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# ***SMALL TOWN ENERGY PROGRAM – EXPANSION COMMUNITY FOCUS GROUP RESULTS***

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July 6, 2012  
Draft Report

## ORGANIZATION OF REPORT

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# 1. RECOMMENDATIONS / PROGRAM ACTION ITEMS

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The successful Small Town Energy Program (STEP) – University Park program is using some of the funds from the Better Building / ARRA grant to expand the program into 3 surrounding communities: Riverdale Park, Hyattsville, and College Heights Estates. As part of the evaluation tasks, the consultant conducted four focus groups in these communities to investigate issues surrounding how best to tailor the design, outreach, and messaging to appeal to these expansion” communities. The four focus groups gathered information from 35 attendees, including both qualitative discussion feedback, as well as quantitative scoring / ranking information related to words, slogans, and messages.

The following chapters provide detailed results of both the qualitative and quantitative results. The main “action” items for the program, as it moves forward, include:

## **Messaging:**

- Focus on bill savings and comfort as messages, but also consider messages related to remodeling / upgrading, and to local community pride.
- Cost and hassles are barriers, but information is also a key barrier to people that might otherwise be interested in undertaking retrofits. To the extent the messaging can convince the program – and/or the coach – will be able to advise in an unbiased way on getting started, what will work in their homes (including historic restrictions), how to find quality (measures and contractors), keep things moving, and similar barriers – the message should resonate.
- Capitalize on the credibility of the program, but also the credibility from the Towns as independent information sources; they appear to be more trusted than the local utility, at least to some attendees.
- The other key, credible message source is testimonials from others that have participated in the program.
- Keep the outreach and slogans simple and short. STEP, followed by the town name, was generally the simplest and most favored program name. “Join / Learn / Save” was a highly ranked slogan.
- The local communities would like to see a local element to the logo-ing.
- Positive-performing words include: Green, value, save/saving, efficiency, my home / my town, incentive, rebate, free, are all preferred words for their respective concepts (over the host of alternatives presented adjacent to these words). Upgrade (fewer negatives than “tune up”) is preferred over assessment or review or audit; and Climate change and carbon neutral are both poorly received terms. Comfort is a “winner”; health and safety are also extremely strong concepts to get across.

**Outreach Suggestions:** The key to making the program real and credible is to provide “multiple hits” to residents. The preferred outreach methods were:

- Town newsletter, emails/list serves, and websites: and door-to-door would only be accepted if pre-mentioned in these other sources.
- Community workshops, events and school-provided outreach to students was considered useful

- Printed material, including flyers (including at Metro stations), bill inserts, and taxi signs were mentioned
- The yard signs were remembered and thought to be effective
- Neighbor contact, especially by those already participating was thought to be especially strong
- Demonstration homes (highlighting one house every quarter), and articles about successes and building on that was considered another positive outreach approach.

**Consider Refining the Program With a Few New Services:** Certainly, the program, as delivered in University Park, performed very well. However, as the program expands to new communities, additional needs were expressed. The program may wish to allocate budget to refinements, both to appeal especially well to the new communities (who won't feel the program is "cookie cutter" from University Park) and to appeal to the next round of potential participants in University Park, who may need more attention than UP's earlier adopters. Some of the enhancements are certainly more expensive than others, but elements to consider adding, in likely decreasing order of likelihood, include:

- **List Serve:** They would like to see a new service – a list serve where questions could be asked of previous STEP participants ('even those in University Park'...).<sup>1</sup>
- **Enhanced Coach Capabilities:** The communities, and particularly Hyattsville, felt that the coach (or perhaps a part-time assistant) should be fluent in Spanish. They also felt that having the coach be available for evening meetings would also significantly enhance the program because it would accommodate the "decision-maker" schedule.
- **Include local contractors:** The emphasis on local job creation led to a suggestion that local contractors should be included in the recommended list.
- **Partners:** Finding partners in key support / related industries (real estate agents, appraisers, etc.) that can assist in promoting the program would be beneficial.<sup>2</sup>
- **Database of Performance:** The attendees mentioned they would like to see a historic database on realized savings with information on the relevant house characteristics (size, etc.), and on performance and success on historic homes to show that savings can actually be accomplished and stay within local historic preservation restrictions. Case studies will be helpful, but this goes beyond traditional case studies.<sup>3</sup>
- **Quality Check:** They would like a 1-year after-the-fact check on quality and performance, if possible. They felt this would provide compelling information on savings, comfort, contractor performance, and other outcomes.

<sup>1</sup> Programs in other jurisdictions have maps that can roll over and identify addresses that have participated, and case studies. Blogs are common. We did not yet find a program elsewhere with an active list serve. However, conceptually, this is straightforward to achieve.

<sup>2</sup> Other programs have partnered with banks/ financing, as has STEP. We have not found programs that have aligned with these specific partner types to any significant degree, although some have partnered with builder and remodeler associations.

<sup>3</sup> Enhanced case studies / testimonials / are not uncommon.

## 2. BACKGROUND / ORGANIZATION / INTRODUCTION

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In order to refine the design, outreach / messaging, and targeting of the Small Town Energy Program (STEP) as it expands from the Town of University Park to the three expansion communities (Riverdale Park, Hyattsville, and College Heights Estates), focus groups were held in each community to conduct discussions and gather feedback from representatives from each community at-large.

The focus groups were held in three communities:

- Riverdale Park, at Town Hall, from 5:30-7pm on Tuesday, June 5, 2012, recruited / coordinated by Sara Imhulse.
- Hyattsville City Administration Building, from 5:15-6:45 and 7-8:30 on Wednesday, June 6, 2012, recruited / coordinated by James Groves and James Chandler.
- College Heights Estates, at St. Mark the /Evangelist Catholic Church, from 7-8:30 on Thursday June 7, 2012, recruited / coordinated by Beverly Silverberg.

Attendees fell into the following categories.

**Table 1: Attendee Breakdown by Focus Group**

	Total attendees	Male	Female	Other
Riverdale Park	11	5	6	
Hyattsville 1	6	2	4	
Hyattsville 2	12	7	5	2 ESL; 1 observer
College Heights Estates	6	3	3	
Total	35	17	18	2

Assistance from the communities and their able staff (mentioned above), and especially from Chuck Wilson of the STEP-UP program, was essential to the successful completion of the focus groups. They provided both recruiting outreach on the focus groups (town newsletters, email networks), and helped coordinate locations for the sessions. We had hoped for more ESL (English as a second language) participants, but were unsuccessful. Participants received \$50 gift certificates to a local store of choice, or cash, or, in one case, a donation to a local charity.

