



# Simple Steps, Smart Savings Process Evaluation Findings

Webinar Presentation  
9-20-16



# Why Process Evaluation?

*(work in progress...QSSI team working)*

## Transparency

- Independent program assessment
- Documentation of goals and approaches

## Stewardship

- Helps ensure effective use of ratepayer funds
- Understand customer satisfaction

## Improvement

- Validation of what's working
- Recommendations for improvement where opportunities exist

# Agenda



- Welcome
- Program Introduction
- Results and Key Findings
- Recommendations
- Discussion

# Program Introduction



# Simple Steps Background



## History

Launched in 2010  
Roots: NEEA's Savings-with-a-Twist  
and BPA's Change-a-Light

## Diversity

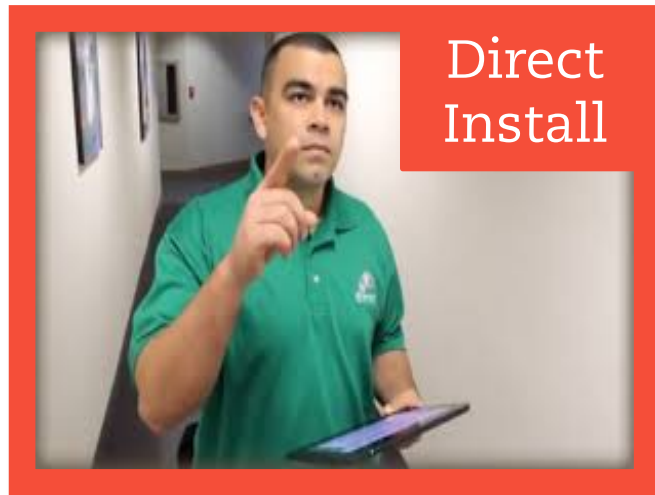
Enables utilities to offer variety of EE technologies to wide audience, which many utilities could not reach on their own

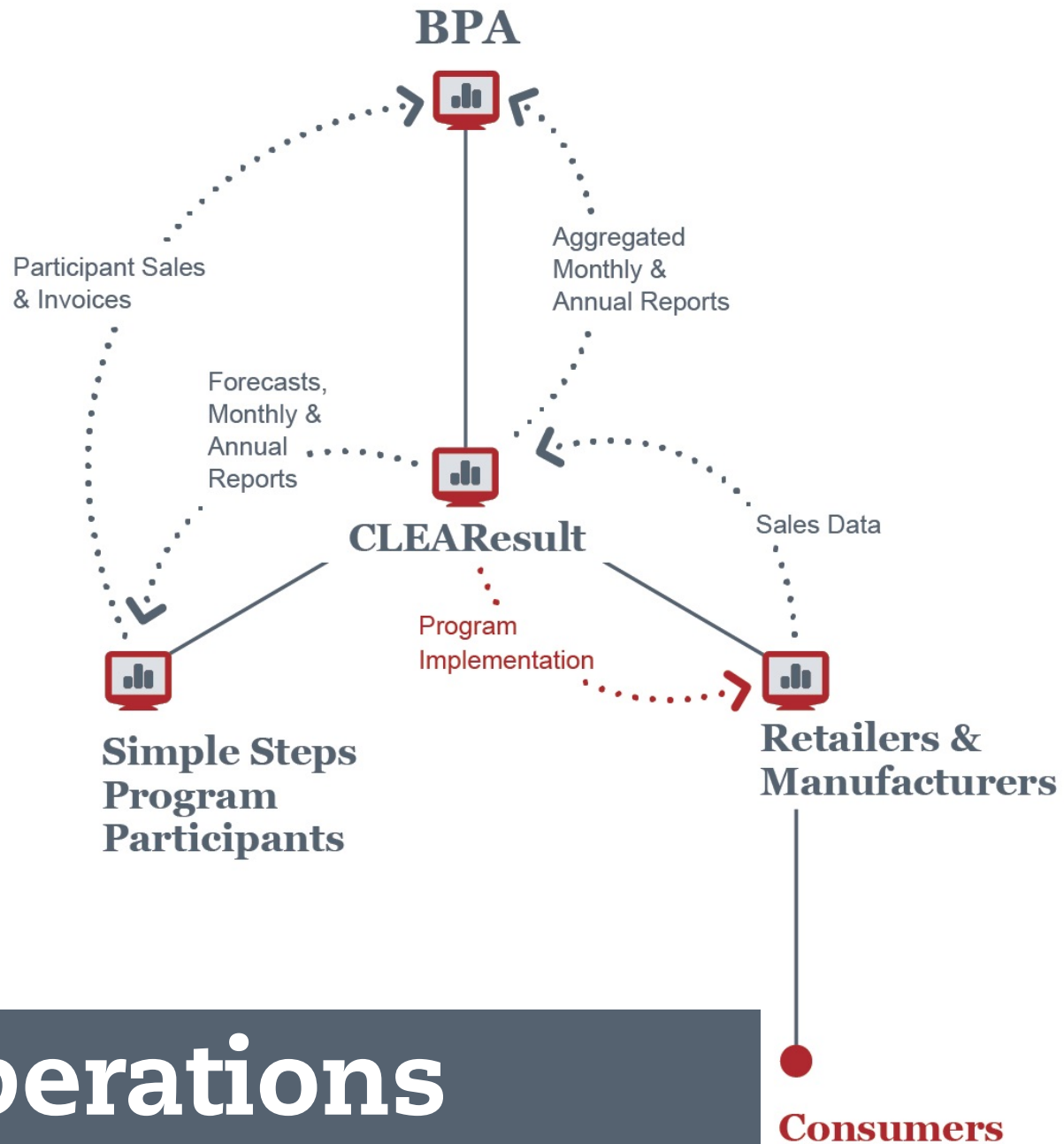
## Flexibility

Allows utilities to choose the channels and technologies : CFLs, LEDs, low-flow showerheads, advanced power strips, and efficient appliances



