**Special Energy Action Team Meeting – 2/23/2022**

**Equity Impact Assessment**

Facilitator: Jim Stratton,   
Timer/Note taker: Annette Mills  
  
Present: Brandon Trelstad, Marge Stevens, Julie Williams, Nancy Evenson, Kristi Ervin, Kathryn Duvall, Michael Hughes, Kirk Rensmeyer, Court Smith, Jeanette Hardison, Johnny Geldhof

**FOCUS: Residential Energy Efficiency Projects**

**1**. **Identifying stakeholders:**

**a.** **Which communities\*, demographic groups\*** and **protected classes\*** **may be most affected by and concerned with the issues related to this project?**

* Low to middle income homeowners benefit most
* South Corvallis, targeted neighborhoods
* Latinx/Spanish-speaking populations
* People with disabilities, traditionally marginalized populations
* Most people who respond to Retrofit Clinics have money; those with money need to be included, too-
* Future generations based on climate change mitigation, so anyone concerned with climate change
* Retired people
* Landlords
* Renters
* Homeowners
* Landlords can tap into multiple properties

**2. Engaging stakeholders:**

**a. How have all stakeholders—especially those identified in question 1a —been informed, meaningfully involved and authentically represented in the development of this project?**

* Tough - how do we reach beyond language barriers and find time they’re available?
* Spanish pages are on Seeds for the Sol (SFTS) website, and Spanish speakers are on the SFTS board
* Trying to attract people of color is challenging
* SFTS is attracting translators from CHS for 3-way conversations
* Energy Trust of Oregon (ETO) residential staff is a Spanish speaker and promoting ESL materials

**b. Who’s missing and how can they be effectively engaged?**

* Missing: nonprofits that are providing housing to low-income people
* Certain communities are less trustful; undocumented people don’t want to connect with government.
* Need to build bridges; one-to-one conversations, personal practices; talking to people

**3. Identifying and documenting inequities:**

**a. How does the current quantitative and qualitative evidence reveal disparities in experiences and outcomes related to this project?**

* Out of 145 SFTS participants, 12 fit in the protected classes
* A lot of issues in the community are with older homes
* There’s no way for potential home buyers or renters to know whether a home is energy efficient or not; low-income people end up in homes that are costly to run

**b. How are the people in communities\*, demographic groups\* and protected classes\* advantaged and disadvantaged differently by the issues this project seeks to address?**

* Home Retrofit Clinics – People who sign up have been mostly older retired people; not sure how to reach out to others, though there have been a few families with younger children
* Another disadvantage is that ETO incentives have particular qualifications that lower income people don’t fit, like manufactured homes

**c. What evidence is missing or needed and how do you obtain it**?

* ETO put out tiers for low-income people and didn’t take into account multi-generational families
* A lot of specifics outlined by ETO and others haven’t taken into consideration marginalized people

[**4. Examining the Causes:**](http://p)

**a. What factors may be producing and perpetuating inequities associated with this issue?**

* It’s good to hear systemic issues like ETO qualifications; manufactured homes is a whole category
* Tax credits don’t help people who don’t pay taxes
* Need to inventory inequities

**b. How did the inequities arise? Are they expanding or narrowing?**

* People who rent: landlord/owner pays for improvement, but the renter pays the bill

**c. How does the system and/or actors within it perpetuate the inequities?**

* In Corvallis, we’re predominantly a white culture
* Can City and County help us disseminate to marginalized populations?
* Everyone comes together in the schools, so we need to get the word out through the schools
* Have Green Clubs get involved and become champions

**d. Does the project address root causes? If not, how could it?**

* There’s a listserv in CSD that makes information available for all

**5. Clarifying the purpose:**

1. **What does the project seek to accomplish?**

* SFTS’s charge for the year has been attracting translators; received money to hire a translator
* SFTS is in contact with NAACP, Casa Latinos Unidos; wants representation on board, to build trust
* Trying to diversify trade allies (women, people of color, LGBTQ)