The focus groups were designed to address several key topics:

- “Localizing” the program / message – how to make the program the “community’s” (not University Park’s). This includes program imagery and slogans, etc. to help improve the programs
- Awareness of energy use / opportunities, identify motivators and barriers to investments for saving energy, including financing decision-making issues to help enhance the program’s elements / design, and potential interest in the program / features.
- Identify trusted information sources and marketing opportunities, and best ways to engage / interest local households in the program.

There were two main parts to the focus group. The first entailed a discussion period of about an hour or hour and ten minutes. The remaining 20-30 minutes was taken up with a scoring exercise to provide quantitative feedback on words and messaging, program names, opportunities and barriers for energy upgrades, outreach suggestions, and feedback on specific logos and outreach materials.

The findings, especially from the discussions, were not dramatically different between communities, but where they differed, we note those variations in the text below. The scoring results are attached at the end of the document, along with the focus group script.

### **3. RESULTS FROM THE FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION SECTION**

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**Households are aware of energy bills, and they are a concern for many:** Virtually all the attendees heated their homes with gas and a few used fuel oil. When we discussed the size of energy bills, responses varied widely. Some said their bills were not high or were ‘manageable’; a number of these respondents were on even payment plans from the utility, but others had already conducted retrofits on their homes that they said had helped control their bills. Others made comments like ‘my bills are insanely high’, even though many did not have air conditioning. One said that the bills were high even though they keep the temperature in the home at ‘60-63 degrees’ (one said ‘58 degrees’), other said it is ‘always hot upstairs’, and many mentioned drafty areas in the homes. When asked why bills were high, several stated that homes in the area ‘have no insulation’; there are ‘old windows’; homes are ‘single zone’ for heat. Home sizes varied from the modest, to one with 16 rooms and 6 baths. Several mentioned they had ‘really learned to dress for the weather’ <to cope>.

**The original housing stock is uncomfortable; some homeowners have retrofitted their home to improve energy use and comfort:** Everyone seemed to agree that the standard / original housing stock was not built for energy efficiency. Some of the attendees had undertaken retrofits that had significantly helped the performance. Some simply added insulation (with the floor / joists noted as an important element) and said that made the home ‘manageable’. Others had gone to the expense of replacing windows or knew of neighbors that had gone as far as installing ‘geothermal’ and heat pump equipment to improve comfort and reduce bills. Some noted that retrofitting isn’t as simple as it seems, even when it seems simple. One homeowner bought a water heater blanket, but three years later it isn’t installed because it takes tailoring and fitting.

**Audits / Assessment are generally known, although not in their detailed elements:** In each group, one or more of the attendees had previously received audits on their home. The general sense of audits was known by most attendees; fine points like blower door tests, etc. were less generally known and understood.

**Retrofitting homes in the area brings complications:** The two most common complications mentioned in association with updating area homes were: 1) expense from odd-sized windows; and 2) limitations from historic community / preservation restrictions (mentioned many times; including as it relates to windows, slate roofs, solar / skylight issues).

**Suggestions for Education / Outreach / Gaining Participation were fairly limited:** Key is that the information should provide “multiple hits” to residents. That is key to making a program seem real and credible. Many were against door-to-door visits – at least unless it was pre-mentioned in the Town newsletter. The town newsletter and email methods are good outreach; several attendees said the town websites were “hard to navigate”. Outreach through the ‘kids at school’ was viewed positively, and Hyattsville in particular wanted to mention that ‘internet is not universal’. Events (town and home), flyers (including at Metro stations), bill inserts, taxi placards, and other items were also mentioned. Churches / book clubs were not recommended. Community workshops, potentially targeted at the elderly, and at CHEA meetings were suggested as good places to promote the program. The yard signs were well-remembered in these communities, and reaction seemed positive. They did note that many people “stopped at one checkmark”, however. Attendees did have some new suggestions, like “expecting or near-requiring” participants to go to neighbors on each side of their home to talk up the program, and maybe providing a small gift certificate to Target / Starbucks, etc. Another suggested highlighting one house every quarter, and using that home as a demo for program promotion and to see that, for instance, historic issues can be dealt with. Another suggestion was to focus on “small successes and build”, including getting early adopters to trumpet their success on list serves to get momentum and credibility (“a story to tell”). Hyattsville also suggested an early push may be valuable to “beat the new historic building codes”, which could complicate the program’s implementation.

**Messaging on Drivers should emphasize the usual suspects – bill savings and comfort:** Bill savings and comfort are key, but additional messages could focus on pride of place, and focusing on convincing people that “the program is a good thing”. The Towns are likely to be able to provide credibility on these concepts.

**Attendees felt the program should add some elements to better fit their community.** The attendees felt the program was several important elements that would be valuable to their communities, including: consideration of non-owners; Spanish language capabilities for the coach, and evening hours; a “nudging” component; and a listserv that would allow questions to be asked of and answered by real, previous participants. Hyattsville requested recognition that there is a mixed population and that it may be hard to meet the needs of a varied, non-bedroom community. Some of these are addressed in the table below.

**There were a number of concerns and real-world barriers about retrofits that the Program seems well-positioned to address – including some suggestions for “new services”:** Attendees were certainly concerned about the cost and affordability of retrofits, especially in ‘this down economy’. Other types of concerns mentioned included the following.

