BayREN

Climate Careers Process Evaluation



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Grounded Research and Consulting, LLC

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December 2025
(Revised May 2026)

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Executive Summary

This evaluation documents the value of BayREN's Climate Careers program and identifies lessons learned to inform program improvements. Climate Careers, implemented by Rising Sun Center for Opportunity (Rising Sun), trains underserved youth (ages 15-24) as Energy Specialists who deliver no-cost Green House Calls (GHCs) to low-income Bay Area households. The program then supports these youth through externships in the fall (i.e., ~8 week placements with local businesses and public agencies).

The program creates a unique dual-value model that simultaneously provides youth with paid employment and career development opportunities while serving households.

- **For Youth:** The BayREN program provides paid employment, technical and professional skills training, real work experience, career exploration in the green economy, and ongoing alumni support—illuminating pathways out of poverty and into sustainable careers.
- **For Households:** The BayREN program provides no-cost energy and water-saving devices either in person or through a virtual audit and mailed energy efficiency kit. The program also provides personalized energy-saving guidance and connections to additional resources. For those receiving in-person services, the services are delivered by trained youth from their own communities. Note that both the in-person services and the virtual services are referred to as "Green House Calls" (GHCs).

Workforce Development Findings

The program provided work experience for 49 youth from low-income backgrounds. The youth gained valuable skills and experience. Through the workforce development component of this program, the youth:

- Built technical skills in energy efficiency assessment and device installation
- Developed soft skills including communication, teamwork, problem-solving, and customer service
- Increased environmental awareness and interest in green careers, with many participants reporting significant growth in green career interest

In addition to these benefits, the evaluation uncovered challenges in translating the youth experience into long-term green careers. The report provides workforce-related recommendations in the section: Opportunities for Improvement to Workforce Components.

Residential Findings

The program served a diverse audience including low-income households, renters, and multifamily, which are households that are not often served by other programs. Many households served had significant weatherization needs, with about one-third reporting broken or drafty doors and a quarter reporting broken or drafty windows. Key findings from the GHC recipient survey show that in 2025, this program:

- Demonstrated measurable energy and non-energy outcomes: 92% reported energy savings, 87% changed behaviors to save energy or water, 78% reported improvements to their family's health, and 75% reported water savings
- Connected recipients to other resources, serving as an access point for additional energy efficiency services, leading to 59% of recipients stating that they took additional actions based on the information provided by the GHC

The evaluation also uncovered some areas in need of improvement. Recommendations related to GHCs can be found in the section: Opportunities for Improvement to Residential-Facing GHC Processes.

Study Overview

In 2025, the evaluation team gathered data via embedded data collection efforts (in coordination with the program team) to identify successes and potential program improvements.

Key Research Questions:

This research included documenting the successes and gathering information through multiple lenses (youth, partners, and Green House Call recipients). Specifically, this report sought to answer the following research questions:

1. What are the key accomplishments of this community-oriented program?
2. What are the youth and partner perspectives about the workforce benefits of the program? Are there recommendations to improve the desired workforce outcomes?
3. What is the Green House Call recipient's (i.e., participating residential household) perspective? Are there recommendations to improve residential awareness-raising and energy saving outcomes?

The report is structured by these three research areas (i.e., accomplishments, workforce findings and residential findings).

Research Methods

The evaluation team used multiple data collection methods during the 2025 program year.

Method	Description
Program Tracking Data Review	Analysis of program tracking data (January through December 2025).
Survey Data Collected By Program	Review of multiple surveys (of both participating youth and GHC recipients) that are fielded by Rising Sun as a part of the program.
Interviews	Interviews with staff and youth, to understand their perspectives, including: • 8 one-hour long interviews with Rising Sun staff • 17 one-hour long interviews with youth program participants (8 current participants and 9 alumni).
GHC Recipient Survey (evaluation survey)	Online survey of GHC recipients in late November 2025. The survey was fielded to 1,447 2025 GHC recipients with a valid email address (of 1,644 who had participated through mid-October 2025). In total, 148 Green House Call recipients responded to the survey (70 in-person visits, 78 virtual/mail kit recipients). The reported total is weighted to the population (33% in-home and 67% virtual).
Outreach Booth Observations	Observation of outreach/tabling efforts at three (3) local events (in Novato, Oakland, and South San Francisco). This included speaking with tabling staff and a discussion with outreach staff members about what the evaluation team observed.
GHC Observations	Observation of six (6) Green House Calls across two counties to observe how the program works in real time. This included two days shadowing Energy Specialists as they prepared for, conducted, and debriefed GHCs. This task also included four (4) informal interviews of youth participants during ride along observations.

The evaluation team (CivicMakers) conducted all interviews and observations and provided three early feedback memos to BayREN and Rising Sun during the 2025 program year. This included memos on:

1. Tabling & Outreach
2. Green House Calls Visits
3. Youth Work Development Experience

The evaluation team (Grounded Research) also provided BayREN and Rising Sun with a quick feedback memo from the GHC recipient survey aimed at helping inform future program changes.

This report is a summary report that draws on the analysis of program data and the information provided in prior memos.

Overview of Climate Careers Program

Climate Careers, implemented by Rising Sun (a Bay Area nonprofit focused on workforce development and community resilience), is a BayREN equity segment program.

The program has both a workforce component (supporting future climate-related green careers) and residential component that seeks to raise awareness of energy saving opportunities and deliver energy savings directly to residents in the Bay Area. These two parts are fully integrated within the program; however, for the sake of this report, we describe them separately as: the **Workforce Component** and the **Residential Component**.

This is also a community-oriented program. For 2025, BayREN worked with county representatives to select Disadvantaged Communities (DAC) in four counties – Alameda, Marin, San Mateo and Solano.[1] In these communities, the program set up a local office and worked with local partners to encourage local youth to participate in the program and become Energy Specialists. Each county and their communities is served for a two-year cycle.[2] The youth Energy Specialists provide GHCs to residents in their communities. In counties where there is no local office, residents can participate through a virtual GHC (see below for more details regarding a virtual GHC).

