

## Seattle City Light

### Low-Income Electric & Multifamily Program

"In some ways, Seattle is an Ecotopia," noted a Seattle City Light official, an Ecotopia where a long term commitment to low income weatherization is possible and a successful track record has indeed been proven. In addition to Seattle's progressive orientation, Seattle City Light has benefitted from Bonneville Power Administration's Energy Buy Back Program, whereby the utility's cost for conservation programs is partially offset by BPA's acquisition of conservation resources throughout the Northwest region.

The Seattle City Light (SCL) low income weatherization programs described in this profile are jointly administered, with the City's Department of Housing and Human Services (DHHS), and are targeted at two discrete sectors: single family and multifamily. For single family homes, the City provides the Low Income Electric Program (LIEP). For multifamily structures, the City offers the Multifamily Conservation Program (MFCP).

The City of Seattle, and Seattle City Light in particular, has had a long history with low income weatherization programs. In 1981 the City Council adopted an ordinance enabling the programs. Since then, some 15,109 low income units have been weatherized: 9,673 single family units, 836 multiplex units (2-4 apartments), and 4,600 multifamily units.

Weatherization of these homes has resulted in average annual energy savings per home of 3,100 kWh, 1,308 kWh, and 1,640 kWh respectively. In terms of total cumulative savings, the low income programs to date have saved 250 GWh, and will create lifecycle savings of 1,160 GWh.

The programs' expenditures support the City's commitment to weatherization. Qualified LIEP participants are granted up to \$3,300 per single family home, \$4,000 per duplex, \$5,000 per triplex, and \$7,000 for a fourplex. For the MFCP, there is no per unit ceiling on expenditures. Total annual costs of the programs have ranged from just over a million dollars in 1981 to a high of over \$6 million in 1983, to \$2.7 million in 1991. Of the \$41 million spent to date, fully \$27 million has gone into expenses directly related to the installation of the efficiency measures.

Using two city agencies to deliver a program has its advantages and disadvantages. On the up side is a diversity of talents. SCL has a long track record with demand-side management and with effectively delivering and evaluating programs. DHHS, on the other hand, is an agency devoted to social services and thus ideally suited to reach out to and serve Seattle's low income population. Among its abilities are translation services including Chinese, Laotian, Russian, Vietnamese, Cambodian, and Ethiopian for program participants.

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#### SEATTLE CITY LIGHT Low-Income Electric & Multifamily Program

**Sector:** Residential

**Measures:** "Mandatory" measures include ceiling, under-floor, heating duct, and electric water heater insulation, and water heater setbacks. A range of "optional" measures are installed where appropriate.

**Mechanism:** Direct installation of measures for qualifying customers

**History:** Started in 1981; multifamily component added in 1986

##### 1991 Program Data

Energy savings: 2,644 MWh  
 Lifecycle energy savings: 78 GWh  
 Peak capacity savings: 4.53 aMW  
 Cost: \$2,747,560

##### 1981 - 1991 Program Data

Energy savings: 250.8 GWh  
 Lifecycle energy savings: 1,160 GWh  
 Capacity savings: 28.80 aMW  
 Cost: \$40,789,014  
 Participation rate: 39%

The Results Center produced 126 profiles of the most successful energy efficiency and renewable energy programs in the United States and around the world in the early and mid 1990s. With the support of the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, Ted Flanigan directed a research team at Colorado-based IRT Environment to produce and distribute these exceptional examples. Thanks to strong demand for solid case studies, The Results Center was supported by dozens of major utilities and energy associations worldwide. Today, The Results Center is managed again by Ted Flanigan, now at California-based EcoMotion Incorporated, a firm focused on strategic consulting, information dissemination, program design, outreach services, and aggressive implementation. To nominate highly successful programs, contact: The Results Center, c/o EcoMotion, 15375 Barranca Parkway, F-104, Irvine, CA 92618, (949) 450-7155, or [TFlanigan@EcoMotion.us](mailto:TFlanigan@EcoMotion.us)