**Table 2: Discussion of Barriers and Program Implications**

Barriers / Issues (besides cost)	Description / Discussion	Program service
Raising awareness	They said a barrier for attendees and others was getting energy efficiency to increase in attention / they “aren’t tuned in”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The program’s outreach and services are well-positioned to address</li> </ul>
Information – and information on “where to start /	There is skepticism about getting unbiased information from contractors that would have an agenda, and a general lack of information, or lack of clarity about where to go for <reliable>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The energy coach is seen as an unbiased information source.</li> <li>The audit / home assessment provides information on “where to</li> </ul>

Barriers / Issues (besides cost)	Description / Discussion	Program service
overwhelming”	information. They don’t know ‘what ratings mean’.	start”
Decision-making assistance / equipment advice	Some had experienced inertia on retrofitting homes because they worried they might make a wrong decision that is irrevocable (specially installing foam insulation that might be inappropriate, hurt the “breathability of the home”, etc.). Help comparing apples to apples for bids, and making sense out of the audit information was a concern. They also want independent advice on “what things <b>should</b> cost”.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The coach is seen as someone that could be consulted on these issues and address concerns / reassure</li> </ul>
Concerns about poor quality of new equipment	There was concern about poor workmanship associated with ‘cheap construction’ of new equipment. Quality matters.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Advice on brands, etc. from the coach would likely be valued</li> </ul>
Concerns they won’t see the expected savings	They want <b>real information</b> . They would like to see statistics for similar homes, similar size, comparable scenarios, etc. Neighbors, non-profits, and independent sources were critical for believable information.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>New Service: They would like to see a new service – a listserv where questions could be asked of previous STEP participants (‘even those in University Park’...).</b></li> <li><b>New service: they would like to see a historic database to build trust – both on realized savings, and on performance and success on historic homes (that it really can be done within the restrictions too).</b></li> </ul>
Concerns about contractors doing poor work	Some contractors seem ill-informed about retrofits and local historic restrictions. Vetting contractors and an approved list was desirable. One concern was to provide extra points to “local contractors <in-city>”. Some choice among contractors was highly desired, however.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Coach – or approved contractor list – can help address.</li> <li><b>New service: A participant listserv could also address this issue</b></li> <li><b>New service: They would like a 1-year after-the-fact check as well on quality and performance, if possible</b></li> </ul>
Time and hassles and expectations	Making time at the household level is an issue. These comments also seemed to be addressing minimizing the amount of “research” a household has to do, and the elapsed time to get a project completed. They also want clarity on when the contractor will start, finish, and how much it will cost.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Existing information by the coach addresses hassle / research</li> <li><b>New service: Having the coach include a more formalized “nudging” system could address this... but it was mentioned it would have to be done gently.</b></li> </ul>
Information on incentives	There is a concern tax credits and other incentives may go away and they don’t / won’t know about it	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The coach is seen as someone that could be consulted on these issues</li> </ul>
Financing	They seemed generally interested in financing, but noted that the low interest loans qualification can be hard.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>STEP has a financing arm.</li> </ul>
Non-English	There was a repeated call that the coach HAD to be able to speak Spanish to be responsive in the	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Spanish speaking capability – in the coach or an assistant – is important.</b></li> </ul>



Barriers / Issues (besides cost)	Description / Discussion	Program service
	communities (especially Hyattsville). Communication is also complicated because 'moms are home all day but husbands make the decisions and they're only home at night'. It was noted that the children can help translate but that is not sufficient.	<b>Also, time of day (being able to meet in the evening) is an issue.</b>
Getting efficiency appreciated / valued - partnerships	It would be great to have assurance that retrofits would be reflected in sales price / enhance housing value and have buyers look for energy efficiency. Additionally, getting partners that can help hook into the program or bring efficiency at replacement / failure would be helpful (when things 'have to be changed out anyway').	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Not sure if the program can <b>find partners (real estate agents, appraisers) that can assist</b> on this issue.</li> </ul>

**Other comments:**

- There were concerns about indoor air quality / breathability of the homes and what is needed.
- The difference in why some people install energy efficiency and others don't is like those who recycle and don't – it is philosophical.
- One suggested it would be nice to have a community spirit or something akin 'to the Amish barn-raising'. Perhaps neighborhood action teams could install some simple measures in multiple homes to achieve this type of progress and raise the awareness of the program.
- The audit may provide good information, but 'people don't read'. That may take assistance from the coach for 'what it means'.
- They suggested better advertising of the energy efficiency loan with the purchase of the house, and a better match up with this program, if possible.
- It might be worth exploring whether there is a role for the Hyattsville Community Development Corporation in promoting the program.
- Security was a concern, with strangers on property.
- Some attendees said there is "zero confidence in PEPCO, and confidence should be MUCH better with this program", which provides another opportunity.
- One noted that when he installed insulation, he "solved his mouse problem, too".
- For most of the attendees, it did not seem like money was the barrier (although this certainly varied by attendee). The other barriers are also critical to address for the program to thrive.

## 4. RESULTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FROM FOCUS GROUP SCORING ACTIVITIES

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We received score sheets from 34 attendees. The focus groups were designed to provide information on barriers, motivations, outreach, attractive program features, and other information useful to the refinements for the 3 expansion communities, and indicative information for the baseline work and the broader expansion / toolkit work.

Specific results are provided for the “scored” questions, representing feedback useful to the logo / outreach / collateral. In addition, results are provided for each focus group, in case there are important differences. Two things to note:

- The scores tally both positive (+1) and negative (-1) responses separately. They are NOT netted, because negatives reactions are separately useful information. Positive values are in different columns than the negative totals. For simplicity, “first” choices are not scored differently than “second” choices (some selected more than 2 winners, etc.).
- After the first (RP) focus group, a few suggestions and changes were made to the scoring handouts. Therefore, some responses will not have feedback from Riverdale Park, and that should be considered in assessing strong /weak performers.

A summary of the high-level results follows. The quantitative results are shown in detail in Table 3 following the summary.

**Potential tailoring of logos for expansion communities:** The majority were fine with either Blue or Green as a primary color in the logo. Both Riversdale Park (RP) and College Heights Estates (CHE) had fairly clear ideas on images that could be incorporated into the logo that would make the program feel “local” – the RP mansion, and the white street signs, respectively. There was less unanimity of opinion in Hyattsville.

**Positive and Negative words to use in messaging, logos, etc.:** In many cases, non-professional / lay persons respond differently than “those in the field” to technical (and other) terms. We assessed terms and potential alternatives that address some of the same concepts (e.g. climate change, carbon neutral, and footprint, etc.). These tradeoffs and reactions may be helpful as collateral is prepared and/or edited.

- Green, value, save/saving, efficiency, my home / my town, incentive, rebate, free, are all preferred words for their respective concepts (over the host of alternatives presented adjacent to these words);
- Upgrade (fewer negatives than “tune up”) is preferred over assessment or review or audit,
- Climate change and carbon neutral are both poorly received terms.
- Comfort is a “winner”; health and safety are also extremely strong concepts to get across.
- Terms related to waste were negatively perceived.

**Program names:** The simple name, “STEP”, followed by the City name, has the highest votes and no negatives. None of the other alternatives come close.

