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
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

Retail

Bulk Purchase

Direct Install

Direct Mail
Simple Steps is “not a one-size-fits-all program” across the region, but is customizable.
Program Timeline

2010
Program launch replacing Change-A-Light

2015
Introduction of LED bulbs and energy efficient appliances

2015
Process Evaluation covering FY2012-2014

2015
Change announced where BPA will no longer fund non-participant savings (Backstop Role)

2016
Continual program improvements and expansion of measure list
Evaluation Overview
Process Evaluation
Data Sources

Evaluation focus: FY 2012-2014

LOGIC MODEL

IN-DEPTH INTERVIEWS

PROGRAM DATA ANALYSIS
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

- **8 BPA Staff (EERs and COTRs)**
- **5 IOU Participants**
  
  *(population 5)*
- **3 Simple Steps Program Managers**
- **24 Non-Participants*  
  *(population 87)*
- **23 Public Participants**
  
  *(population 24)*
- **2 Implementation Staff**

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

BPA IS2.0 data:
• Program data reported to BPA by Public Utilities, including Simple Steps and other “outside” programs

Simple Steps data:
• Program data provided by manufacturers and retailers
• IOU participant data
Program Savings FY2012-2014

Program saved over 45 aMW in FY 2012-2014
- Participating public utility savings: 24%
- Non-participating savings: 11%

Source: Simple Steps program data.
“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
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”*

* Interviews conducted in late 2015
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.
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)

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.
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

- Retail (n=22): 7.6
- Bulk Purchase (n=7): 8.9
- Direct Install (n=5): 5.4
- Direct Mail (n=1): 9.0

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


**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)

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.
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.

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

Example - Ref No. 123456 - Omnidirectional LED

Units

Utility A
Utility B
Utility C

Simple Steps Program Data  IS2.0 Data

This gap indicates unreported savings
This gap indicates outside savings
Alignment

This gap indicates unreported savings
This gap indicates outside savings
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.
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

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

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

lsmgage@bpa.gov

More info at www.bpa.gov/goto/evaluation