

Instructions: Replace the yellow highlights with appropriate information (the name of the relevant State Energy Office official, your organization name, etc.) and delete these instructions. Attach the [Recommendations for Immigrant Inclusion](#) and submit both to your State Energy Office.

[DATE]

RE: Recommendations on Immigrant and refugee inclusion for State Energy Offices implementing *Home Energy Rebate Programs*

Dear #####,

As State Energy Offices begin to design and implement the Department of Energy's Home Energy Rebates Program, it is critical that they take steps to ensure access and inclusion for immigrant and refugee households in disadvantaged communities.

Around the country, immigrant and refugee households of color face both disproportionate energy burden and heightened exposure to pollutants and environmental hazards.¹ In many communities, immigrants and refugees live in some of the most inefficient housing stock, where energy efficiency and electrification could yield the greatest benefits. However, these households face significant barriers and lower access and participation rates in federal, state, local, and utility-provided energy incentives and assistance programs, compared to white, non-immigrant households.²

Years of organizing in these communities show us that our members are deeply concerned about taking action to address climate change, as well as reducing their own household energy burden. However, they face significant structural barriers to access existing programs including language, immigration status, and cultural competency. Many members of these communities are categorically excluded from other federal programs due to their immigration status, like the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program and Weatherization Assistance Program. Those who are eligible face language barriers, a lack of culturally competent outreach and education efforts, eligibility screening that unnecessarily excludes non-citizens, challenges finding qualified contractors with appropriate language skills, among other barriers.

Ensuring that immigrant and refugee households have access to the Home Energy Rebates program is essential both for achieving equity, and for maximizing emissions reductions in some of the country's most energy-burdened housing stock.

[Organization] offers the attached recommendations to State Energy Offices to recognize and remediate these barriers. We urge State Energy Offices to address these barriers in their program applications and to engage with local immigrant and refugee advocates during their stakeholder processes.

Sincerely,

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¹Ariel Dreobl, Lauren Ross, and Roxana Ayala. *How High Are Household Energy Burdens?: An Assessment of National and Metropolitan Energy Burden across the United States*. American Council for an Energy-Efficient Economy, September 2020

²*Needs Assessment for the Energy Savings Assistance and the California Alternate Rates for Energy Programs Volume 2: Detailed Findings Final Report*. Evergreen Economics, December 2013