

STATE HOME ENERGY REBATE PUBLIC INPUT SESSIONS

TALKING POINTS FOR MIDWEST HEALTH PROFESSIONALS & ADVOCATES

*Midwest Building
Decarbonization Coalition*



TALKING POINTS FOR MIDWEST HEALTH PROFESSIONALS & ADVOCATES

The Home Energy Rebate Programs include 8.8 billion dollars in grant funding to help American households save money on energy bills, upgrade to clean energy equipment and improve energy efficiency, reduce indoor and outdoor air pollution, and create workforce training programs.

States have until January 2025 to get their final applications for the [Home Energy Rebate Program](#) to the Federal Department of Energy (DOE). **States are required to do at least one public input hearing and include how that was incorporated into the final application.**

Most likely, states will allow written comments, but we also will want coalition members to be prepared to speak during these hearings (in-person or virtually).

These talking points have been developed with health professionals and advocates in mind - for more general, non-health-specific guidance, check out the Midwest BDC [Talking Points](#) and [Training Session](#). These health recommendations are fully aligned with the general talking points.

Tips for public input sessions:

- There will be a time limit for your comment - often just a few minutes. Practice saying your comment and time yourself! If you go over the time limit, you may get cut off.
- Connect your comment to a personal experience or story. Identify a problem, and comment on how these rebates could help solve it.
 - Have you had trouble understanding or accessing a state or utility rebate in the past? What would have made the process easier for you?
 - What health impacts have you seen firsthand or in your community that decarbonizing homes could help alleviate?
- Take notes! Use the last page of this packet to jot down any notes you want to reference in your comment. You could underscore a similar experience, or refute an opposing comment.
- Come prepared. If you can reference specific data in your comment, that's great! You can bring a notecard with bullet points, or read from a page where you've scripted out exactly what you want to say.
- Practice, practice, practice! Attend one of our upcoming prep sessions or practice reading your comment to a partner. **This will make you feel more prepared - you've got this!**

TALKING POINTS FOR MIDWEST HEALTH PROFESSIONALS & ADVOCATES

As health professionals and advocates, we know that a healthy and safe home is critical to the well-being of Midwestern families. This truth is even more evident for our low-income neighbors who often suffer from high energy bills, poor indoor air quality, and associated health impacts like asthma. Due to redlining and housing discrimination, BIPOC communities are also far more likely to live in homes with health and safety concerns.

These rebates could alleviate some of those health and financial burdens, or prevent them before they occur. It is incredibly important for State Energy Office staff to hear from health professionals and advocates so that public health considerations are figured into program design, implementation, and evaluation.

Here are the main, high-level talking points the Midwest BDC Health Working Group found important to highlight. Use these as inspiration to begin crafting your comment and connect it to your personal story. Comments from multiple people that hit on these same points will emphasize their importance.

-
- **Establish program coverage that encourages full home decarbonization for public health & air quality.**
 - **Create robust health education materials and conduct outreach to health-sensitive populations.**
 - **Track and analyze health and air quality data to understand the positive impact of the rebates.**
-

NOTES

More details:

Establish program coverage that encourages full home decarbonization for public health & air quality.

Due to the clear health benefits of eliminating in-home combustion and improving housing quality, each state's Home Energy Rebate Program should:

- Cover all qualified appliances including electric/induction stoves, heat pumps, heat pump water heaters, heat pump clothes dryers
- Cover all qualified building materials including electric panels, wiring, insulation, air sealing, efficient mechanical ventilation
- Not cover combustion appliances as an option under the efficiency rebate
 - Enable funding to support basic health and safety measures like water mitigation to reduce mold, carbon monoxide & smoke detectors, etc.
- States should go above and beyond the minimum safeguards for tenants in cases where building owners utilize rebates to make property upgrades.
 - We recommend that states increase restrictions on rent increases and evictions from the DOE mandated 2 years to 5 years.

Create robust health education materials and conduct outreach to health-sensitive populations.

State Energy Offices should develop culturally appropriate and multilingual educational materials focused on health – written and oral – and conduct outreach to health-sensitive populations and households (including individuals with disabilities) about the rebates and the application process. Ideally, these efforts will be supported by trusted community organizations. These efforts will increase uptake of Home Energy Rebates that will improve home air quality, comfort, and safety.

Track and analyze health and air quality data to understand the positive impact of the rebates.

State Energy Offices should secure funding and staff capacity to track and analyze additional health outcome and air quality data – above and beyond what is captured by the CEJST screening tool. SEOs would benefit from seeking partnerships with experts within community organizations, health departments, local academic institutions, and/or non-profits. These efforts would allow SEOs to better understand the positive impact of the Home Energy Rebate Program on public health, especially in underserved communities. At a minimum, SEOs should take advantage of the opportunity to collect pre- and post-intervention data on respiratory health (asthma symptoms, management, hospitalizations, ER visits, etc.), air pollutants (PM, NO₂, CO, benzene, etc.), temperature & thermal comfort, mental health & well-being, and other relevant health metrics of interest (like maternal and infant health). Cross-state collaboration to establish a uniform data collection and sharing protocol will boost efficiency and transparency.

TALKING POINTS FOR MIDWEST HEALTH PROFESSIONALS & ADVOCATES

Useful reference links:

- Midwest BDC's General [State Home Energy Rebate Public Input Sessions Talking Points](#)
- [Health Effects from Gas Stove Pollution](#)
- [Interactive State Map of Health & Air Quality Impacts of Building Emissions](#)
- [Decarbonizing Homes: Improving Health in Low-Income Communities through Beneficial Electrification](#)
- [Gruenwald et al. 2022: Population Attributable Fraction of Gas Stoves and Childhood Asthma in the United States](#)
- [Tessum et al. 2021: PM2.5 polluters disproportionately and systematically affect people of color in the United States](#)

NOTES



This toolkit was developed by a diverse set of health professionals, researchers, and advocates based out of the Midwest Building Decarbonization Coalition (Midwest BDC) [Health Working Group](#). This group convenes individuals from a variety of backgrounds with a common goal of exploring the health benefits of building decarbonization and identifying key policy opportunities to ensure healthy buildings for all.