# Program Components

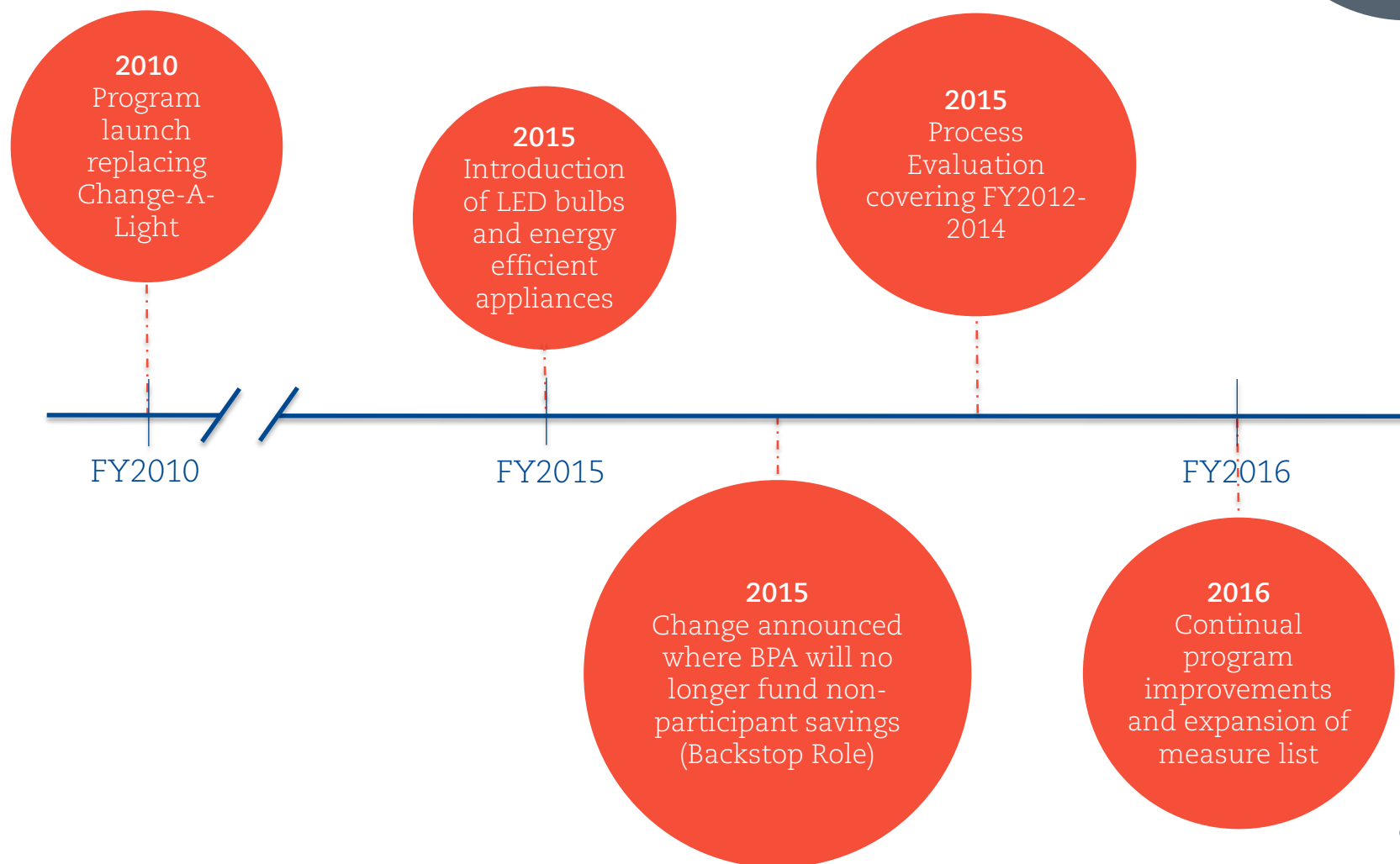




Simple Steps is “not a one-size-fits-all program” across the region, but is customizable

# Program Operations

# Program Timeline





# Evaluation Overview



# Process Evaluation

## Data Sources



Evaluation focus:  
FY 2012-2014



LOGIC  
MODEL



IN-DEPTH  
INTERVIEWS



PROGRAM DATA  
ANALYSIS

# Logic Model



## Long-Term Targets

- Deliver high-volume energy savings for lighting and appliances
- Test and improve the midstream model

## Program Activities

- Work with the program contractor
- Work with utilities
- Work with retailers and manufacturers
- Reporting