### **Key drivers, motivators, concerns, and ways to address concerns:**

- Key drivers are, respectively, high energy bills / savings, comfort, and remodeling / upgrading / broken equipment.
- Cost, hassles, finding contractors, and ruining the home's historic look were important concerns about program participation. Paperwork is not an important concern.
- Nothing beats real-world testimonials from similar households that have gone through the same / similar program in allaying these concerns. Figures and tables (presumably user-friendly and well-designed) will also be useful. Other strategies – with the very strong exception of testimonials from contractors – may also play useful roles in getting past concerns.
- The strongest program motivator is the technical assistant / coach, followed by help selecting contractors and potentially, low interest financing.

### **Outreach and communication:**

- Realtors and home inspectors are potentially-positive partners to help get the word out. These actors have the added benefit that they are actively involved at an opportune time for installing measures.
- Non-profits (and “other agencies”) are also good sources of information that the households feel can be trusted (no “agendas”).
- In communities of this size, it seems the town's list serves are the strongest ways of getting word out, followed by the town website and newsletter and local events.
- Many felt translation to (at least) Spanish was a critical part of a successful, local program.

### **Branding, Slogans, and Collateral Feedback:**

- Again, the simple “Small Town Energy Program” was the winning program name, followed by “Small Steps, Big Impact”; however, the second name had more negative reactions. Keeping the logo short was one of the key considerations in the choices.
- The most popular process description slogan was Join Learn, Save. This is followed by “Join, Learn, Benefit” and “Easy as Ready Set Save”. Focus group attendees reacted negatively to terminology like commit, sign or other more permanent-sounding / onerous words. The slogans might need more work, as a significant portion of the respondents left comments saying they didn't like any of the process slogans.
- The four flyers generated quite a few comments. Generally, the “cooler” slogans with the photo (or possibly the house outline) performed well. However, there were strong negative reactions to the lack of diversity in the illustrations. Other comments were provided about readability (of red type, for instance), and the negative “look and feel” of some aspects of the flyer.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Comments on the flyers specifically include: Comments: Don't like any of the photos / need diversity. Don't use quote bubble (looks like advertisement); red text on blue difficult to read; arrows on other poster nice and eye-catching - combine with house version. (1); House=not really readable; associate better with humans; can't see red text on house; make action CLEAR - not sure what you want me to do. (1); (1) focus on cooler as we had no winter this year; 1- I like the arrows for ready, set, save, but like the house outline & coach comment too; 1- I like the arrows and house, not photos of woman, cooler ones are good in summer although photos are cheesy/ bad Homes toasty in winter; 1- not sure I like the quote makes me feel like a pressure sale. House or flyer best.; 1- Cooler house hard to read red text on blue background, I like energy coach quote; 1- Person in toasty photo looks cold; 1- red text easy to miss, 1- use a picture of a family, not a single person, all have too much wording.; 1- Where are the men in tank tops?, Red lettering is too hard to read. Female in black shows too much skin, better gender neutral, 1-

- T-shirt colors don't matter much between green and blue. There were significant "negatives" associated with each of the T-shirt slogans. Four slogans scored close: "BIG energy savings for SMALL towns", "STEP forward for energy savings"; "Save money. Save energy. Everybody's doing it", and "Get an energy Boost". There are significant negatives associated with several of these slogans.

Conceptually the program is interesting to residents (7-8 out of a maximum of 10) for the focus group participants.

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The flyer should tie into the season the program is launched; 1- Photo is better than a snapshot. Toasty has more appeal than cooler and I general believe you can heat efficiently better than you can cool

**Table 3: Scores from Focus Groups**

Positive Resp - Total	Negative Resp - Total	Positive responses				Negative responses				<b>FOCUS GROUP FEEDBACK / RESULTS</b>
		RP1	HY1	HY2	CHE	RP1	HY1	HY2	CHE	
34	34	11	6	11	6	11	6	11	6	<== Number of Attendees
All	All	RP1	HY1	HY2	CHE	RP1	HY1	HY2	CHE	<b>1. Preferred Logo Colors</b>
10		4	2	3	1					Blue
8		2	1	2	3					Green
6		2		3	1					Town Color (Hy: Red; CHE Dark Royal & white) yellow / warm colors)
1			1							other?
										<b>1a. Local landmark for logo?</b>
										RP: Mansion (8); Anacostia River (2)
										Hyattsville: Castle Rte 1, meh(?), Franklin's (2), victorian entrance
										<b>2. Words -- positive (circle) and negative (x out)</b>
18		4	3	8	3					green
3	8		1	2		4	2	2		waste
3	14		1	1	1	5	2	7		stop wasting
26		6	4	11	5					efficiency
9	2	3	2	3	1	1		1		conservation
7	2	3		4				1	1	upgrade
25		7	4	10	4					savings
9	1	4	1	3	1			1		bills / high bills
6		1	2	3						money
	4					1		2	1	review
9	1	3	2	4				1		assessment
3	4	2			1				4	audit
21		5	2	10	4					my home
14	2	4	2	8				1	1	my town
10		2	1	6	1					my family
5	3	2		3		2		1		footprint
4	10	1	2		1	3	2	5		climate change
3	9	1		2		3	1	2	3	carbon neutral
15	2	3	3	8	1		1	1		incentive
15	1	4	3	7	1	1				rebate
9	2	3	1	4	1			1	1	discount
10	6	2		7	1	1	2	2	1	SMART
10	2	4	1	5		1		1		innovative
5	3	1	2	2		1	1	1		good idea
18	2	5	4	8	1	1			1	free
4	10	1	1	2		5		4	1	bargain
2	11	1		1		3	1	6	1	cheap
5	3	1	1	3			1	2		future
4	3	1	1	2				3		grandchildren / children
2	1	1		1				1		now
10	4	2	3	5		1	1	2		home tune up
10		4	1	4	1					upgrade
9	3	4	2	3				2	1	retrofit
6	4	1	2	2	1	1	1	2		energy measures
3	2			3		1		1		appliances
2	1	2						1		equipment
22		7	3	9	3					comfort

Table 3, continued.

