



September 2018

Participation Guide for Community Partners

Summary

Button Up Vermont 2018 is a community-based public outreach campaign to help Vermonters reduce their heating and cooling costs, and be more comfortable in their homes. This year's campaign is designed to help all Vermonters take action – from simple weather stripping to comprehensive home energy efficiency improvements like air sealing and insulation upgrades.

Button Up is a project of Efficiency Vermont, in partnership with a broad range of statewide and regional organizations working to help Vermont reach its statewide goal to weatherize 80,000 homes by the year 2020.

Community partners have two ways to participate: Button Up Champ and Button Up Hero.

Button Up Champ: Community partners commit to undertaking two community engagement activities (e.g. table at a local event, presentation about energy efficiency) and distribute free energy efficiency kits (provided by Efficiency Vermont) to residents who complete a Button Up checklist and commit to taking action to reduce energy use at home.

Button Up Hero: Button Up Hero communities will offer residents a free walk-through assessment, scope of work, and cost estimate from a qualified contractor who participates in Efficiency Vermont's Efficiency Excellence Network. Residents sign-up by completing a brief survey before December 15.* Walk-throughs will be completed between November and March, and homeowners who commit to moving forward with their projects by Earth Day (April 22nd) will be entered into a statewide prize drawing for an additional payment to be added to the Efficiency Vermont rebate for their qualifying weatherization project.

Button Up Hero community partners will host a fall kick-off event and engage in other creative local outreach before the December 15 sign-up deadline. Community partners will receive a list of participating residents, including status updates throughout the winter so community partners can provide personal encouragement to neighbors who are in the process of weatherizing their homes.

*Button Up Hero builds upon the *Weatherize* model that was successfully field-tested in the Upper Valley by the non-profit organization, Vital Communities. *Weatherize* was specifically designed to help neighbors receive comprehensive weatherization improvements for their homes. The success of the Weatherize model can be credited to the strong partnership between community groups and contractors. In the Upper Valley, the Weatherize model was implemented in 14 Vermont towns in 2017. 187 homeowners received a free walk-through assessment from an Efficiency Excellence Network Home Performance with ENERGY STAR® contractor and 101 moved forward with completing the work – representing a conversion rate of 54%.

In support of all Button Up Vermont 2018 campaigns, Efficiency Vermont will place printed and digital ads to reach all Vermonters –with the majority of the paid media aimed toward directly supporting participating communities. Efficiency Vermont will work with its network of retail partners to promote weatherization and other energy efficient products.

This Guide includes the following sections:

- Background
 - Roles and Responsibilities
 - How to Participate
 - Timeline
 - Attachment A: Sampling of Community Engagement Activities
-

Background

Vermont has seen a groundswell of individuals at the local level who are interested in helping their communities promote energy efficiency and renewable energy. Today, there are over 100 town energy committees in Vermont along with another 50 town-appointed energy coordinators. These local energy committees and energy coordinators offer great promise for helping Vermont increase energy efficiency in their homes. Despite this inspiring wave of energy action, most Vermonters have not undertaken comprehensive action to fully weatherize their homes.

In 2008, the Vermont State Legislature set a statewide goal of improving the energy efficiency of at least 20% of the state’s housing stock by 2018 (about 80,000 units) and reducing annual fuel needs and bills by an average of 25% in the housing units served. Unfortunately, Vermont is falling significantly behind in this goal. This is where the 2018 Button Up Vermont campaign comes in.

Button Up Vermont is designed to encourage community partners, such as town energy committees, to work with their residents to encourage them to commit to making efficiency improvements in their homes. The campaign focuses on all Vermonters and is designed to provide opportunities for all individuals to take actions – from simple weather stripping to Home Performance with ENERGY STAR jobs.*

In 2017, Vermonters in 31 towns helped their neighbors figure out how to spend less on heating and cooling and make their homes more comfortable. Weybridge residents booked the school library and 30 people showed up to hear about effective air sealing and new heat pump technology from an Efficiency Vermont expert. Montpelier’s Energy Committee tabled at three farmers markets, getting 140 neighbors to commit to upgrading their homes. Volunteers from Sharon, Bethel, and Royalton put up posters and notices in town newsletters for a *Weatherize* event where neighbors could meet contractors and set up free home walkthroughs, leading to 13 families weatherizing their homes.