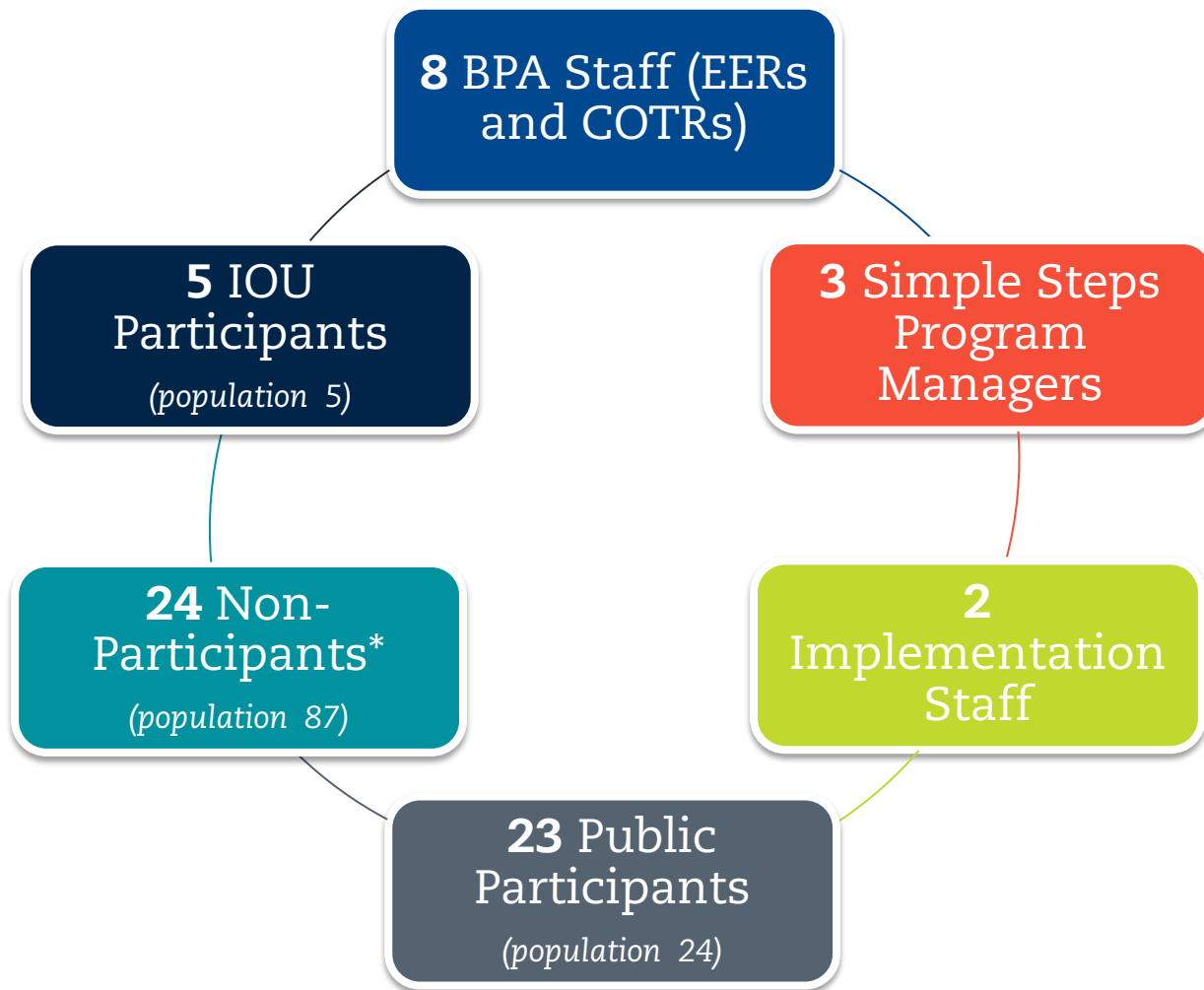
## Strategies/Rationale

- Provide a low-cost, easy program to help program participants achieve energy efficiency goals
- Transform markets around the selected measures to encourage end users to buy energy efficiency measures

## Motivating Conditions/Barriers

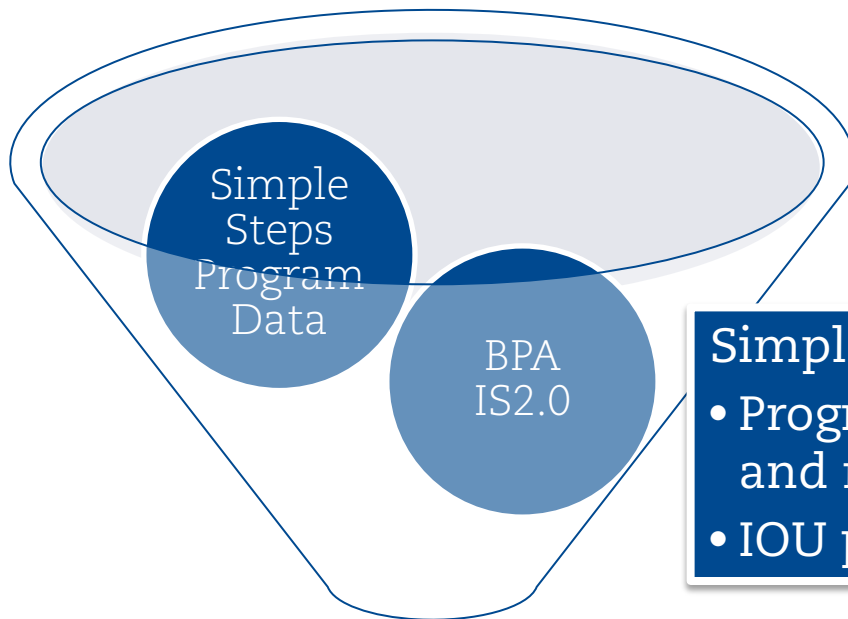
- Accessibility to retailers
- Effective education and outreach to customers and retailers
- Program marketing materials with utility branding

# In-Depth Interviews



\*Non-participants are BPA utility customers allocated—but not receiving—savings because they are not currently participating in the program