The Workforce Component

In-person visits are conducted by youth ages 15–24 trained through the program to be Energy Specialists. The youth are paid to deliver GHCs. Youth participants (the Energy Specialists) are mostly from low-income backgrounds and often in their first job (technically a paid internship). The program provides career development support (like financial literacy and resume building), helps youth participants build confidence and professionalism, and provides a chance to practice communication, leadership, problem-solving, and teamwork. Youth also learn technical skills that support future jobs in the green economy, such as how to assess the energy efficiency of a home and install energy and water saving items.

Youth interns administer the GHCs in pairs, conducting up to three GHCs per day between June and August each year. Energy Specialists assess the water and energy efficiency of the residences, install energy and water saving devices, and offer resources.

After the summer internship, all youth are encouraged to participate in paid externships with local partner organizations in the green economy. Through the fall externship, participating youth receive more hours of professional development. Some are offered jobs by their externship hosts, although ~80% of the youth are still in school and not at the point where they are ready for a full-time job.

The Residential Component

Through the BayREN Climate Careers program, Rising Sun offers GHCs[3] to households across the Bay Area, with a focus on low- and moderate-income residents, renters, and non-English speakers. Residential households receive simple energy saving upgrades at no cost and get tips for further reducing their energy and water bills. Device upgrades include power strips, LED light bulbs, smart plugs, low-flow showerheads, sink aerators, night lights, and weather stripping. A limited number of customers also receive a single burner induction cooktop.

[1] These 4 offices served 26 cities and towns.

[2] BayREN plans to add two more counties in 2026 (for a total of 6 counties).

[3] Rising Sun also offers GHCs to other communities outside of BayREN's area using a separate funding source.

Residents can access GHCs through two avenues.

- **In-Person GHC**: During summer months (June, July, and August), the youth Energy Specialists trained by Rising Sun provide energy and water savings information as well as install relevant low cost items. Residents who receive an in-person visit are given hands-on support.
- **Virtual GHC:** Throughout the year, Bay Area residents can access the program via an online site. (See https://www.bayren.org/toolkit for more information)**.**[4] Residents who participate virtually receive an energy saving kit by mail.

Figure 1. Image of Energy Efficiency Kits for Virtual GHC Recipients

All services are no-cost to the residents.

[4] https://risingsunopp.org/programs/ghc/

2025 Accomplishments

Table 1 below shows an overview of the program's accomplishments during 2025.

Table 1. Overview of 2025 Accomplishments

Workforce Component Youth ages 15-24 gain skills and career pathways	Residential Component Low-income households receive free services
Dual pathways delivering community impact through youth workforce development and household energy savings	

• 49 Youth trained in 2025, i.e., gaining skills while delivering tangible community benefits
• 48 Youth in externships completed in 2025 (31 completed 120+ hours)
• Demographics of participating youth
  ○ 100% low-income
  ○ 81% non-white*
• 93% of youth participants felt that they are more prepared to enter a job or career because of the Climate Careers program
	• 2,006 Green House Calls delivered in 2025
	  ○ 663 in-person
	  ○ 1,343 virtual
	• Demographics of participating households
	  ○ 77% of GHC recipients are low income (only valid responses included)
	  ○ 62% non-white GHC recipients served across the Bay Area*
	  ○ 43% renters
	  ○ 26% multifamily households
	• At the end of 2025, the program reported 467,053 Lifecycle gross kWh, 107,442 Lifecycle gross therms, and 4.8 million gallons saved annually (on CEDARS)

★ Program Integration: Community-Oriented Impact The intersection creates community value. Trained youth from disadvantaged communities deliver no-cost energy services to their own low-income neighbors, building immediate household savings while creating pathways to green economy careers.	

Source: Program Tracking data, lifecycle gross savings and water savings from CEDARS through Q4 2025
**Based on valid percentages*

In the sections below we first describe the workforce-related findings followed by the residential findings (related to GHC recipients).

Workforce Findings

Below we describe how the program is: (1) providing youth with workforce development opportunities and (2) building skills and workforce experience. We also provide some opportunities for improvements to the program.

Providing Youth with Workforce Development Opportunities

Early in a calendar year, youth learn about the GHC program and apply to become a paid intern. They receive four days of training in mid-June and professional development throughout the summer. Between June and August, youth administer GHCs in pairs, conducting up to three GHCs per day. After the summer internship, all youth are encouraged to start a paid externship with a local partner organization in the green economy and receive more hours of professional development. Some are offered jobs by their externship hosts although many (~80%) are full-time students and may not be ready for a full-time job placement).

Figure 2. Youth Journey

Before Summer Program	During Summer Program (Internship)		After Summer Program	
Learning About the Program & Signing Up *(Early Jan - TBD)*	**Paid Job Training** *(Jun 16-20)*	**Green House Calls & Curriculum Workshops** *(Jun 23-Aug 1)*	**Externships** *(Aug 5-Nov 20)*	**Alumni Engagement** *(Nov 21 and beyond)*
• Hear about the program from friend, relative, school, or event • Complete application & interview • Selected for the program, notified, and accept	• Learn about Rising Sun goals & policies • Trained in home electrification assessment, energy efficiency decarbonization, and device installation • Learn safety requirements	• Visit 3-5 homes per day for GHCs • Participate in professional development workshops on Mondays and Fridays • Follow up with clients about their experience. • Conduct outreach, as necessary	• Informational interviews with externship orgs • Work 8-15 weeks for 8-10 hrs per week, 120 hrs total • 45 additional hours of professional development • Give final presentation • Submit program evaluation	• Invited to happy hours, financial literacy workshops, and other events • Receive newsletter about organizational updates & environmental jobs, including at Rising Sun • Access to career resource

We found that the program creates a rich environment for learning and growth for the youth (as workers and as people) and is often their first real work experience. Externships gave youth valuable paid experience in a professional setting and helped them apply what they learned in the summer. There is also an active alumni community that keeps former participants connected, engaged, and supported.