* * Home Performance with ENERGY STAR® is a statewide program of certified energy contractors who conduct energy audits and implement comprehensive efficiency improvements, such as insulation and air sealing. This program is managed by Efficiency Vermont with private contractors operating in Vermont. [Click here](#) for more information about Home Performance with ENERGY STAR. Information about Vermont Gas Company’s energy efficiency program that can be [found here](#).

The 2018 Button Up Vermont campaign is designed to:

- Engage with at least 45 Vermont communities to promote thermal and electrical efficiency measures to their fellow community members;
- Increase the number of Vermonters who undertake comprehensive weatherization measures by partnering with community groups and local energy contractors; and,
- Raise general public awareness and literacy about energy saving benefits (e.g. comfort, \$\$ savings) and opportunities;

Roles and Responsibilities

For Button Up Champ AND Hero partners, Efficiency Vermont will:

- **Hold informational calls & regional workshops for community partners:** Several calls and workshops will be held throughout the state, and Efficiency Vermont will provide a handbook for partner communities;
- **Supply educational/promotional materials:** Including posters, handouts, and educational materials to distribute to residents, as well as the Button Up Vermont checklist;
- **Provide free products to distribute:** Communities will receive free energy efficient product kits to distribute to residents and homeowners. Energy efficient products kits include weather stripping, information about a new DIY offer, and a refrigerator thermometer;
- **Offer paid advertising:** Efficiency Vermont will work directly with newspapers to provide paid advertising for one outreach event;
- **Update the Button Up website:** ButtonUpVermont.org, which provides educational videos, tools for communities as well as individual residents.

In addition, for Button Up Hero communities, Efficiency Vermont will,

- **Recruit participating contractors:** Engage with contractors in the Efficiency Excellence Network (EEN) and encourage them to partner with community groups in their service territory to offer free walk-throughs;
- **Provide status updates:** track participants and provide this data to community partners;
- **Supply campaign materials/tools:** Provide sample agendas and press releases volunteer scripts, as well as lawn signs, table top posters, and a sample weatherization kit.

Button Up Champ Community Partners will:

- **Host two community engagement public events, where they will:**
 - Distribute free energy efficient product kits to residents and property owners in exchange for residents/property owners committing to undertake at least one new energy efficiency measure/action in their homes. *Agree to distribute only one packet of efficient products per household and to distribute efficient products only to Vermont residents/property owners;*
 - Promote a checklist of energy-saving actions that residents/property owners can undertake to reduce heating and cooling costs; and,

- Record the name and address of all individuals who receive free efficient product kit and provide this list to Efficiency Vermont. Note, by obtaining their full address, Efficiency Vermont can better support the homeowner in the future;*
- **Prepare a brief narrative report** at the conclusion of the program with information on completed activities and results.

In addition to the activities list above, *Button Up Hero* community partners will:

- **Commit to hosting a kick-off event** for residents to encourage their participation.
 - The kick-off event includes participating contractors who will have an opportunity to speak and talk about their company, and residents have an opportunity to have 1:1 conversations with participating contractors.
 - This event can be done in partnership with participating neighboring communities.
- **Undertake additional public engagement activities** with residents and homeowners, as described above.
- **Follow-up with residents** who have received their work scope and cost estimate from the contractor to encourage them to move forward (additional guidance will be provided).
- **Distribute free energy efficient product kits** to residents and property owners and record the names and contact individuals who receive a free energy efficient product kit, as described under the Button Up Champ options above.

How to Participate

- 1) **Register on-line:** Go to [this link](#) and complete the on-line registration form. You will need to *choose if your community will be a Button Up Champ or a Button Up Hero.*
- 2) **Sign a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU):** Once you register, Efficiency Vermont will send you a simple Memorandum of Understanding that lays out our respective roles and responsibilities.
- 3) **Assemble your team:** Pull the key individuals together who will be involved in your Button Up effort and start to make preliminary plans for engaging community members. Efficiency Vermont will send you an informational packet that will include the Button Up Vermont checklist, sign-up sheets, flyers on the Heat Saver Loan program, and other educational materials.
- 4) **Participate in one of 4 regional workshops for community partners:** Efficiency Vermont, in partnership with regional planning commissions around the state, is hosting a series of 4 regional workshops around the state for community partners. These workshops will provide a critical opportunity to meet other community groups participating in Button Up Vermont, gain a deeper understanding of how the Button Up Vermont program works, and pick-up educational materials and efficient products to distribute to residents. [Click here](#) for information on the dates and locations of regional workshops.
- 5) **Post engagement events in your community on the Button Up website:** Once you figure out what engagement activities you want to undertake and the dates of each, go to the Button Up Vermont website and complete the [“Add your event”](#) form. All community engagement

• * If individuals object to putting their full contact information – then just the name is sufficient.

activities will then be posted on the website. In addition, Efficiency Vermont will cover the cost of one paid advertisement for one of your community engagement activities. For Button Up “Heroes”, this event will be the kick-off event.