# Program Data Analysis



## Simple Steps data:

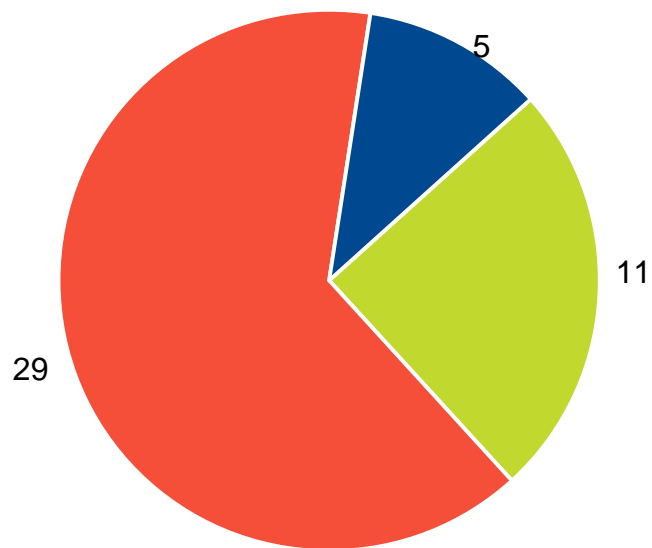
- Program data provided by manufacturers and retailers
- IOU participant data



## BPA IS2.0 data:

- Program data reported to BPA by Public Utilities, including Simple Steps and other “outside” programs

# Program Savings FY2012-2014



■ Public Utility Participants

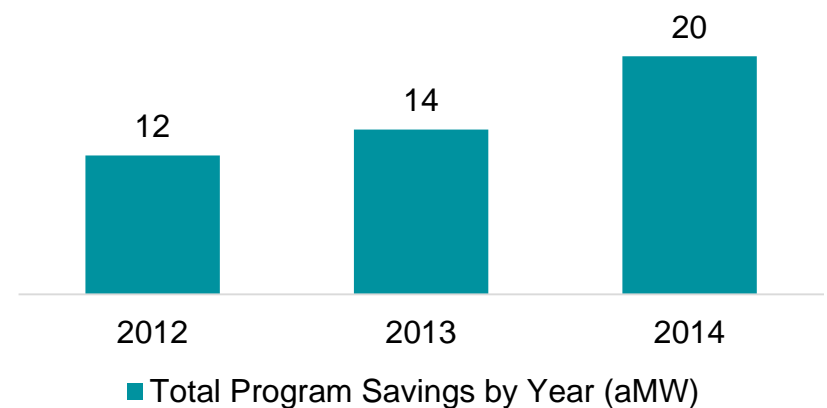
■ IOU Participants

■ Non-participants

Program saved over 45 aMW in FY 2012-2014

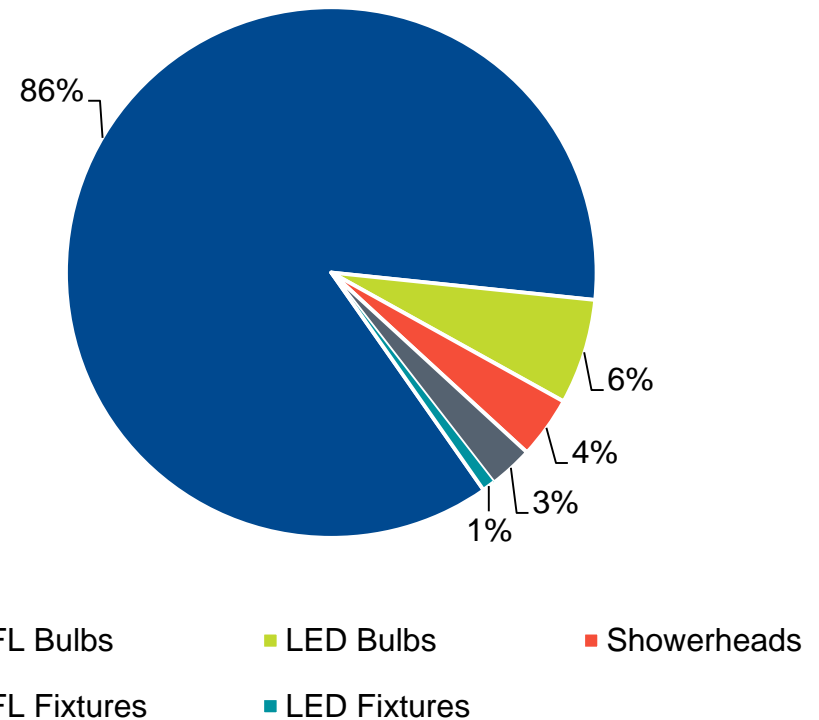
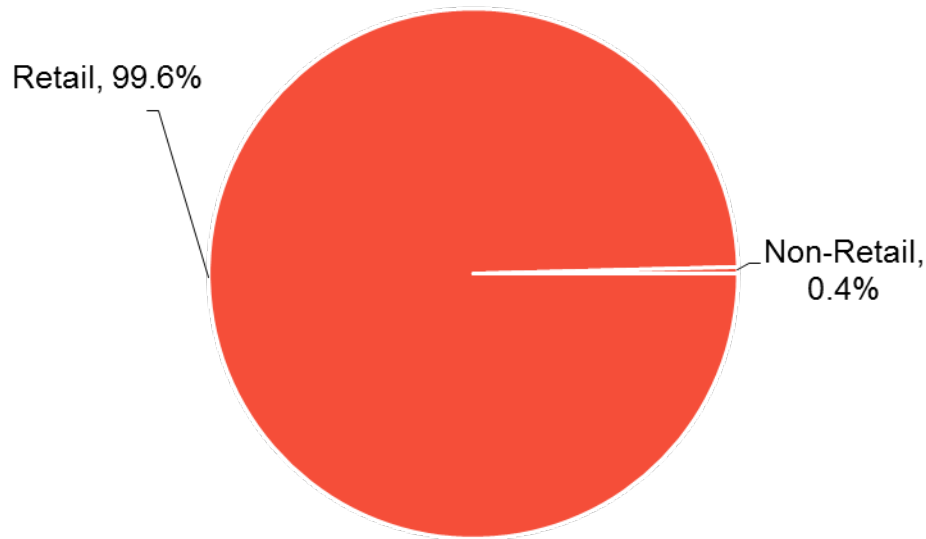
-Participating public utility savings: 24%

-Non-participating savings: 11%



■ Total Program Savings by Year (aMW)

# Savings by Component and Measures



"Non-Retail" includes the other three delivery components of Simple Steps: Bulk Purchase, Direct Install, and Direct Mail  
Source: Simple Steps program data.