Figure 3. Summary of Youth Experience

Topic	Summary of Findings
Career Exploration during the Program	The program creates a rich environment for learning and growth, often providing participants' first real work experience. The mix of new and returning participants, combined with supportive staff, fosters peer learning and skill development. The program successfully builds confidence and foundational workplace skills. Youth value the paid work experience and professional development training (financial literacy, resume building). 93% of youth participants indicated that they feel more prepared to enter a job or career because of the Climate Career programs (based on embedded program survey efforts)
Externships	Youth highly value the paid professional experience in real workplace settings that helps them apply summer learnings and explore green career paths. Some wanted more clarity

Topic	Summary of Findings
	in how externships were matched, more choices for the types of hosts, and more time to grow in the role.
Alumni Engagement	An active alumni community keeps former participants connected, engaged, and supported, with many staying involved and giving back to the program. While some expressed an interest in green jobs, others expressed that their interest faded after participating. Some alumni also want more help finding their career next steps and getting into green jobs. Alumni suggested some kind of roadmap that helps them understand options and next steps.

The section below focuses on findings related to skill building and other workforce outcomes.

Building Skills and Workforce Experience

Youth gained substantial workforce skills through the Climate Careers program, including both technical energy efficiency skills and transferable soft skills.

Youth gained skills related to energy efficiency and climate

- **Energy Efficiency Knowledge.** Participants received training in home electrification assessment, energy and water efficiency, decarbonization, and device installation. Youth learned to assess a home's energy use (and efficiency) and install basic measures like low-flow showerheads.
- **Environmental Awareness.** The program built lasting environmental consciousness. Alumni reported changing their energy-related habits and advocating for energy efficiency among friends and family. As one participant noted: "I might go to a friend's house and say 'hey, you should change those to LEDs.' The program has ingrained those principles in me."

Youth also gained professional skills that will help them get a future job in energy efficiency, climate or other industries. The program successfully built foundational workforce skills that employers value:

- **Communication.** Communication ranked as the top skill youth felt they developed. Most participants described being shy before joining and said the program helped them learn professional communication. One alumnus stated: "This was the first job where I had to work with new people and talk to strangers. That forced me to get over my introvertedness—now I feel much more outgoing and confident."
- **Teamwork and Collaboration.** Teamwork ranked as the top skill for alumni. Youth learned to work effectively on teams and collaborate professionally in diverse settings.
- **Confidence and Professionalism.** Staff observed significant transformations in participant confidence. According to staff, the program helped youth understand professional workplace norms, including balancing teamwork with professionalism.
- **Leadership.** Returning participants developed leadership skills by mentoring newer youth. One alumnus stated: "I felt like I was teaching kids how to work in the professional world—not just punishing them for mistakes, but helping them grow."

The experience led to some green career outcomes, including:

- **Increased Environmental Interest.** Many participants reported significant growth in interest in environmental careers. One participant stated: "Before the program, I was 3 out of 10 interested in green careers, now I'd say an 8." Two recent participants indicated they may minor in an environmental field.
- **Externship Experience.** The externship program provides hands-on experience at green economy organizations. In 2024, 22.5% of externships led to full-time or part-time employment, demonstrating the program's potential to connect participants directly to green jobs.

- **Sustainability Integration.** Some participants plan to integrate sustainability into their chosen career paths. For example, one engineering student said: "I want to make prosthetics for people in need and design them with an environmental impact focus with less plastics and metals."

Opportunities for Improvement to Workforce Components

The evaluation also uncovered some challenges with the program's support for green, energy efficient or climate careers.

- **Fading Interest Over Time.** Many youth finish the program more interested in environmental careers but lose momentum afterward. Most alumni indicated their enthusiasm for green careers peaked at the end of the program and declined since then.
- **Unclear Career Pathways.** Participants expressed confusion about next steps toward green careers. Both alumni and recent participants ranked "career direction" as an area where they grew least. As one alumnus stated: "After high school I felt like I had to go to college, but there was no clear path to a green career—I wish there was more input from Rising Sun."
- **Limited Career Guidance.** Participants wanted more concrete guidance, including networking help, guest speakers, and mentorship to connect their new skills to real-world careers. They requested more exposure to different climate jobs and their certification and education requirements.

Recommendations to Strengthen "Green Career" Workforce Elements

The Climate Careers program successfully builds both technical energy efficiency skills and transferable professional skills. However, sustained career pathway support is needed to translate program participation into long-term green careers.

To strengthen the pathway from program participation to long-term green careers, the evaluation team recommends:

- **Make green career pathways clearer** through field visits, guest speakers, and hands-on exposure to various environmental career options including energy, construction, government, and sustainability organizations.
- **Create mentorship opportunities** by pairing participants with alumni in green fields and environmental professionals for shadow opportunities and career guidance.
- **Develop clear career roadmaps** that outline different green career options, required certifications and education, and salary ranges so participants understand potential opportunities.

With enhanced career pathway guidance, ongoing mentorship, and clearer connections between program skills and green career opportunities, Rising Sun can better help participants translate their experience into long-term environmental careers.

Note: *In 2026, BayREN is actively making improvements to the workforce elements of the program to improve the experience for both the youth and hosts. The detailed evaluation memos highlighted that scheduling misalignments and skill-level mismatches between youth and hosts were ongoing challenges. To address this, the program is replacing the previous flat 120-hour requirement with a three-tier, skills-based pilot structure: Tier 1 (Entry Direct Service, 80–100 hours) focuses on operational support; Tier 2 (Project Support, 101–120 hours) centers on executing defined project components and ongoing program assistance; and Tier 3 (Capacity Building, 121–140 hours) emphasizes strategy, creation, and designing new solutions. By aligning each extern's hours and scope to their skill level and the host's needs, the model aims to increase retention, set youth up for success, and create more meaningful placements.*

Residential Findings

Below we describe how the program is: (1) expanding access of CPUC-funded EE programs by reaching a diverse audience, (2) delivering energy and water savings, (3) delivering benefits beyond energy efficiency, and (4) connecting GHC recipients to resources and encouraging additional behavioral changes. We also provide some opportunities for improvements to the program.

