

# Efficiency for everyone

All communities deserve access to energy efficiency



Grants in action

## Small changes make big differences

Solar panels, more efficient appliances, replacement windows and tankless water heaters were all part of the energy efficiency and renewable energy incentive mix over the past few years at Energy Efficiency Alberta. Some measures, though, are still cost prohibitive for certain groups of people to save money on energy bills. Several

organizations have developed programs that made efficiency accessible to everyone by showing how small changes can lead to big results.

Energy Saving Cafés, created by the All One Sky Foundation, offered an innovative format for communities to engage with energy locally, with a goal to combat energy poverty and promote energy efficiency and conservation through education and advice. This is important for their chosen community. In a survey, only half of program participants said they can keep their home at a comfortable temperature on a typical winter day and 20 per cent of participants rarely, if ever, are able to heat their home to an acceptable level in winter.

The Energy Saving cafes took place in the Edmonton region and provided personalized, one-to-one energy efficiency advice and education sessions in a relaxed, stigma-free setting. All One Sky demonstrated how changing small behaviours like adding a dry towel to the dryer with wet clothes and small retrofits like weather stripping can make homes more comfortable and save money.

They also partnered with local agencies catering to the same clientele in the city to offer on-site energy efficiency information. The workshops were so impactful, All One Sky was frequently asked to return multiple times to speak to different client audiences or to be available to speak to other agencies. This organic interest helped them to provide education to many more people than they had originally anticipated. The project's ability to connect social services and organizations, as well as to educate trainers and clients about efficiency and utilities made it a success, and one that they will look to continue.



***“We had a conversation with an Indigenous woman about energy bills and specific resources that could assist her and her five children. She was appreciative of the energy saving tip sheets and resources we provided her. We talked for half an hour about difficulties of managing expenses and bills, as well as some specific challenges for her such as discrimination. Other participants highlighted challenges they face that exacerbate their struggles with energy poverty.” ~ All One Sky team member***

Empower Me is Canada’s only energy conservation and education change program designed for and delivered by members of diverse, multilingual, and hard to reach communities. With Energy Efficiency Alberta funding, Empower Me focused on delivering education to save energy, money, the environment, and increase the comfort and safety of Albertans’ homes. They hosted workshops in over 16 languages, conducted home visits with energy saving kits for residents and engaged in impactful conversations at many local events around Alberta, prior to COVID. Over the past few years, their programming was successful in empowering over 26,349 Albertans to not only make changes in their homes, but share their valuable knowledge with their communities.



***“We are aware that saving energy will not only benefit us as a single family, but our behaviour benefits the environment, the conservation of resources and may even save lives as well. Although our energy saving adjustments and awareness may seem inconsequential, our small step could become a great leap when it is multiplied by millions.” ~Keyla, Empower Me home visit recipient***

The Alberta Council of Disability Services is a not-for-profit network of Community Disability Services (CDS) sector organizations in Alberta. Their member-driven organization works closely to strengthen the CDS sector to benefit Albertans with developmental disabilities. This includes increasing their members’ capacity to run lean, efficient organizations and make the best use of funding. ACDS pulled its members together to teach them how to be smarter about their energy use and to reduce operating costs. Members were provided with the expertise to evaluate their businesses and homes for potential efficiencies and make informed decisions based on proven

audit methods, economic analysis, and based on their specific geographic situations. They opened their workshops to all members of the community to share the benefits of energy efficiency and conservation, and create opportunities for the Disability Services Sector to be leaders in environmental stewardship. Roughly half of the organizations who attended workshops requested energy monitors for their offices, enabling them to actively track and lower their energy consumption.

***"We have implemented energy saving conversations into our team meetings and shared information with all of our staff and individuals. We have changed some practices such as shutting down computers at night, programmed thermostats, recycle program, composting etc." Diane Magill***

***"I now turn off my computer screen every day! I am more aware of ways to improve my energy efficiency (led light bulbs, etc.)." Charlotte Mackay (CEO, Catholic Social Services)***