holistic rehabilitation and electrification.
- Residential electrification messaging should be phrased to focus on health, comfort, and energy burden – things relevant to occupants' immediate interests. Messages addressing climate change or reducing carbon footprint are less effective.
- Resource coordination among housing rehab partners and other program partners is crucial for layering financial resources effectively. Workshops to encourage collaboration among partners and outreach materials highlighting existing electrification initiatives would be valuable.
- Underrepresented populations face barriers in accessing electrification training and supply chains, often due to lack of connections or work volume. Supporting minority contractors' entrance into the electrification workforce will require frequent, local, free, and project-based training and engagement with supply chain partners. Partnerships with industry groups and initiatives like Energy First CA, the Building Decarbonization Coalition, and the National Association of Minority Contractors can provide crucial support and attention to these challenges.

Next Steps

- The project team will continue to develop their Green and Healthy Homes Initiative Pay for Success financing model by seeking more data on the health impacts of addressing home health hazards and removing gas systems from low- and moderate-income households.
- Revalue.io has been accepted into the Terner Housing Innovation Lab at UC Berkeley, a three-year partnership aimed at scaling the model supported through this grant project. Specific objectives for this partnership include:
 - Conducting surveys to identify assets and gaps in the local contractor base, program coordination, and homeowner/tenant engagement.
 - Developing customized materials to communicate benefits and process of electrification to low- and moderate-income households – focusing on health, comfort, and energy burden.
 - Standardizing Revalue.io's electrification product offerings to incorporate residential electrification workforce development best practices, consumer and program education, and project management.
 - Establishing a low to no cost pay-for-performance finance program for holistic low- and moderate-income household improvements.

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