

Make upgrade options clear and concise for customers

Programs in many regions of the U.S. find that the concept of home performance is new to homeowners. Homeowners may not know how energy efficiency measures compare (e.g., energy savings benefits of insulation versus new windows) or have not heard about some effective measures, such as air sealing. Programs can help customers overcome decision paralysis with a prioritized list of upgrade recommendations and help deciding which measures to undertake. Several programs have devised simple approaches to help customers understand the energy savings, cost savings, and other benefits from various types of measures, so homeowners can choose what is best for them. Recognize that customers may have other priorities when considering an assessment's proposed measures (e.g., improving the look of their home with new windows or replacing an aging furnace before winter weather sets in).

- [Austin Energy](#) [1] developed a form to estimate energy savings using a point system that contractors could use with residents during a home assessment. The form helped contractors and customers quickly determine which measures would achieve 15% energy savings in the home. Texas A&M's Energy Systems Laboratory validated the point system for the program to ensure its accuracy and integrity. The program found that this streamlined approach was appealing to customers and contractors.
- [Los Angeles County's Energy Upgrade California](#) [2] implemented the [Flex Path program](#) [3] that used a point system to show the energy savings from a menu of energy upgrade measures. To be eligible for program rebates, residents then selected which measures they would like to undertake that would total over 100 points and achieve 15% energy savings.
- [Michigan Saves](#) [4], formerly BetterBuildings for Michigan, provided customers with a "base package" that included an energy assessment, direct installs of compact fluorescent light bulbs and water saving devices, and basic measures like air and duct sealing. Customers could then choose to undertake additional measures (e.g., insulation, furnace replacement) in addition to the base package. The program found that the clear and concise base package was a good way to get people into the program, but it wasn't sufficient to reach the program's goal of 15% energy savings in upgraded homes. Getting homeowners to achieve higher energy savings through additional measures required incentives, such as rebates and low interest financing. For more information, see the case study [Experiment to Find the Right Mix of Incentives](#) [5].

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Source URL: <https://rpssc.energy.gov/tips-for-success/make-upgrade-options-clear-and-concise-customers>

Links

- [1] <http://energy.gov/eere/better-buildings-neighborhood-program/austin-texas>
- [2] <http://energy.gov/eere/better-buildings-neighborhood-program/los-angeles-county-california>
- [3] <http://energy.gov/sites/prod/files/2014/01/f6/m3a-culbertson.pdf>
- [4] <http://michigansaves.org/>
- [5] http://energy.gov/sites/prod/files/2014/01/f6/michigan_incentives_case_study.pdf