# Results and Key Findings





# Program Effectiveness



## KEY FINDING:

Public utilities like the ease of Simple Steps calling it a “turnkey” program. IOUs like the benefit the program brings to the region and the promotion of energy efficient technologies.

# Program Effectiveness



Program is generally effectively run and marketed

Awareness of non-retail components is low

Utilities largely unaware of the recent changes to the “Backstop Role”\*

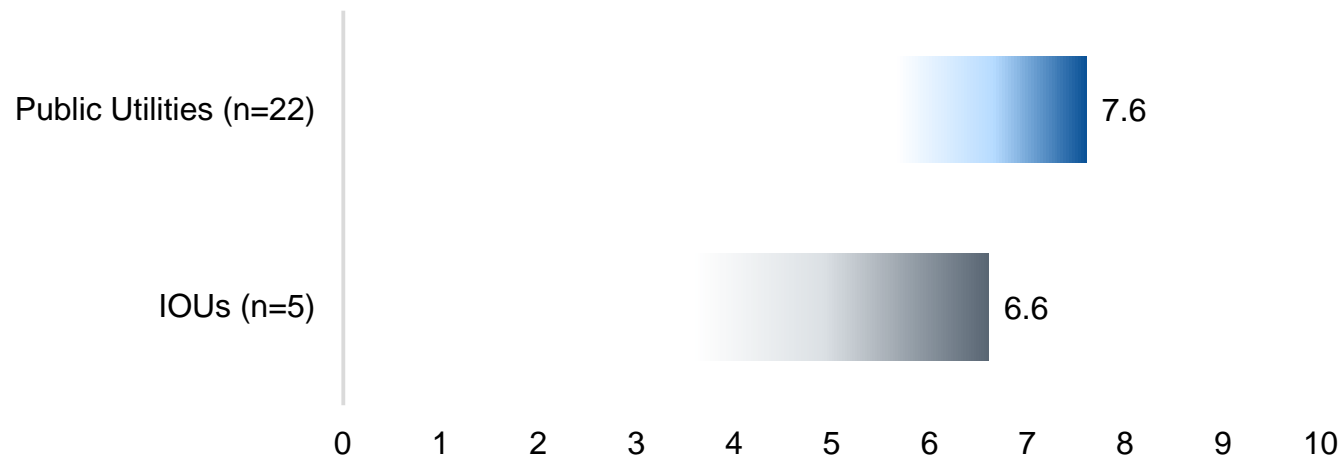


# Interview Results: Overall Program Satisfaction

## **KEY FINDING:**

Satisfaction among public participants is moderate for the program overall. Stakeholders generally liked the types of measures and flexibility in measure offerings the program allows, but were less satisfied with the amount of utility branding overall.

# Overall Program Satisfaction



## LEVERS DRIVING SATISFACTION

Flexible (23\*)

Easy – utilities identified it as “turnkey” (20)

Note: “n” in chart indicates number of participant interviewees rating satisfaction.

\* numbers in parentheses are counts of responses; the survey allowed for multiple responses for each category.

# Overall Program Satisfaction

## STICKING POINTS HINDERING SATISFACTION

Lack of visibility and utility branding (15)

Wanted to expand measure list to include heat pump water heaters, thermostats, and efficient washer/dryers (10)

Low oversight or engagement in rural areas (4)

IOUs had issues with monthly sales reports not meeting reporting requirements (3)