1. **How will it reduce disparities?**

* If your water heater breaks, you’re going to have to do something; we need to switch people’s default to “How can I get a replacement that will cost less to run?”
* Money-saving has been oversold; a lot of the opportunities seem too good to be true
* People are wary because they’ve been taken advantage of previously

1. **How will it advance equity and inclusion?**

* If you have to get something new anyway, it’s relatively cheaper to get a more efficient appliance

**6. Considering adverse impacts: (negatives)**

**a. What adverse impacts or unintended consequences could result from this decision?**

* Someone who gets into a situation where they can’t pay back a loan
* Also, people who have been keeping their thermostats low may be surprised by their bill

**b. Are there ways to reduce the opportunity for unintended consequences that arise from individual unconscious bias?**

* Unhappy experiences with contractors can be an adverse consequence
* Part of house might be cold if you replace central heating with just one ductless heat pump

**c. Which communities\*, demographic groups\* and protected classes\* could be negatively affected, and how?**

* Contractors can be a problem, although it’s rare for a contractor to be non-responsive
* Some people may think they qualify for incentives, but they don’t

1. **How could adverse impacts be prevented or minimized?**

* We have a problem with ETO and NW Natural - a lot of incentives are supportive of natural gas

**7. Advancing Equitable impacts: (positives)**

**a. What positive impacts on equality and inclusion, if any, could result from this project?**

* When we get people thinking about conserving in an area, they start thinking about other areas to conserve
* Acceptance and responsibility of privileged positions; can we create a focus where we can get people to understand their point of privilege and get one group to help another?

**b. Which communities\*, demographic groups\* and protected classes\* could benefit?**

**c. Are there further ways to maximize equitable opportunities and impacts?**

* Fundraising – SFTS donations allow reinvestment to happen over and over
* Difficult decision to make if SFTS has extra funds but only has people with higher incomes who want the solar

**8. Examining alternatives or improvements: (possible or different: change)**

**a. Are there better ways to reduce disparities and advance equity?**

* UUFC has donated to SFTS, so SFTS can calculate how much the initial donation has been maximized because it’s revolving

**b. What provisions could be changed or added to ensure positive impacts on equity and inclusion?**

* Nancy would like to bring others in to help spread the word
* Help people learn in which directions they should go; i.e., “Let’s help you focus your own research.”
* SFTS’ weakest point is communication: language barriers, income barriers; SFTS needs a communications expert.
* It takes time and emotional energy for people to make retrofits

**9. Ensuring viability and sustainability:**

1. **Is the project realistic, adequately funded, with mechanisms to ensure successful implementation and enforcement?**

* Ongoing work is needed to keep Retrofit Clinic up to date; need to go over the presentation every 3-6 months

1. **How will the impact of this project be evidenced in current data collection and public reporting?**

* SFTS tracks everything (who’s unsuccessful in their goal), how much has been installed, how much donated, etc.
* Donations stabilize us

1. **Are there provisions to ensure ongoing data collection, public reporting, stakeholder participation and public accountability?**

* Would CSC (Community Services Consortium) information be helpful? SFTS and CSC do some of the same work so they need to be separate. Need to look at duplication.
* Programs are under-funded, run by volunteers; limited supply of labor

**10. Identifying success indicators:**

**a. What are the success indicators and progress benchmarks?**

* Nancy asks people to let her know if there are problems or questions; result for some may be way down the road. Retrofit Clinics - doesn’t have a good way to track.

**b. How will impacts be documented and evaluated?**

* SFTS sets indicators – 10% are in groups they’re trying to reach; they set goal increases

**c. How will the level, diversity and quality of ongoing stakeholder engagement be assessed?**

* Need to use multiplier effect; i.e., Nancy could divide the consult into four pieces, but they need to be people who have implemented their own retrofits.

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NOTE: We need to talk about “next steps” at 4/13 EAT meeting.