



MAINE DEPARTMENT OF
Energy Resources

Home Energy Navigator and Coaching Pilot Program Design

NASEO Energy Affordability Meeting
March 2, 2026





Resolve requirements

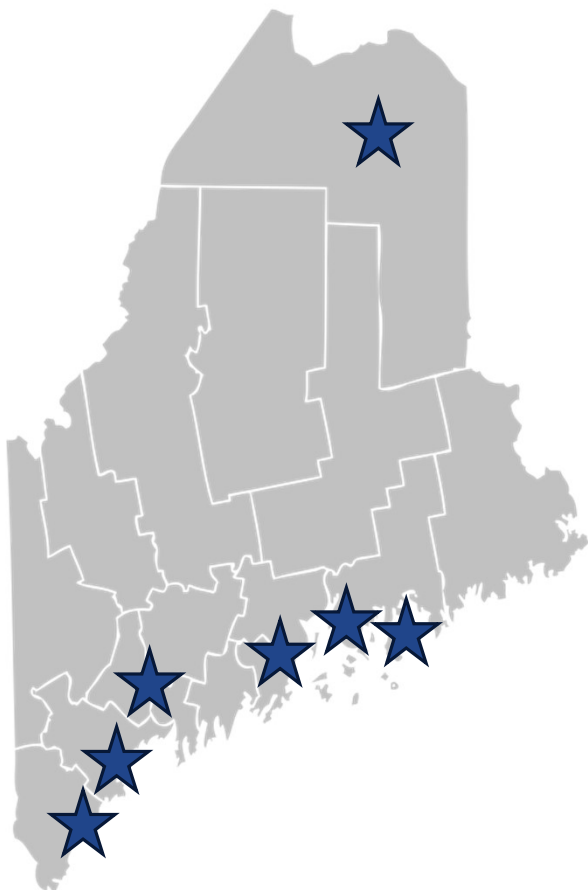
- Maine Department of Energy Resources and the Governor's Office of Policy Innovation and the Future to design an energy coach program in consultation with Efficiency Maine Trust, Maine State Housing Authority, and the Maine Office of Community Affairs
 - Must consult with external community-based organizations and tribal governments
- Submit a report to Energy, Utilities and Technology committee by 2/1/2026
 - A description of the design;
 - A description of the TA and educational materials;
 - An estimate of costs;
 - Target metrics; and
 - A proposed timeline.
- Resolve was unfunded

Energy Coaching/Navigating

Broad range of activities that provide hands-on support to walk people through the process of identifying rebates or other energy programs, selecting contractors, and completing energy efficiency/clean energy projects. Energy coaching programs seek to mitigate time, trust, and knowledge barriers and may use volunteers or paid coaches.

- Provide **community-based energy coaching services** to residential consumers, particularly those in low-income and underserved communities;
- Advise on **accessing available grants, rebates**, and other **assistance programs**;
- Prioritize identified energy-saving opportunities to **reduce heating and cooling loads**; and
- Help review and **analyze contractor recommendations** regarding cost, payment and other relevant factors.

Energy Coaching Activity in Maine



Existing or past energy coach/navigator programs:

- York Ready for Climate Action
- Southern Maine Planning and Development Commission/GPCOG
- passivhausMAINE (Lewiston and Freeport)
- Camden/Rockport
- Blue Hill Peninsula
- A Climate to Thrive – MDI/Hancock County
- Aroostook Community Action Partnership and other community action agencies with similar programs

Process

- 15+ conversations
 - Community Action Agencies
 - Energy coaching program implementors
 - Maine Climate Council working groups
 - Tribal representatives
 - Age-Friendly Communities
 - Energy auditors and industry representatives
 - Regional planning organizations
- Public comment period
 - 30 responses
- Summary of feedback
 - State coordination and support would be useful, but shouldn't be "top down"
 - Leverage existing momentum
 - Regional/multi-community coordination is beneficial



Pilot Proposal Design Options

Recommend several program design options at different funding levels (\$ - \$\$\$)