Positive Resp. - Total	Negative Resp. - Total	Positive responses				Negative responses				<== Number of Attendees	<b>FOCUS GROUP FEEDBACK / RESULTS</b>
		RP1	HY1	HY2	CHE	RP1	HY1	HY2	CHE		
34	34	11	6	11	6	11	6	11	6		
All	All	RP1	HY1	HY2	CHE	RP1	HY1	HY2	CHE		<b>1. Preferred Logo Colors</b>
15	1	4		10	1	1					healthy
9		2	1	5	1						safe
11	2	2	2	6	1		1	1			opportunity
9	2	4	2	2	1			2			green energy
8	1		1	6	1			1			invest (not on RP)
	8					3		3	2		broken
17	1	4	4	6	3	1					value
5	2	2	1	2				2			fix
18	1	3	6	7	2	1					save
6	3	3	1	2		2		1			conserve
2	6	1	1			2		4			don't waste
	2							2			replace (not on RP)
3	2		2	1				2			works (not on RP)
1		1									works
	2							2			consumption (not on RP)
3	1		1	2			1				use/usage (not on RP)
3	1		1	2				1			personal experience
1		1									New (write-in RP)
1		1									Personal experience (write-in RP)
1		1									Recycle (write-in RP)
1		1									Invest (write-in RP)
											<b>3. Program names (rank top 2 and LEAST liked)</b>
17		5	3	5	4						STEP (Small Town Energy Program) - city name?
2	1	1		1		1					Energy challenge
4	3		2	2		2		1			Neighborhood community action
7	5	1		4	2	1	3	1			Energy smart
7	5	3	2	2		1	1	1	2		Home Tune Up
1	6				1	2		3	1		Be Smart Home
1	2		1				1	1			<city knows> (not on RP)
1	1	1				1					Community Power Works
3	3	2			1	2	1				Energizing Efficiency
1	4		1			4					JUMP start
	15					7	1	4	3		Best Offer Ever
4	2	2		1	1		1	1			Efficiency Works
	1						1				<city> leaps ahead (not on RP)
	1					1					(leap, jump, action, run, sprint)?
2	4	1		1		2	1	1			Green Jobs / Green Energy
5	3	1		1	3	1	1	1			Healthy Homes
5	2	1	2	2		1	1				Home Efficiency Assistance Team
3	2		1	2		2					Home savings
2	2	2				2					<City> Local Power
5			1	4							other
1		1									Riverdale Knows (write-in)
1		1									Riverdale Leaps Ahead (write-in)

Table 3, continued.

Positive Resp - Total	Negative Resp - Total	Positive responses				Negative responses				<b>FOCUS GROUP FEEDBACK / RESULTS</b>		
		RP1	HY1	HY2	CHE	RP1	HY1	HY2	CHE			
34	34	11	6	11	6	11	6	11	6	<== Number of Attendees		
All	All	RP1	HY1	HY2	CHE	RP1	HY1	HY2	CHE	<b>1. Preferred Logo Colors</b>		
										<b>4. Drivers - why do people consider retrofitting for energy? (top 2</b>		
21		6	3	8	4					High energy bills / savings		
12		5	1	4	2					Remodeling / upgrading / broken		
17		6	2	6	3					Comfort		
5		2		2	1					Avoid breakdowns / maintenance		
	2							1	1	Equipment Features		
6	3	2	1	1	2			2	1	Don't waste energy		
9	2	2	1	5	1			1	1	Don't waste money / bills		
2	1			1	1			1		Don't waste program opportunity / free money		
	6						2	2	1	1	Trusted messenger	
	7						2	1	2	2	Curiosity	
	13						4	2	4	3	Competition	
2				2						Health		
6	1	3	1	2					1	Green / future		
9		3	2	3	1					Housing value		
2	3	2						2		1	Noise	
2	2			2		1	1			Neighbors / friends did it		
1		1								Don't pollute (Write-in)		
										<b>5. Potential program concerns (top 2, and Least important (scored</b>		
23		8	4	8	3					Cost		
8	1	2	2	2	2				1	Savings won't happen		
1				1						Cost overruns		
11	1	6	2	3				1		Hassles		
9	2	3		3	3	1			1	Finding contractors		
	4							1	2	1	House won't breathe	
2			1		1					Problems with		
3	1		1	1	1				1	Hassle (not on RP)		
2	6	1			1	3	1	1	1	Paperwork		
9	4	5		2	2	1	1	1	1	Ruin historic look		
2	1	1	1						1	Warranty		
2	3	1	1					1	1	1	Equipment won't work properly	
5			1	2	2					Contractor		
3				3						Decision- making/ not		
4			1	3						over investment, under delivery, no ROI		
										<b>6. How to allay concerns? (Note best and worst)</b>		
16		3	3	8	2					Figures / tables		
26		7	6	8	5					Testimonials from neighbors		
9		4		4	1					Web site case studies		
3	2			1	2			1	1	Promise of approved contractors (not on RP)		
2	15	1		1		5	4	2	4	Testimonials from contractors		
7	1	3	1	3					1	Demonstration site		
6	1		1	3	2					Promise of followup		
1					1					Clarify coach has		
2				2						building, 1- sustained coaching, comback in a year and calculate my savings and project future savings.		

Table 3, continued.

	Positive Resp - Total	Negative Resp - Total	Positive responses				Negative responses					
			RP1	HY1	HY2	CHE	RP1	HY1	HY2	CHE		
34	34		11	6	11	6	11	6	11	6	<== Number of Attendees	
All	All											
											<b>7. Participation motivators (note best and worst)</b>	
23			7	3	7	6					Technical assistance / coach	
3	6		1			2	2	2	1	1	Deadlines / incentive (program) expiration time frame	
2	7		1	1			3	1	2	1	Literature got me to want to save energy	
7	1		4	1	2					1	Needed to do improvements anyway	
10	3			2	8					3	Low interest financing (not on RP)	
11				2	6	3					Help selecting contractors (not on RP)	
2					2						into property taxes, 1- family	
											<b>8. Tie in with which groups for getting word out?</b>	
13	3		4	2	5	2				1	2	realtors
10	1		4	1	4	1					1	home inspectors
6	6		4	1		1			3	3		lenders
6	3		5		1				1	2		repair / remodel contractors
11			3	2	4	2						nonprofit (specify!!)
1	2			1							2	book club
4	1			3	1				1			chamber of commerce?
9			1	2	4	2						Other agencies (specify)?
1			1									Newspaper articles / Wash Post (write-in)
1			1									Town Crier (write-in)
1			1									Town List Serve (write-in)
1			1									Town of RP (write-in)
1			1									Local event (write-in)
1			1									town list serve, website, town Talk, crier (write-in)
												<b>8a. Other ways to get word out? (not on PR)</b>
6	1			3	3						1	Newspaper
16				3	9	4						Town list serve
8				2	4	2						Town website/ outreach
3	4				2	1			2	1	1	Door to door
1	2			1							2	Bill inserts
2	1				2					1		Kids at school
												feedback (stats, partic)
7				2	2	3						Town newsletter
7					4	3						Local events
7	3				3	4			2	1		Yard signs
3				1		2						Facebook
4					2	2						Stickers, contests
10				2	8							Translated materials
4				1	1	2						blogs, 1- one on one conversations
												<b>9. Ideas for local spokesperson / local hero / person of respect ...</b>
												<b>10. Branding "taglines" (rank top 2 and LEAST liked)</b>
16			7	5	2	2						Small Town Energy
4	6		2		1	1	3			3		Easy, Affordable, Energy Coach-
15	4		5	3	5	2	1	1	2			Small Steps, Big Impact
3	8			1	1	1	3	2	2	1		Small Town Energy Program for College
5	5			1	4		3	1	1			STEP Towards Comfort and Savings wth the
7	8		1	1	3	2	4	1	2	1		Save 4 Comfort
4	2			1		3		1	1			Step up your energy...
3				1	2							Other: 1-Not too Long!; 1-small steps big impacts lacks the word energy, 1-I'm an energy saavy Hyattsvillager
1			1									Step up your energy... efficiency savings! (write-in)