Expanding Accessibility - Reaching a Diverse Audience

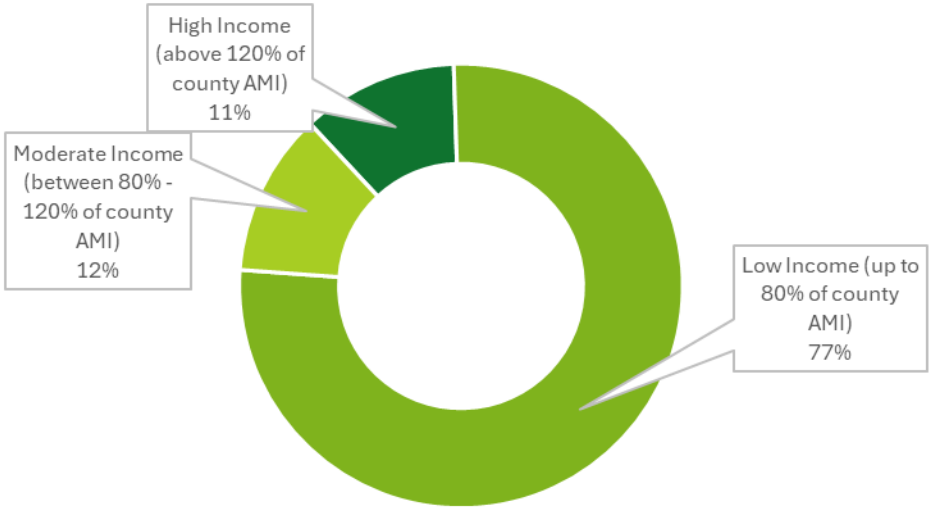
The data collected by the program show that the program is reaching the targeted demographic groups, including a lower-income diverse population in need of services (described below).

Below we present the data collected from the program, calling out differences between in-person and virtual GHCs only when the data are significantly different. The findings are based on information gathered from a questionnaire filled out by the household during the GHC (both in-person and virtually).

Note that 33% of GHC recipients did not provide income data, and home ownership data was collected for less than half of in-person GHCs, suggesting enhanced data collection protocols may be beneficial. For the purposes of this report, the evaluation team weighted all self-reported data (to account for missing data) so that the total is representative of the full population.

GHCs are reaching lower income households in need. Based on program data, 77% of GHC recipients are low-income households[5] (see Figure 4) and nearly 70% indicate that they are in need of some weatherization or remediation services (e.g., 40% have broken or drafty doors and 33% have broken or drafty windows, as shown in Figure 5).

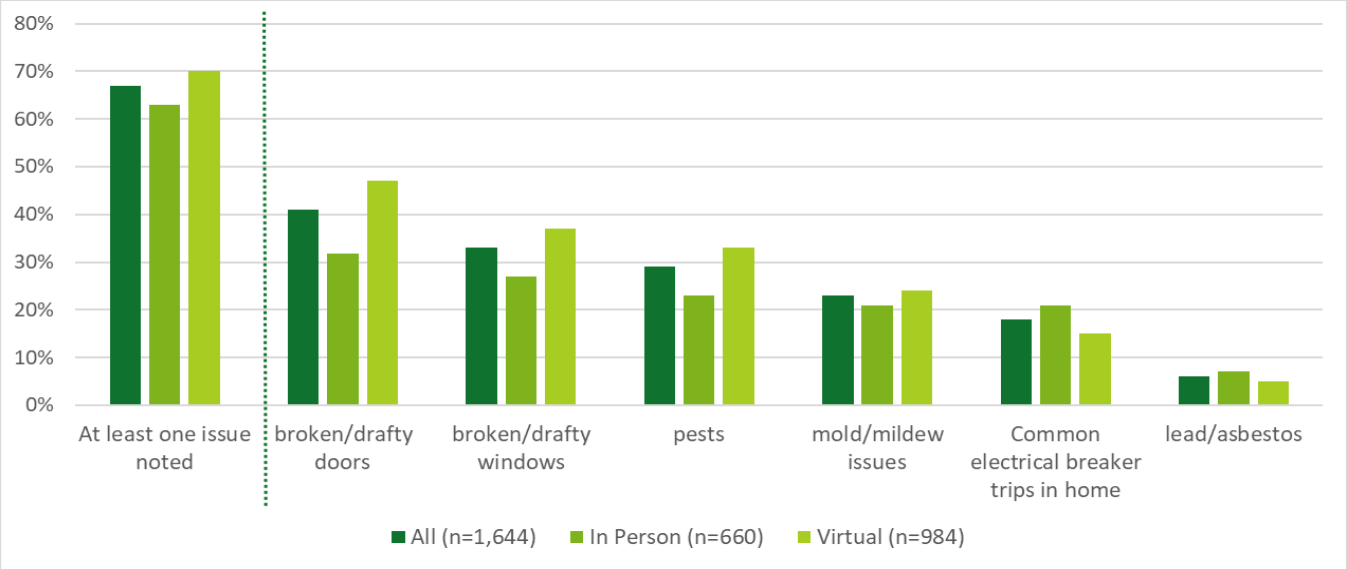
Figure 4. Low, Moderate, and High Income



[5] The average number of people in a household was 2.9 within the program tracking data

Source: Program Tracking data for income levels and number of people, California Area Median Income data (AMI) by County

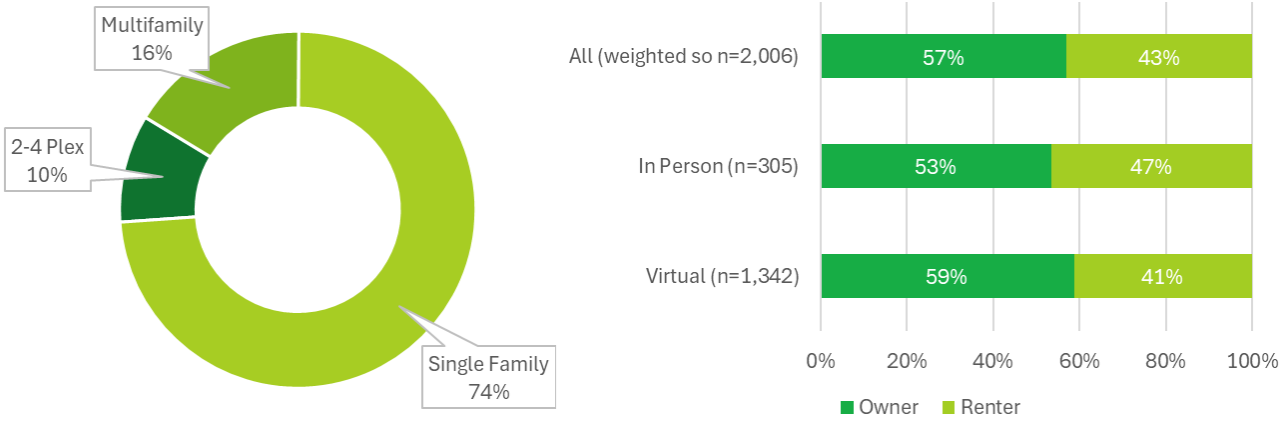
Figure 5. Issues in Home (self-reported, respondent could choose multiple problems)



Source: Program Tracking data. Note that this figure is based on data through October 16th, not the full program year.