Energy Coach Grant Pilot

- RFA to fund two projects from different tracks. Track 1 = one coordinator to support existing programs & Track 2 = two energy coaches to develop new programs
- Most resource intensive

Climate Corps Coach Pilot

- ~6 Climate Corps members placed in communities to serve as paid energy coaches, focus on rural and remote areas
- Moderate level of resources

Resource Hub Pilot

- DOER to develop and host a library of resources for organizations to implement their own programs
- Least resource intensive

Elements of all three proposals

Process revealed standard technical assistance/resource development, liability and risk reduction, and metric components to include in all three design options



TA Materials

Each proposal would benefit from standardization of resources. Energy coaching TA material fall into three categories:

1. Energy coaching program materials
2. Technical energy materials
3. Volunteer and client engagement materials



Liability Reduction

Successful programs clearly delineate the role of the energy coaches:

- Offer guidance, not expert advice
- Provide multiple options, when possible
- Requiring waivers
- Shouldn't directly perform upgrades



Metrics and Evaluation

- Energy coaching programs require both qualitative and quantitative metrics
- Metrics should be straightforward, data is often being collected by volunteers

Recommended Approach



- **Proposal 1 would likely have the most significant impact**
- Proposal 3 is a low-cost, 'no regrets' strategy that improves statewide coordination and standardization to address liability concerns, ease administrative burdens, and evaluate program success
- Continued coordination with partners, existing programs, and regional entities (e.g., NEEP) is essential



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Thank You

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One-Stop Shop

NASEO Energy Affordability Committee Meeting

Energy Navigator Initiatives

outwit complexity™



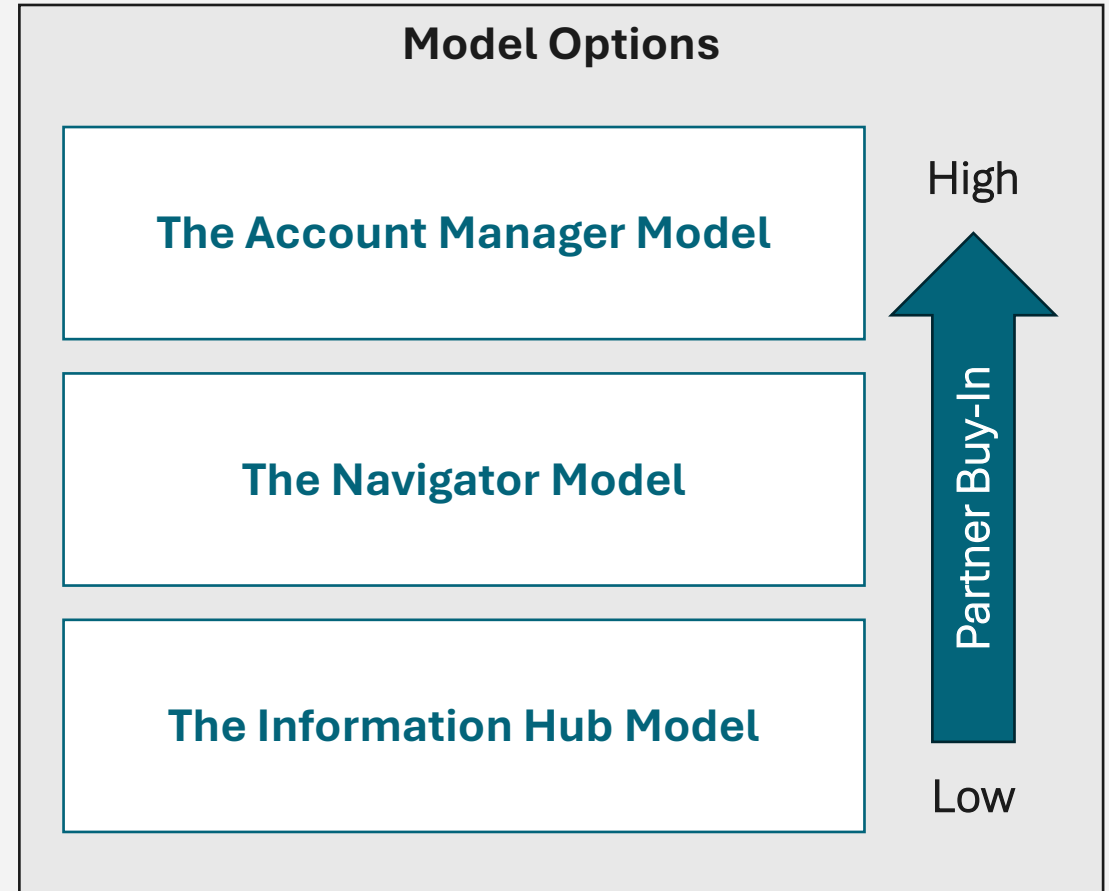
Access to Energy Affordability: Single Front Door