Table 3, continued.

Positive Resp - Total	Negative Resp - Total	Positive responses				Negative responses				FOCUS GROUP FEEDBACK / RESULTS
		RP1	HY1	HY2	CHE	RP1	HY1	HY2	CHE	
34	34	11	6	11	6	11	6	11	6	<== Number of Attendees
All	All	RP1	HY1	HY2	CHE	RP1	HY1	HY2	CHE	
<b>11. Process Description (rank top 2 AND least liked). Convey info</b>										
7	4	1	3	1	2	2		2		Easy as 1-2-3
9	1	3	1	3	2	1				Easy as Ready, Set, Save
3	1	1	1	1				1		Ready, Set, Go
10	1	6		3	1			1		Join, Learn, Benefit
2	2			1	1	1	1			Sign, Save, Thrive
6	2	2	1	2	1	1			1	Learn, Evaluate, Improve
11		4	2	3	2					Join, Learn, Save
4	7		1	2	1	3		2	2	Commit, Convert, Collect
1	7		1			3	2	2		Sign, then Thrive
1	6				1	2	4			Sign, Save, Relax!
7			3	2	2					of these, they all sound meaningless, 6- Don't really like any of these; 1- the term commit has negative connotations, likes easy, 5- not easy as, just ready, set, save
<b>12. Flyers (4 versions) - Clearest message; memorable (best)? Wc</b>										
12	1	6	2	4					1	Cooler, with photo
16	2	2	4	5	5				2	Cooler - house outline /coach quote
8	6	4		2	2	2		3	1	Toasty, with photo
9	4	3	1	3	2		2	2		Toasty, house outline / coach quote
11			4	4	3					Comments: don't like any of the photos; need diversity; don't use quote bubble (looks like advertisement); red text on blue difficult to read; arrows on other poster nice and eye-catching - combine with house version.??(1); House-not really readable; associate better with humans; can't see red text on house; make action CLEAR - not sure what you want me to do. (1); (1) focus on cooler as we had no winter this year; 1- I like the arrows for ready, set, save, but like the house outline & coach comment too; 1- I like the arrows and house, not photos of woman, cooler ones are good in summer although photos are cheesy/ bad Homes toasty in winter; 1- not sure I like the quote makes me feel like a pressure sale. House or flyer best; 1- Cooler house hard to read red text on blue background, I like energy coach quote; 1- Person in toasty photo looks cold; 1- red text easy to miss, 1- use a picture of a family, not a single person, all have too much wording.; 1- Where are the men in tank tops?, Red lettering is to hard to read. Female in black shows too much skin, better gender neutral, 1- The flyer should tie into the season the program is launched.; 1- Photo is better than a snapshot. Toasty has more appeal than cooler and I general believe you can heat efficiently better than
<b>13. T-shirt color: Blue? Green? Other?</b>										
12		4	2	5	1					Blue
11		1	3	3	4					Green
5		1	1	2	1					person; 1- Would not wear
<b>14. T-shirt slogans - Compelling? Most likely wear? Record top 2</b>										
13	3	5	3	1	4	2		1		BIG energy savings for
11	5	4	2	3	2	2	2	1		Save money. Save
11	2	4	1	5	1	2				STEP forward for
2	6		1		1	5	1			STEP it up for Comfort
12	6	6	1	4	1	2		2	2	Get an Energy Boost
4	1		1	3				1		Logo and URL (not on
4			3	1						like acknowledging that we are a small town but can play a big part; 1- none, people just throw them out; 1- get an energy boost with Hyattsville on the
<b>15. Have you... Yes/no? (not asked in RP)</b>										
2	19			1	1	6	8	5		Had energy audit last 2
12	8		3	6	3	2	4	2		Installed EE
9			8	4	15					if yes- which equip
17			25	14	11					How many yrs in
8			7	7	8					How long plan to be..
										How interesting does program sound 1-10.

## 5. APPENDIX – FOCUS GROUP GUIDE

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### *Introduction*

#### **Moderator State objective** of the meeting:

We are conducting group discussions with residents and homeowners. **<The City / Town>** is designing a program to help homeowners increase the energy efficiency of their homes. The purpose of the meeting is to help make the program best align with homeowner needs. Our objective is to uncover your motivations and influences for energy savings as well as to learn about what makes it hard to save energy in your homes. We are also trying to learn about energy saving programs you may or may not like and we would like to get your reaction to a few ideas, and brainstorming on other ideas. The overall goal is to increase participation in the programs and maximize energy and bill savings for residents. **<The City/Town>** is looking for **in-depth feedback** on how to achieve energy savings in homes in **<Riverdale Park / Hyattsville / CHE>**.

#### **Moderator State Rules** of discussion:

- Everyone should say what they think, hold nothing back. We are interested in your opinions and experience, do not be shy – your participation is essential.
- There are no right or wrong answers; even negative comments are useful in gaining insight about the issues
- All comments are confidential
- Feel free to express any opinion – consensus is NOT the goal – opinions and information are. Everyone’s opinion is valid and important.
- Group interaction/discussion is desirable
- You don’t have to raise your hand, but try not to interrupt someone too much.