GHCs are also reaching multiple housing types including multifamily and renters. In 2025, the program provided GHCs to 526 multifamily and 2-4 plex households in the Bay Area, 26% of all GHC recipients. This program was also able to reach both owners (57%) and renters (43%), with in-person GHCs serving a larger proportion of renters (47% v. 41% renters within the virtual GHC group).[6] These populations (i.e., multifamily households and renters) are generally populations that are underserved by other energy efficiency programs due to split incentive barriers.

Figure 6. Home Type and Ownership

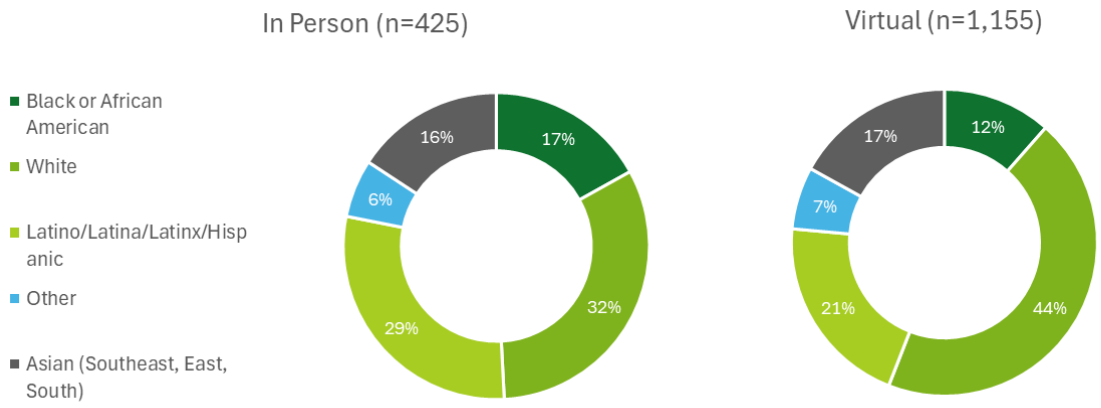


Source: Program Tracking data

The demographics of GHC recipients are also very diverse. Overall, the program provided GHCs to 62% non-white households with in-person GHCs recipients being even more racially diverse (68% non-white vs 56% virtual, see Figure 7). The program also reached non-English speaking populations: 27% Spanish-speaking (in-person), 17% (virtual) and ~8% speak Mandarin, Cantonese, or Vietnamese. In addition, 29% of GHC recipients report disabilities (consistent with the California population at 25%).

[6] We note that there are 663 in-person GHCs and this owner/renter data point was filled out for less than half (46%). Collection of this datapoint may need to be stressed during Energy Specialist training.

Figure 7. Race by GHC Type



Source: Program Tracking data; Declined to State (6% of 2,006) and Blank data (15% of 2,006) removed

While the program appears to expand accessibility by reaching groups that tend to be underserved, it is also able to reach households that may be newer to energy efficiency, that is, those just starting out on the journey to make their home efficient. Over a quarter had limited knowledge about energy efficiency (i.e., 9% "new to this" and 18% "recognize some terms but not all the basics"). In addition, one third (33%) indicated that they were just starting out or in the planning stages of their energy efficiency journey (see Table 2).

Interestingly, when we asked survey respondents about where they were in their home's energy efficiency journey, those using the kit (i.e., virtual GHC participants) were more likely to say they were just starting out or in a planning phase (38% versus 23%).

Table 2. Prior Knowledge and Stage of Energy Efficiency Journey

(*sig. higher than comparison group: in-home vs. virtual)

Metric	Total weighted (n=148)	In-person (n=70)	Virtual/Kit (n=78)
PRIOR KNOWLEDGE			
I was just starting to learn about it (new to this)	9%	4%	12%
I recognized some terms and topics (but not all basics)	18%	19%	18%
Understood basics	40%	47%	37%
Well informed	32%	30%	33%
ENERGY EFFICIENCY JOURNEY			
Just starting or Planning	33%	23%	**38%***
Active/Nearly complete/Maintaining	64%	**73%***	59%