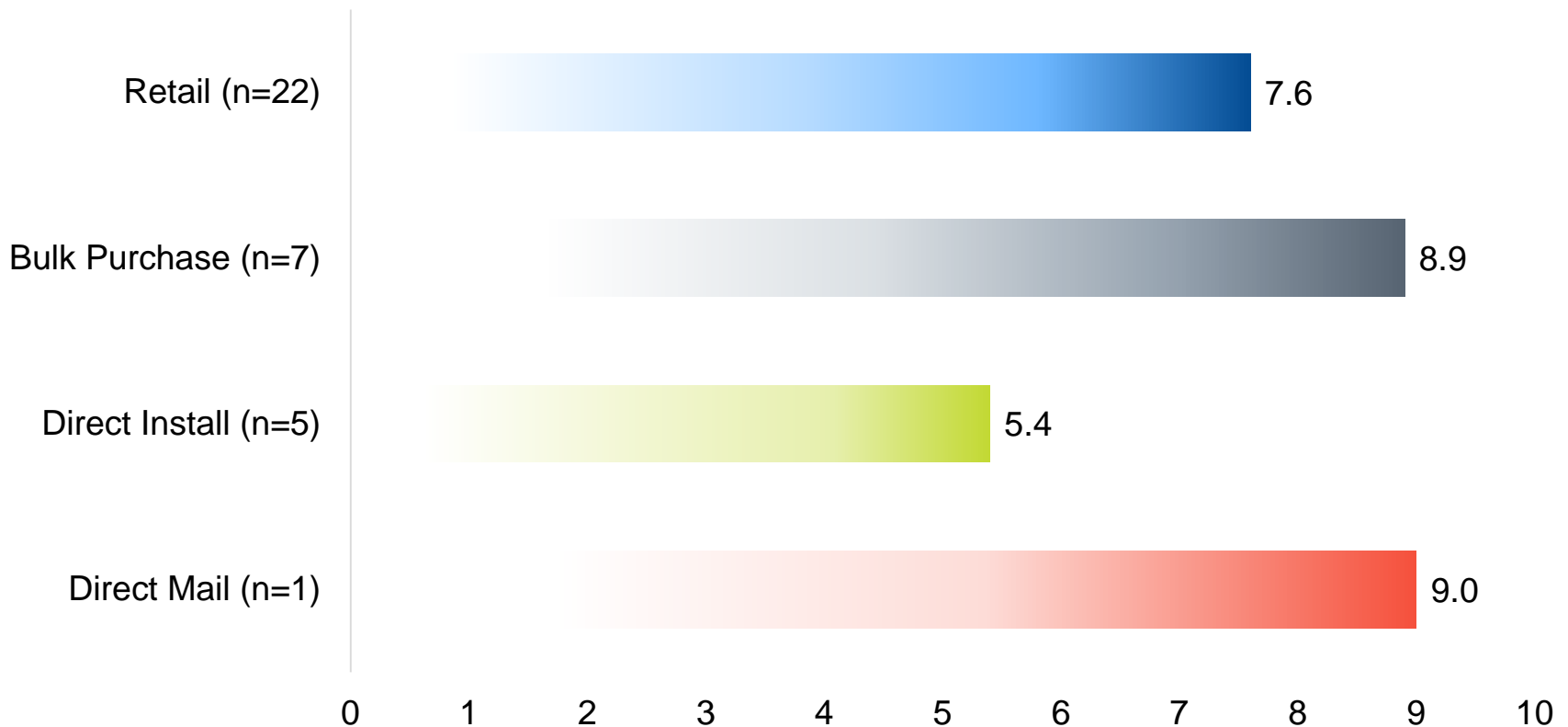
# Overall Program Satisfaction



## KEY FINDING:

Participants who reported valuing the savings aspect of the program (n=11), gave higher overall satisfaction scores than those who reported valuing customer connections and utility branding (n=5).

# Interview Results: Delivery Component Satisfaction



Note: "n" indicates number of participant interviewees rating satisfaction; average mean scores.

# Retail Component Satisfaction



“The program works. It’s incredibly easy for us, requires almost no effort, [and it] helps our customers without them really knowing about it.”

– Satisfied Public Participant



# Retail Component Satisfaction



## LEVERS DRIVING SATISFACTION

Consistent savings (11\*)

Easy (9)

Customer service (5)

## STICKING POINTS HINDERING SATISFACTION

Lack of visibility and utility branding (9)

IOUs issues w/ monthly sales reports (3)

Low oversight or engagement in rural areas (4)

Concerns about allocation methods (2)

Note: “n” in chart indicates number of participant interviewees rating satisfaction.

\* numbers in parentheses are counts of responses; the survey allowed for multiple responses for each category.

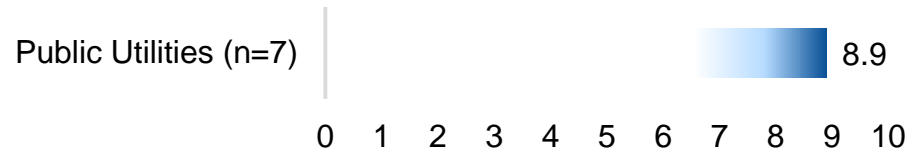
# Bulk Purchase Component Satisfaction



“It’s just really easy and it’s low cost. We ask a lot of the bulk purchase program and it really delivers.”

– Satisfied Public Participant

# Bulk Purchase Component Satisfaction



## LEVERS DRIVING SATISFACTION

Easy (6\*)

Competitive measure cost (6)

## STICKING POINTS HINDERING SATISFACTION

Delivery time too long (1)

Overall cost too high (1)

Note: “n” in chart indicates number of participant interviewees rating satisfaction.  
\* numbers in parentheses are counts of responses; the survey allowed for multiple responses for each category.

# Direct Install Component Satisfaction



## LEVERS DRIVING SATISFACTION

Allows for direct contact with customers (2\*)

Enables utilities to collect housing stock information (2)

## STICKING POINTS HINDERING SATISFACTION

Poor quality products (1)

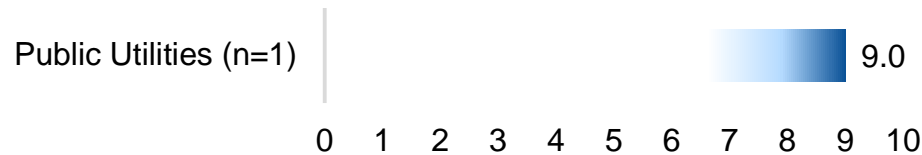
Not cost effective (1)

Limited access to rural or small utility customers (1)

Note: “n” in chart indicates number of participant interviewees rating satisfaction.

\* numbers in parentheses are counts of responses; the survey allowed for multiple responses for each category.

