Simple Steps, Smart Savings
Process Evaluation
2012-2014

Program Overview
Simple Steps is BPA's regional efficiency program designed to increase the adoption of residential products, such as LEDs, showerheads, power strips, and appliances. The program has multiple delivery channels: retail, direct install, bulk purchase and direct mail.

From 2012-2014, the program reported 46 aMW of savings, with public utilities accounting for 16 aMW. Most savings during this period were from CFL bulbs sold through retail stores.

In 2015, BPA conducted a process evaluation to understand program operations, explore program strengths, and identify areas for improvement. The evaluation included 64 program stakeholder interviews and reviews of the program logic model and tracking databases.

Key Findings

Easy Program
Public utilities like the ease of Simple Steps, calling it a “turnkey” program. IOUs like the benefit the program brings to the region.

Effective
Simple Steps program is implemented and marketed effectively and is meeting the goals laid out in the program logic model.

Satisfied Customers
For the program overall, utilities generally liked the types of measures and flexibility in measure offerings, but were less satisfied with the amount of utility branding overall. Public utilities rated the program with a moderate satisfaction rating of 7.6; IOUs had slightly lower satisfaction at 6.6.

Retail Satisfaction
Public utilities reported the retail delivery component was easy to use. Some concerns were raised about lack of utility branding, allocation methods, and low engagement in small or rural areas.

www.bpa.gov/goto/evaluation
Participants cited ease of use and low measure cost as drivers of satisfaction with the bulk purchase and direct mail delivery components. Direct install received the lowest satisfaction due to limited access to rural areas.

Most frequently reported budgets to be the barrier to participation, but they also reported concerns with utility branding and low sales allocations in Retail Sales Allocation Tool.

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

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

Given the size of unreported program savings, BPA should encourage participating utilities to report all savings. BPA could also capture the savings by improving reporting system measure tracking and comparing to the Simple Steps program data.

Awareness of non-retail program components is low. BPA should use education and marketing to increase participation in these program components.

BPA should increase the amount of utility branding and provide tools for utilities to engage in “meta-marketing” techniques.

The evaluation team recommends increasing communication with utilities of field staff visits to retail stores.

BPA continues to improve the Simple Steps program. Since 2015, BPA has enhanced the program, which may address some of the above recommendations. For more information, please visit: www.simplestepsnw.com