Delivering Energy and Water Savings

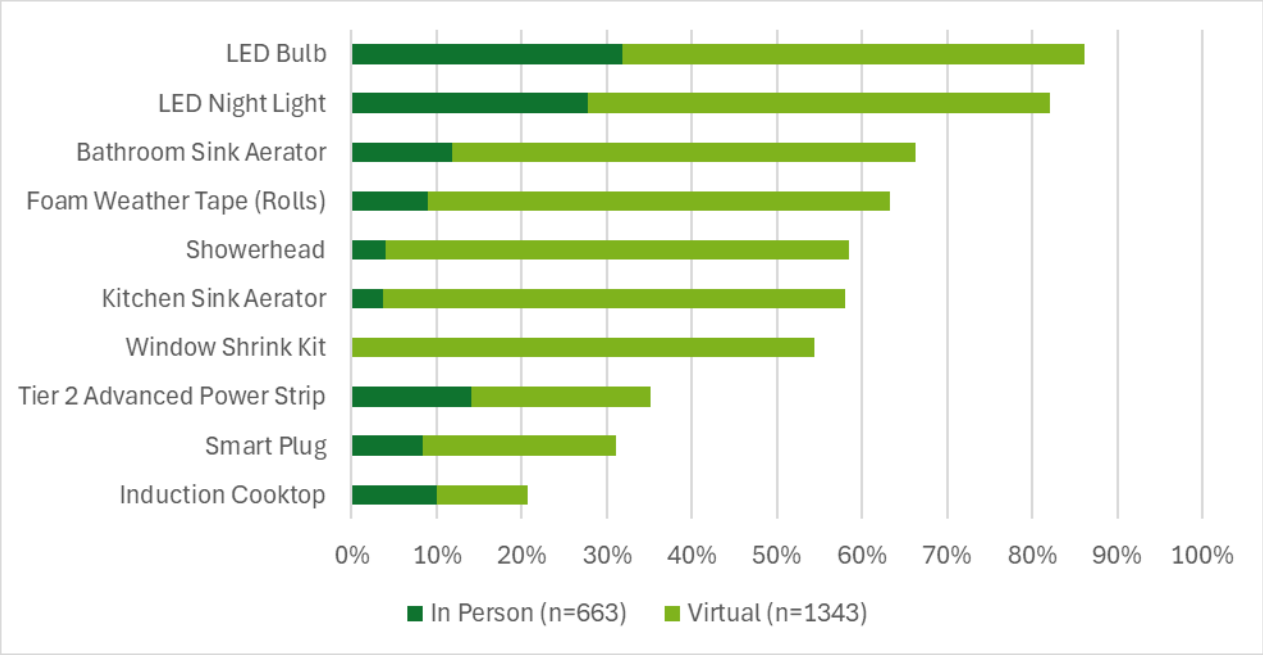
The data collected by the program and the survey also demonstrated measurable energy and non-energy outcomes.

Energy and Water Saving Measures from GHC

Across all GHCs (in person and virtual), the program data showed that over 80% of households received LED light bulbs, and an LED night light. Over half of households also receive faucet aerators (bathroom or kitchen), foam weather tape, a showerhead, or window shrink wrap kit. A limited number of customers also received a portable induction cooktop (21%). Some measures, like the window shrink kit, were only provided to virtual GHC recipients. (Figure 8)

Based on the survey, GHC recipients placed the highest value on LED bulbs (71%), nightlights (29%), power strips (25%), smart plugs (23%) and induction cooktops (23%).

Figure 8. Percentage of Households who Received No-cost Measures



Source: Program Tracking data

Energy Specialists install the measure for in-person GHC recipients; however, for virtual GHC recipients who receive an energy efficiency kit in the mail, the occupant must install the items in the kit.

Feedback from virtual GHC survey respondents indicates that not all measures in the kits have been installed. Based on responses from virtual GHC recipients, nearly half of virtual recipients have at least one item that they are not planning to use. That is:

- 53% plan to use all items in the kit
- 47% have items they are not planning to use

Among those who are not planning to use measures, virtual GHC recipients most frequently reported that they were not going to use aerators and weather stripping.[7] Virtual GHC survey respondents cited practical constraints like existing installations, incompatibility with their specific situation (renters, water filters, new construction), lack of DIY skills, or inconvenience factors—suggesting they're generally open to efficiency

[7] The survey was not designed to provide quantitative installation rate values.

measures but face logistical hurdles that prevent installation. These results may represent some missed opportunity for impact and a need for better kit customization or better installation instructions/follow up.

Even though some kit items may not be installed, nearly all survey respondents report that the GHC experience led to energy and water savings. Based on the GHC recipient survey (conducted several months after participation):

- 92% reported energy savings (83% in-person, 97% virtual)
- 75% reported water savings

Delivering Benefits Beyond Energy and Water Savings

GHC recipients also reported non-energy benefits (NEBs). Based on survey responses from GHC recipients:

- 78% reported improved family health
- 70% reported increased safety (53% in-person, 78% virtual)
- 61% reported improved indoor air quality
- 58% reduced drafts in home (47% in-person, 64% virtual)

Based on the items installed, single burner induction cooktops can improve indoor air quality (if used in place of gas stoves). Weather stripping can reduce drafts in the home and the lighting from LEDs and nightlight can increase safety.

Based on the evaluation team's observations, the comments about health could also be related to the benefit of weather stripping to reduce mold as the team witnessed one place with a lot of mold around the windows due to insufficient weather stripping (single-pane; aluminum). The evaluation team also observed that safety could be related to LEDs, since they aren't hot to the touch and the evaluation team witnessed a huge appreciation for replacing old lightbulbs with LEDs.

Connecting Households to Resources and Encouraging Additional Behavior Changes

In addition to the installation of some low cost energy saving measures, the GHC program asks households to pledge to take further action and connects GHC recipients to other resources – raising awareness of energy efficiency opportunities and services while serving as an access point for additional energy efficiency programs.

At the end of the GHC (in person or virtual), all GHC recipients are asked to sign a pledge to take actions that save energy and water. When comparing energy to water pledges, results are mixed in terms of who pledged to take action(s) to reduce energy or reduce water. More virtual GHC recipients made an energy pledge (77% compared to 54% for in-person GHC recipients). However, this changed for water pledges where 49% of in-person GHC recipients made a pledge to take a water savings action versus only 13% of virtual GHC recipients. Across both energy and water, the highest pledge was to use cold water for laundry, where 30% pledged to take this action. (Table 3)