# Direct Mail Component Satisfaction



## LEVERS DRIVING SATISFACTION

Easy (1\*)

Can reach customers at lower cost than other components (1)

## STICKING POINTS HINDERING SATISFACTION

Not cost-effective to run every year  
(from participant who decided not to participate in component)

# Non-Participants



## BARRIERS PREVENTING PARTICIPATION

Limited budget (11\*)

RSAT allocation concerns (10)

Lack of utility branding in retail stores (9)

*All non-participants admitted a lack of awareness of at least one other delivery component*

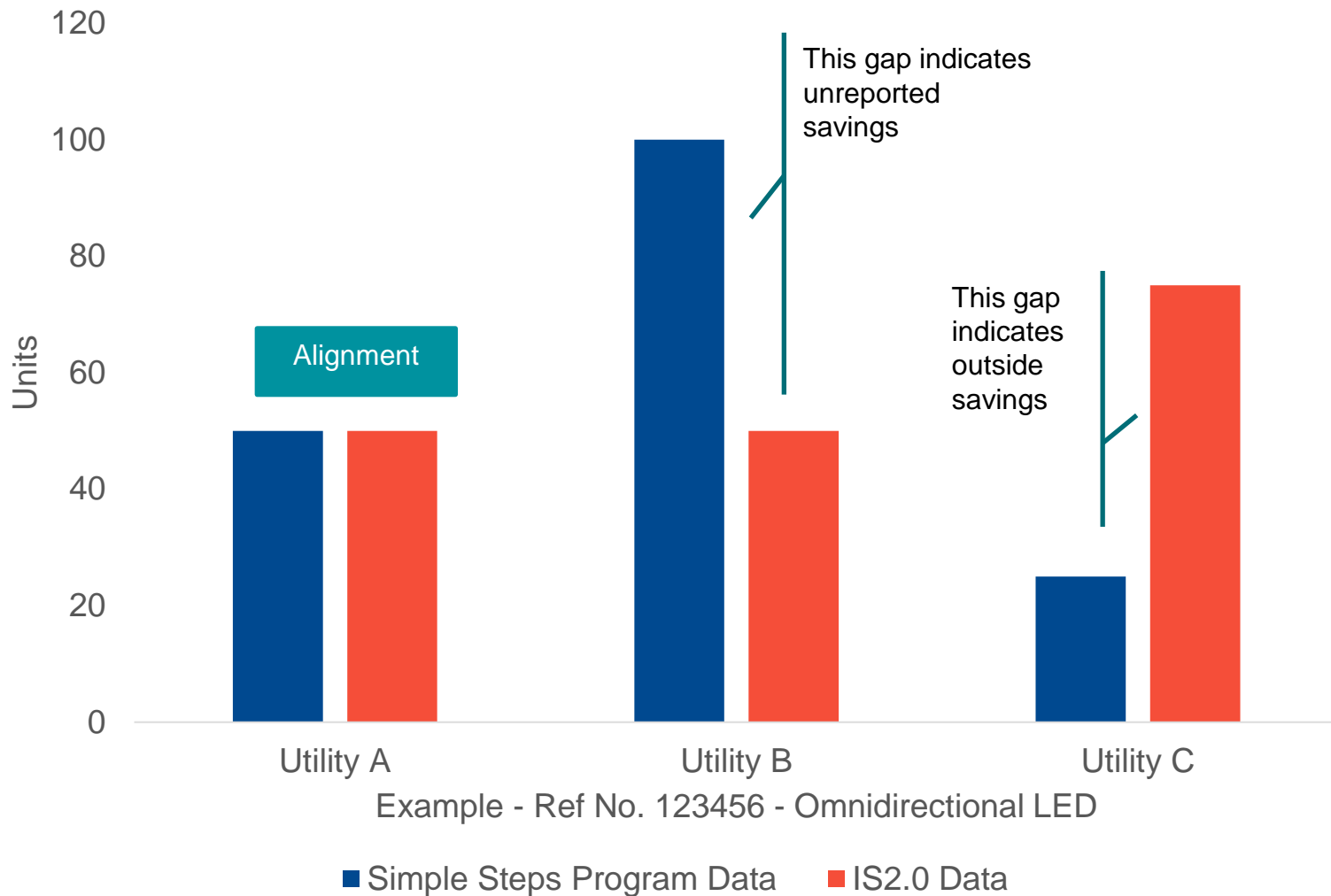
# Non-Participants



## KEY FINDING:

Non-participants indicated that the retail delivery component was not a good fit for small or rural utilities due to their low sales allocations in RSAT.

# Database Comparisons





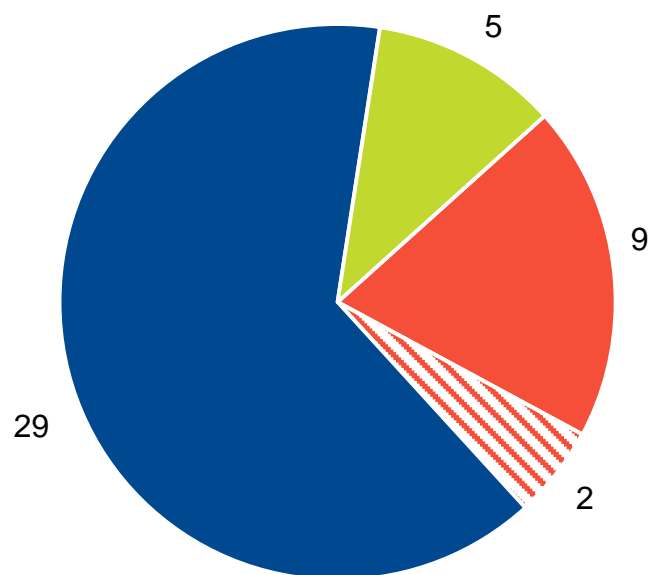
# Data Analysis Results: Unreported Savings are Large



## **KEY FINDING:**

Over 2 aMW of savings were unreported to BPA because some utilities cease to report savings once they exhaust EEI budgets.

# Unreported Savings



Public utility participants did not report 2.4 aMW of savings to BPA

60% of unreported savings from 2 utilities, but 50 utilities with unreported savings

- Public Utility Participants (Reported)
- ▨ Public Utility Participants (Unreported)
- IOU Participants
- Non-participants

Source: Simple Steps program data from the implementer compared with BPA IS2.0 data.