Housekeeping – bathrooms (before / after), food, turn off cell phone ringers.

Any questions before we start?

#### **Opening Question:**

1. OK. First, let’s go around the table and have you introduce yourselves. Please tell me three things:
  - Your name,
  - how long you’ve lived in **<RP, H, CHE>** and
  - a fact (favorite hobby or other questions to start some feeling of familiarity).

### **A. Awareness / Use of Energy in Your Home / Familiarity with EE (15 min)**

1. *What type of fuel does your house use for heating and cooling (icebreaker question to gauge level of knowledge)...*

2. *Are your energy bills high relative to other household costs? Do you feel like you have more control, or less control, over energy bills than other bills? Other households? Why?*
3. *What do you believe allows some households to use less energy than others.....*
4. *What do you think about energy conservation in general? What do you think your neighbors think? ....*
5. *What type of energy saving equipment have you heard of? Any that you like or use... Any you've heard good things about from others?*
6. *Have you ever heard of a home energy audit, if so, do you know what happens during an energy audit (prompts how long it takes, who to contact to get an audit, blower test, instant energy savings measures, free CFLs).....*

**Objectives:** What they know about, what they haven't heard of

**Prompts:** Weatherization, city outreach, energy conservation, insulation, audits, others

## **B. Barriers / Opportunities for EE Investment and Savings (25 min)**

1. *Does your household do anything to try and to save energy (probe for behaviors – thermostat settings, cold laundry, power strips, etc.)? Have you installed any energy efficiency measures (probe for measures - CFLs, Insulation, Appliances, HVAC)? Have you considered / looked into them? What types?*
2. *What do you think makes it challenging to save energy in your home ... (ask if barriers are the same for their neighbors, others in the community – spend a lot of time here)*
3. *Why do you think some families are <able to> retrofit their homes... or are seeking out help and others aren't...?*
4. *Do you believe that one house can make a difference through reducing their energy use...*
5. *Are you aware of programs by the local utilities?*
6. *If the City were implementing an energy retrofit program to help residents, what features would help make it appealing to you? (Prompt for financing after the discussion has gone on a while).*
7. *What kind of payback is needed for you to consider investing in EE? What affect this number / decision? How long are you expecting to live in your home?*
8. *Hand out paper: Which of the following elements would make a program appealing? Unappealing?*

**Objectives:** Current behaviors, retrofits, barriers to energy conservation, weatherization, and upgrades in the home, differences in families and sectors,

**Prompts:** Cost of high efficient equipment, house cannot qualify for upgrades / rebates, energy efficiency is not a very high priority, unaware of program or energy audits, self efficacy, hassle, financing, moving.

## **C. Motivations for EE Investment (15 min)**

1. *What benefits does saving energy, or investment in energy efficiency, provide families (ask at larger level (town, city, state)...(prompts, NEBs lists, housing value, etc.)*

2. *What is the best way to motivate your neighbors to get an energy audit / to install energy efficient measures....*
3. *Is this motivation different for different families/people in XXXXXX...*
4. *Who do you think needs the most motivation.....*

**Objectives:** Motivations to reduce energy use, self-efficacy, best messages

**Prompts:** Bill savings, comfort, less drafts, reduced sickness, overall environmental benefits

#### **D. Messaging for EE Investments, Trusted Sources (10-15 min)**

1. *What do you think is a good way to communicate with your neighbors.... What would be bad/ useless ways?*
2. *Who usually makes the decisions about investments and about energy in your household...*
3. *Are any of the following good ways to communicate regarding EE?*
  - a. *Is a meeting at a neighbor's house a good way to share information on energy saving options... a community center... other options (prompts, church, school, restaurant / bar)*
  - b. *If someone knocked on your door to talk about energy, who would you listen to... (cub scouts/girl scouts, middle school age, high school age, college students, professionals, city employee, environmentalist, others)*
  - c. *Is facebook™ a good way to share information with you (email, mail, community bulletin, website, etc.)...*
  - d. *How much do you use the Town website? How do you use it?*
  - e. *Are there active book clubs, civic organizations, churches, town opinion leaders...? Other?*
4. *Whose information would you trust most (and least) regarding energy efficiency? (utility, town, realtor, non-profit, neighbor, other). What information would you need before you'd consider an EE investment? What form would the information have to be in?*

**Objectives:** Motivations, actors, messages

**Prompts:** Children, parents, dad, mom, families without children, retired families, ESL

#### **E. Making the Program Appealing and Local (15-20 min)**

1. *What is a local landmark or element that might be good to incorporate into the program's logo or slogan? What is special about <RP, H, CHE> that towns-people would recognize?*
2. *What words do you like.... (Bring a **list** of words and get feedback, preferences)*
3. *Reaction to slogans and logo elements.... (Bring a **list** of slogans / **logo elements** for outreach materials)*
4. *Brainstorming of new ideas....(prompt about yard signs or stickers for acknowledgement, potential for block, neighborhood, or community contests, feedback on progress)*
5. *We are trying to figure out ways to roll this program out to other communities as well. What do you think would be the "features" of a community that would be a "good" candidate vs. a "bad"*

*candidate for a program of this sort? (prompts – demographics, government, housing stock/ age, green, etc.)*

**Objectives:** Discuss social marketing tools, stickers, yard signs, contests, community groups, feedback, others

**Prompts:** Energy use, audits, House parties, CFLs, other programs, web-sites, facebook, bill inserts, posters

*(Use a white board / flip chart to take notes that all attendees can see)*

## Closing (short)

1. Did you have any additional questions for us? Or Any comments you'd like to make to make sure the Town/city has a good sense of the market, the situation, or factors related to energy and programs in <RP/H/CHE>? Any reflections on what we discussed?

**Summary Questions:** *Reflect on the most important motivations, barriers, and slogans*

**Wrap up question:** *Anything not yet covered or any questions that came up during the focus group*

If we wanted to **follow up** on any issues with you via internet / email, might that be possible? (if yes, get **email address**).

**Thank you so much for taking time to talk with us today.** I know you're busy, so we're really pleased you were able to join us. And one of the ways we'd like to show our appreciation is by handing you our promised "thank you".

XXX in the lobby has got the incentive we promised, and thanks again for you participation.