Table 3. Behavioral Action Energy and Water Pledges by Call Type

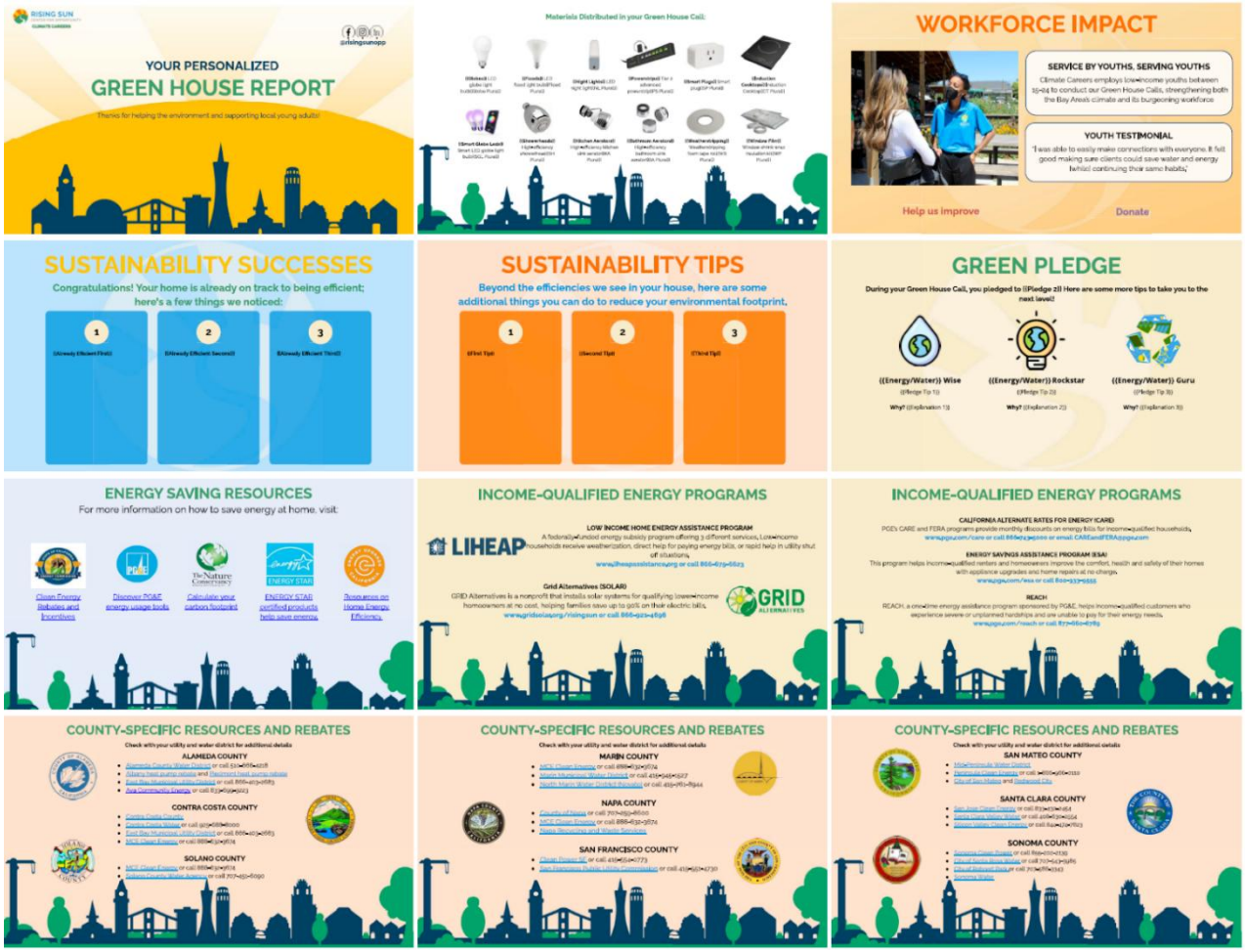
	Total % *(n=2,006)*	**In Person %** *(n=663)*	**Virtual %** *(n=1,343)*
Energy Pledges (any energy pledge)	69%	54%	77%
Use cold water for laundry	*30%*	29%	30%
Run only full dishwasher loads	*19%*	8%	25%
Use a microwave/toaster oven when cooking or warming leftovers	*20%*	17%	22%
No Pledge	*31%*	*46%*	*23%*
Water Pledges (any water pledge)	25%	49%	13%
Take 5-minute showers (maximum length)	*12%*	25%	6%
Collect shower water in a bucket as the water warms up	*6%*	12%	4%
Use a bucket to wash bike or car instead of the hose	*6%*	11%	3%

No Pledge	*75%*	*51%*	*87%*

Source: Program Tracking Data

Following the visit, households that provide a valid email address are provided with a personalized client report (sent via email). An example of the report is shown in Figure 9. Based on the survey responses, 59% have taken or plan to make a change based on the recommendations in the report. An even larger portion found reports helpful (65% overall, 70% in-person, 63% virtual).

Figure 9. 12-page Personalized Client Report (example)



The most valuable sections included: sustainability tips (54%), the information about the items distributed through the GHC (36%), and links to resources (36%).

Figure 10. Survey Feedback in the Personalized Client Report

	Total	In-person	Virtual/Kit
PERSONALIZED CLIENT REPORTS			
Found report helpful	65%	70%	63%
Have taken/plan to take action	59%	62%	57%
Felt report gave enough info to follow through on recs ("completely" and "mostly")	80%	75%	82%
Visited resource links	13%	10%	15%
MOST VALUABLE INFORMATION (n=103, not asked if not valuable)			
Sustainability tips	54%	55%	54%
Information on the materials distributed to you during the GHC	36%	37%	35%
Sustainability successes	31%	**43%***	25%
Links to energy saving resources and programs	36%	25%	**42%***
County-specific resources and rebates	32%	20%	**38%***
OTHER (discussed below)			
Green pledge that I made	21%	**33%***	15%

*** bold** indicates that the value is statistically higher than the comparison group (i.e., in-person v. virtual/kit)

When asked about the links to resources, 13% reported that they visited the resource links and 48% "plan to in the future".

Based on the GHC recipient survey conducted several months after participation, 87% stated that in addition to the installed measures, they also changed their behaviors to help their household save additional energy and/or water (80% in-person, 91% virtual).

Opportunities for Improvement to Residential-Facing GHC Processes

For the in-person GHC visits, in addition to the benefits described above, the evaluation also uncovered some areas that needed improvement.