# Outside Program Savings

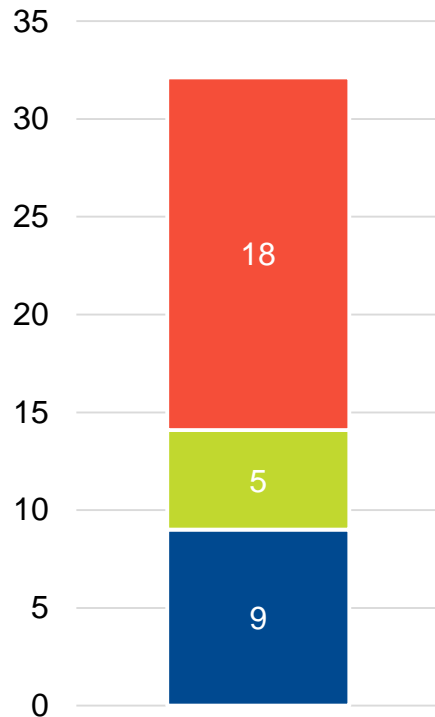


## **KEY FINDING:**

A significant amount of savings in the region (18 aMW) come from outside programs offering identical retail measures to those offered by Simple Steps.

# Outside Program Savings

aMW



- Outside Program Savings
- Non-Participant Savings
- Public Utility Participant Savings

Utilities also run programs with identical measures to Simple Steps (e.g., CFLs and LEDs)

IS2.0 has 32 aMW for retail measures: ~14 aMW attributed to the Simple Steps program, 18aMW are outside program savings

3 utilities account for 92% of the outside savings

# Data Analysis Results: Double-Participation



Evaluation found a possible scenario where a utility customer inadvertently participates in both Simple Steps and an outside utility program – defined as Double-Participation



Customer purchases a Simple Steps incentivized measure at a retail location



Submits the receipt for a rebate under a utility run program

*Evaluation team found no direct evidence of this issue in the program tracking data and in interviews found that participants are working to mitigate any potential impacts.*

*BPA's tracking of Momentum Savings reduces the likelihood of double counting savings from double-participation*

# Recommendations



# Recommendations



## Recommendation #1: Improve reporting methods to capture all program savings

Given the size and significance of unreported program savings, BPA should encourage participating utilities to report all program activity and savings even after exhausting their EEI budgets. BPA may also capture these savings by improving measure tracking in IS2.0 (see Recommendation #2) and comparing to the Simple Steps program data.

## Recommendation #2: Improve measure tracking

BPA should enhance their measure tracking processes to allow BPA to clearly identify the amount of savings reported to the Simple Steps program. This could include adding unique reference numbers for Simple Steps to the IS2.0 database.

# Recommendations



Recommendation #3:  
Increase awareness of delivery  
components other than Retail

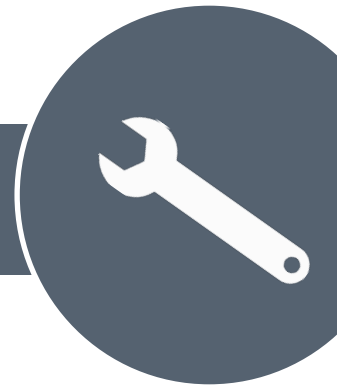
Awareness of non-retail program components is low. BPA should increase awareness through education and marketing of its non-retail program components to increase participation in the program among these segments.

Recommendation #4:  
Improve marketing to guide customers toward  
their best suited delivery component

Many perceive that the program is not suited for rural or small utilities. BPA could alter the program marketing to promote program components that better fit the needs of utility customers.



# Recommendations



## Recommendation #5: Improve utility branding across all delivery components

BPA should encourage the implementation contractor to increase the amount of utility branding across all components of Simple Steps, and provide tools and advice for utilities to engage in “meta-marketing” techniques using wider BPA promotional efforts.\*

## Recommendation #6: Increase communication regarding field staff visits to retail stores

The evaluation team recommends increasing the communication between public utilities and the implementation contractor around field staff visits to retail stores in their service territory to take advantage of opportunities to bolster program marketing with retail staff.

\* = The term “meta-marketing” describes the marketing efforts BPA uses to promote Simple Steps across the entire region. Utilities can add their own logos in tandem to these marketing efforts to reach a wider audience.

# Recommendations



## Recommendation #7: Retail marketing tracking

To enable analysis of the efficacy of different program promotions, the evaluation team recommends improving the tracking of program promotions such as dates, incentive levels, marketing approach, and any other relevant store-level data.

# Evaluation Take and Next Steps



# Evaluation Take and Next Steps

## Findings

- Evaluation shows value and effectiveness of the Simple Steps programs
- As with all programs, there are areas of improvement

## Evaluation Process

- Process evaluation took too long
- QSSI team working on policies for future

# Program Perspective



# BPA Program Improvements

Since the completion of the Simple Steps evaluation, BPA has worked to improve the program by:



Providing new point of purchase displays with large, full color utility logos

Creating “no-cost” kits for non-retail delivery components intended to help small and rural utilities reach a wider customer base

Emphasizing LED bulbs and phasing out CFLs as per the Regional Technical Forum

Increasing available measure options to include advanced power strips, efficient clothes washers and dryers, and heat pump water heaters

Adding online sale capabilities and improving RSAT to include online allocations

Offering special event distribution by request

Increasing program budget to improve overall program marketing efforts

# Questions?



[lsmsgage@bpa.gov](mailto:lsmsgage@bpa.gov)

More info at  
[www.bpa.gov/goto/evaluation](http://www.bpa.gov/goto/evaluation)