One-stop shops (OSS) provide a unique opportunity to engage and convert households to users of energy affordability programs

A well-designed one-stop shop or “single front door” can **reduce friction, improve program outcomes, and help deploy funds efficiently**, while reducing the administrative burden for contractors and households.

Successful implementation is defined by disciplined coordination through:

- Strong inter-agency cooperation
- Clear ownership
- Shared eligibility rules
- Performance management systems



Learn more at [Guidehouse.com](https://www.guidehouse.com)

The Information Hub Model

Provides a single, comprehensive resource for energy savings programs, making the information more accessible and easier-to-use for households and businesses

Information Potential



Education: Plain-language and multilingual resources about energy efficiency, electrification, distributed energy, and resilience upgrades



Program Information: Plain-language program information: requirements, income-eligibility, and how-to guidance



Incentive Finder: Central, searchable resource for energy efficiency rebates, tax credits, and financing. Contains external links



Resource List/Finder: Central, searchable list for energy efficiency, electrification, and renewable contractors, retailers, and finance orgs

Success Factors



Funding/Staffing: Lowest-cost option, covering stakeholder engagement, vendor management and updates



Collaboration: Partners willing to engage and share updates regularly will increase effectiveness



Technology: Beyond information and search tools, applications are managed on existing program platforms



Monitoring & Compliance: No PII collection; compliance owned by stakeholders

The Navigator Model

Provides live support that is especially useful for engaging hard-to-reach populations. It requires significant investment, collaboration, and management

Navigator Potential



Advising: Navigators help provide basic education, and direct households to programs that best suit their needs and eligibility



Program Navigation: Navigators help household navigate programs, including how, when, and where to qualify and participate



Contractors: Navigators help households find program contractors and retailers, and provide selection best-practices



Application Support: Navigators assist households access and understand applications. May assist with technology, language services, and/or application submission

Success Factors



Funding/Staffing: Significant investment for management of staff, stakeholders, and information



Collaboration: Requires program specific information, requirements, updates, and training



Technology: Applications may be submitted via existing program platforms on a central OSS platform



Monitoring & Compliance: Navigator role-dependent; compliance owned by stakeholders



Roles and Boundaries: Clearly identifying the navigator role and boundaries is essential

The Account Manager Model

Provides high-touch, personalized support and may be the most likely to convert income-qualified households to participation in energy affordability programs.

Account Manager Potential



Consulting: Managers gather household-specific needs, and support the household for the full scope of engagement



Program Navigation: Account managers identify program eligibility and the order that the work should be done. May assist with scheduling and correspondence



Contractors: AMs help households find and program contractors and retailers, and may coordinate or schedule work



Application Support: AMs help households with income-eligibility and may submit applications on behalf of the household

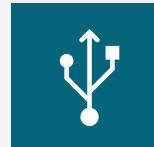
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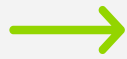
Roles and Boundaries: Clearly identifying the AM role and boundaries is essential

Building the Foundations for Success



Identify common programs and target audiences:

Align with programs that have similar goals, target audiences, and/or project and equipment alignment



Start Small: Inter-agency coordination is challenging. Starting small and focused with bring early success and lessons learned



Use the right model: Variation in program requirements, household eligibility thresholds, PII and budget constraints can help determine which model is best suited for local circumstances





Thank You

For further reading, please check out our white paper:

[How a “single front door” can transform home energy programs](#)

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