- **Expectation gaps.** Survey responses indicated some GHC participants expressed a lack of understanding of what the GHC entailed prior to the in-person GHC visit: 24% felt the communications were "very clear," 59% said "somewhat clear" and 17% found the information to be unclear (10% "not very clear" and 7% "not at all clear"). Observation of six in-person GHC visits also confirmed that some GHC participants misunderstood the program's scope—expecting major repairs (like fridges or extensive renovations) rather than simple efficiency upgrades. Others cancelled or arrived late to appointments, potentially indicating the need for additional confirmations or engagement before the visit. According to qualitative information from survey respondents, the biggest source of confusion was about what would happen during the visit, including not being clear about the thoroughness of the inspection, what areas and appliances would be checked, and whether the visit would have work done immediately or just be a consultation.
- **Unclear materials.** Based on a review of program materials and observations of community members asking questions about the materials provided, some materials were hard to understand. The difficulty was due to translation gaps, overly complex language, and confusing duplications (paper and digital versions of the same forms). Observations of community members and participating households interacting with materials demonstrated that for those new to energy efficiency, information about the program and program processes was difficult to understand.
- **Unclear benefits.** Based on observations of outreach events and observations of GHCs, community members considering a GHC and the GHC recipients weren't always clear on the impact of the upgrades. However, during the GHC, households were most engaged when staff explained the "why" behind each measure and the potential savings.
- **Limited flexibility for household variability.** Based on observations of GHCs, different types and conditions of homes (e.g., old, large, or cluttered), limited inventory knowledge beforehand, and varying

GHC participant familiarity with energy/water efficiency sometimes created mismatches between household needs and what the staff had available to install.

The survey also identified one area of improvement for virtual GHCs.

- **Kit compatibility issues.** For virtual GHC recipients, some kit items went unused (47% had items they didn't plan to use), primarily due to compatibility issues with existing fixtures, renter restrictions, or installation challenges. The program mails out three different types of kits but the majority of the items are the same. The only difference is that the kits have only one of the following three options: a portable induction cooktop, two smart plugs or a smart power strip. Suggestions for improving the installation rates for kit items are described below.

Recommendations

To improve the program processes, the evaluation team recommends:

- **Enhance pre-visit communication to overcome expectation gaps**. For in-person visits, pre-visit communication about what to expect during the visit should be clearer.
- **Clarify and simplify materials**. Additional translations and a simplification of the information would help ensure a clearer understanding of the program and streamline the process.
- **Emphasize the benefits in communications and program materials**. Further communication, both before and during the visit, will provide GHC recipients with more context about what they are getting out of the GHC and will incentivize more households to participate.
- **Build in more ability to adjust for household variability**. Additional training for Energy Specialists on how to navigate different housing types, the option for households to answer more questions about their home (online or by phone) in advance, and providing Energy Specialists with additional "back up" items may allow for each visit to have more impact.

To improve installation rates for kit items, the evaluation team recommends:

- **Enhance communication about the items in the kit and explore whether additional customization of kits is possible for virtual GHC recipients**. Additional communication before mailing the kit and/or follow up communication after installation (e.g., email based communication and online communication) could help increase the installation of these items. Alternatively, the program could provide an option for returning or sharing unused items.

Note: *In 2026, BayREN is actively making improvements to the GHC elements of the program to improve the experience for participating households. The detailed evaluation memos highlighted that outreach materials were difficult to understand or not tailored to different audiences, and that some households didn't understand what the GHC would entail or felt they received limited value when standard measures weren't compatible with their home. To address these gaps, the marketing materials have been redesigned for 2026, including flyers, handouts, and the virtual Box Kit branding, to more clearly convey program benefits and set accurate expectations; and staff training on communicating those benefits has also been strengthened. Additionally, the post-visit client report is being redesigned to provide a clearer pathway toward home electrification, including health information about gas cooking risks and resources for next steps. The program is also planning to expand its measures to include a single-burner induction cooktop and one compatible pan for all in-person Green House Call recipients — as well as adding universally applicable lower-cost items such as dryer balls, door sweeps, and reusable bags to ensure every visit feels worthwhile.*

Appendix: GHC Recipient Desires for the Future

The evaluation effort also collected information about items that participating households would have liked to receive, additional information that might be valuable, and other information that could inform future program changes. This (unweighted) survey data is shown in the tables below.

Would you have liked to receive any of the items below?	Total (unweighted) (n=146)	In-person (n=70)	Virtual (n=76)
Indoor air purifiers	43%	34%	**51%***
Portable battery with solar panel to charge	43%	40%	46%
Solar lights	35%	30%	39%
Rechargeable batteries	29%	21%	**36%***
Energy efficient fans	29%	29%	29%
Single burner induction cooktops with pots/pans	27%	21%	32%
Low water, native, fire-resistant plants	26%	26%	26%
Electric tea kettle	24%	19%	29%
Energy efficient outdoor lighting	23%	**29%***	17%
Exterior LED holiday lights	21%	21%	21%
Window heat pumps for home heating and cooling	21%	24%	17%
Shades/blackout blinds	21%	17%	25%
Outdoor water efficient hose nozzle	20%	**30%***	11%
Window screens	17%	19%	16%
Dryer balls	12%	11%	13%
Clothesline	10%	6%	13%
Shower timers	8%	10%	7%
Shower shutoff valves	5%	**10%***	1%
None of these items	4%	6%	3%

** Statistically higher than comparison group (in-home v. virtual)*

What information would be useful to you in the future?	Total (unweighted) (n=134)	In-person (n=61)	Virtual (n=73)
Estimated cost savings from recommendations	54%	49%	59%
Step-by-step installation guides	39%	38%	40%
Comparison to similar homes in the area	36%	38%	34%
Video tutorials	34%	21%	**45%***
Local contractor recommendations	33%	**41%***	26%
Timeline for when to expect results	27%	25%	29%
Before/after examples from other participants	25%	28%	23%
Carbon footprint reduction calculations	21%	20%	22%
Other	5%	5%	5%
None of the above	0%	0%	0%

** Statistically higher than comparison group (in-home v. virtual)*

Other	Total (unweighted) (n=143)	In-person (n=68)	Virtual (n=75)
Would want help signing up for additional water and energy saving programs	50%	49%	52%
Would want help switching from gas to electric appliances	36%	37%	35%

Summary of top recommendations for encouraging future participation:

1. **Messaging about savings** (7 mentions) - Emphasize financial and environmental benefits
2. **Social media marketing** (6 mentions) – Use NextDoor, TikTok, Reddit, digital ads
3. **Financial incentives** (5 mentions) – Offer rebates, tax credits, free items
4. **Staff training** (4 mentions) – Train staff to be knowledgeable, use skilled technicians
5. **Referral program** (4 mentions) - Leverage word of mouth
6. **Educational content** (4 mentions) – Provide videos, demos, instructions