*The draft collateral that was rated by attendees was prepared by the communications consultant (Pinnacle Communications, in Maryland) and is attached. The T-shirt mock-ups are not included because the slogans (the relevant part) are included in the scoring table.*

Figure 1: Messaging Mock-Ups for Review by Focus Group Attendees (provided by Pinnacle Communications)

<p><b>WANT TO BE COOLER THIS SUMMER?</b> We'll help pay for it!</p> <p>Get \$400 to \$4,300 back on home energy upgrades</p> <p>IT'S AS EASY AS: <b>READY -SET- SAVE</b></p> <p><b>WHY TAKE ADVANTAGE OF STEP?</b> STEP is a community program that makes it easy and affordable to increase the energy efficiency of your home. Enjoy all of the benefits of STEP:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Be more comfortable: fewer drafts and hot/cold rooms</li> <li>• Save money: rebates on energy improvements and lower utility bills</li> <li>• Boost health: find gas leaks and reduce dust (helps with asthma and allergies)</li> <li>• Add value: lower energy bills make your home worth more to buyers</li> <li>• Help the environment</li> </ul> <p><b>OUTSTANDING SUPPORT</b> STEP includes free support from Energy Coach Suzanne Parmet. She can answer your questions, help you through the entire process, and ensure that you receive every possible financial incentive.</p> <p><b>JOIN YOUR NEIGHBORS</b> Hundreds of your neighbors in University Park, Hyattsville, Riverdale Park and College Heights Estates have committed to STEP, had home energy evaluations, and began improving their homes. See who's doing what and find out how STEP can benefit you and your family at <a href="http://www.SmallTownEnergy.org">www.SmallTownEnergy.org</a>.</p> <p>“STEP is a limited time program. To make sure you get the maximum rebates, get started as soon as possible. Contact me to find out more.” Energy Coach Suzanne Parmet</p> <p>energycoach@upmd.org 240-695-3991</p> <p><b>STEP</b> SMALL TOWN ENERGY PROGRAM</p>	<p><b>BE TOASTY THIS WINTER for less bread!</b></p> <p>Get \$400 to \$4,300 back on home energy upgrades</p> <p>IT'S AS EASY AS: <b>READY -SET- SAVE</b></p> <p><b>WHY TAKE ADVANTAGE OF STEP?</b> STEP is a community program that makes it easy and affordable to increase the energy efficiency of your home. Enjoy all of the benefits of STEP:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Be more comfortable: fewer drafts and hot/cold rooms</li> <li>• Save money: rebates on energy improvements and lower utility bills</li> <li>• Boost health: find gas leaks and reduce dust (helps with asthma and allergies)</li> <li>• Add value: lower energy bills make your home worth more to buyers</li> <li>• Help the environment</li> </ul> <p><b>OUTSTANDING SUPPORT</b> STEP includes free support from Energy Coach Suzanne Parmet. She can answer your questions, help you through the entire process, and ensure that you receive every possible financial incentive.</p> <p><b>JOIN YOUR NEIGHBORS</b> Hundreds of your neighbors in University Park, Hyattsville, Riverdale Park and College Heights Estates have committed to STEP, had home energy evaluations, and began improving their homes. See who's doing what and find out how STEP can benefit you and your family at <a href="http://www.SmallTownEnergy.org">www.SmallTownEnergy.org</a>.</p> <p>“STEP is a limited time program. To make sure you get the maximum rebates, get started as soon as possible. Contact me to find out more.” Energy Coach Suzanne Parmet</p> <p>energycoach@upmd.org 240-695-3991</p> <p><b>STEP</b> SMALL TOWN ENERGY PROGRAM</p>
<p><b>WANT TO BE COOLER THIS SUMMER? WE'LL HELP PAY FOR IT!</b></p> <p>Get \$400 to \$4,300 back on home energy upgrades</p> <p><b>READY</b> JOIN THE PROGRAM → <b>SET</b> COMPLETE HOME ENERGY EVALUATION → <b>SAVE</b> MAKE HOME IMPROVEMENTS, COLLECT REBATES &amp; LOWER YOUR BILLS</p> <p><b>WHY TAKE ADVANTAGE OF STEP?</b> STEP is a community program that makes it easy and affordable to increase the energy efficiency of your home. Enjoy all of the benefits of STEP:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Be more comfortable: fewer drafts and hot/cold rooms</li> <li>• Save money: rebates on energy improvements and lower utility bills</li> <li>• Boost health: find gas leaks and reduce dust (helps with asthma and allergies)</li> <li>• Add value: lower energy bills make your home worth more to buyers</li> <li>• Help the environment</li> </ul> <p><b>OUTSTANDING SUPPORT</b> STEP includes free support from Energy Coach Suzanne Parmet. She can answer your questions, help you through the entire process, and ensure that you receive every possible financial incentive.</p> <p><b>STEP IS A LIMITED TIME PROGRAM.</b> TO MAKE SURE YOU GET THE MAXIMUM REBATES, GET STARTED AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.</p> <p>energycoach@upmd.org 240-695-3991</p> <p><b>STEP</b> SMALL TOWN ENERGY PROGRAM</p>	<p><b>BE TOASTY THIS WINTER FOR LESS BREAD!</b></p> <p>Get \$400 to \$4,300 back on home energy upgrades</p> <p><b>READY</b> JOIN THE PROGRAM → <b>SET</b> COMPLETE HOME ENERGY EVALUATION → <b>SAVE</b> MAKE HOME IMPROVEMENTS, COLLECT REBATES &amp; LOWER YOUR BILLS</p> <p><b>WHY TAKE ADVANTAGE OF STEP?</b> STEP is a community program that makes it easy and affordable to increase the energy efficiency of your home. Enjoy all of the benefits of STEP:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Be more comfortable: fewer drafts and hot/cold rooms</li> <li>• Save money: rebates on energy improvements and lower utility bills</li> <li>• Boost health: find gas leaks and reduce dust (helps with asthma and allergies)</li> <li>• Add value: lower energy bills make your home worth more to buyers</li> <li>• Help the environment</li> </ul> <p><b>OUTSTANDING SUPPORT</b> STEP includes free support from Energy Coach Suzanne Parmet. She can answer your questions, help you through the entire process, and ensure that you receive every possible financial incentive.</p> <p><b>STEP IS A LIMITED TIME PROGRAM.</b> TO MAKE SURE YOU GET THE MAXIMUM REBATES, GET STARTED AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.</p> <p>energycoach@upmd.org 240-695-3991</p> <p><b>STEP</b> SMALL TOWN ENERGY PROGRAM</p>