- 6) **Communities implement engagement activities:** Community partners will have the primary responsibility for organizing local engagement activities, including kick-off events, tabling, workshops, and other engagement activities. Descriptions of these engagement activities can be found below.
- 7) **Community partners conclude outreach efforts:** After undertaking your community engagement activities, community partners are asked to submit a short report summarizing the activities they implemented and their results.

Timeline

		Button Up Champ	Button Up Hero
2018	Aug 8	Community partner application process opens	
	Sept 6	2 nd informational call for interested community partners	
	Sept 17	Community partner sign-up deadline	
	Sept 25		Contractor participation deadline
	Sept 28		Contractors matched up with participating communities
	Oct 1-8	Five regional workshops for communities held statewide <i>(receive campaign material and efficiency giveaway bags)</i>	
	Oct 1-8	Community engagement begins	Residents can sign up for free walk-throughs
	Oct 22 – Nov 8		Community partners host kick-off events
	Dec 15	Community engagement concludes	Sign-up deadline for free walk-through visits
	Oct - Mar		Contractors conduct walk-throughs and submit reports to customers
2019	Jan - Apr		Follow-up with residents who received energy assessment/scope/cost
	April 22 (Earth Day)		Deadline for homeowner to commit to a project and be entered into the Button Up prize drawing

Attachment A: Sample of Community Engagement Activities

Community partners are encouraged to be creative in reaching their residents to help them reduce heat and cooling costs. To start you down the path, Efficiency Vermont has prepared a guide on specific community engagement activities, including:

- **Tabling:** Community partners can table at a variety of locations, including farmer's markets, town transfer station, or at any existing community gathering.
- **Workshops:** Efficiency Vermont is offering free workshops for community partners and businesses designed to help Vermonters make energy improvements. Each workshop addresses how a particular technology works, associated economics, and available technical and financial resources. Efficiency Vermont can provide an energy expert to deliver the presentation, guidance on how to effectively organize a workshop, and educational and public outreach materials. Community partners and businesses are asked to take primary responsibility for getting the word out and securing the venue. To schedule a workshop, [sign up here](#) on the Efficiency Vermont website or call 1 888-921-5990.
 - The following educational workshops are currently available:
 - **Button Up Vermont:** how homes lose energy and primary opportunities for air sealing and insulation
 - **Cold Climate Heat Pumps:** the latest in heat pump technology, the relative economics compared to other fuel sources, and successful case studies
 - **Mobile Home Efficiency:** improvements unique to mobile homes, with a focus on DIY opportunities
 - **Modern Wood Heating:** how wood pellet central heating systems work, and the relative cost and savings compared to other systems
 - **Slash Your Energy Bills:** introductory workshop on reducing energy bills through low-cost efficiency improvements, weatherization, and more
 - **Zero Energy Homes:** the path toward a zero energy home with energy efficiency, heat pumps, and solar
- **Home Energy Parties:** Home energy parties can be an effective way to encourage residents to improve the efficiency of their homes. Based upon the Tupperware party model, homeowners who have recently completed comprehensive energy retrofits invite their neighbors and friends to their homes to share their experiences. The energy contractor who performed the work is also invited to attend and explain the energy audit and retrofit process.
- **Door-to-Door Community Outreach:** Door-to-door outreach efforts offer an effective method to reach a large number of people in a relatively short timeframe. Volunteers go door-to-door to share information about energy saving opportunities and resources and provide educational materials. Door-to-door efforts can also include providing energy saving products to interested residents, and surveying residents about their energy usage and preferences.
- **Phone-a-Thons:** Phone-a-thons present a relatively inexpensive method to reach a large number of residences in a relatively short-time frame. Simply, volunteers organize one or more phone-a-thon parties, obtain a list of residents' phone numbers, and using a prepared script encourage them to move ahead with home energy improvements.