

Invest in information and communications technology

Paper-based or spreadsheet-based information collection processes can be low cost to develop and easy to roll-out, but more often than not, they become cumbersome to aggregate and store the data from many sources. Many Better Buildings Neighborhood Program partners found that investing in information and communications technologies (ICT) eased program implementation and was well worth the effort because they were able to regularly monitor progress and automate what would otherwise be time-intensive, manual processes. For more information on the future of ICT, see ACEEE's [How Information and Communications Technologies Will Change the Evaluation, Measurement, and Verification of Energy Efficiency Programs](#) [1].

- [Garfield Clean Energy](#) [2] in Garfield County, Colorado, at first used a series of Excel spreadsheets and hardcopy file folders to track participants, their energy upgrade measures, and resulting energy savings. As the number of participants reached into the hundreds, the program realized that spreadsheets did not offer the level of sophisticated searching and reporting that was needed to analyze the results of their work. They explored several online customer relationship management systems and contracted with a third-party developer to customize their selected system so that it could track building and energy data, energy upgrades, contractors, dollars spent, rebates awarded, and deemed energy savings. The customization and data entry work, which took several months to complete, enabled Garfield Clean Energy to create detailed reports based on a wide variety of reporting parameters, and to better analyze the effectiveness of program activities.
- When [Enhabit](#) [3], formerly Clean Energy Works Oregon, scaled up their pilot program to the entire city of Portland, it was clear to them that an IT solution was needed to meet the demands of funding agencies, media requests, and good project management from the customer perspective. Enhabit worked with software company EnergySavvy to develop a unified service delivery platform to manage the home energy upgrade process from application to completion. The software platform provides a web-based interface between homeowners, contractors, and lenders, enabling each party to document progress through the Enhabit program. The platform also streamlined data collection and analysis.
- In Boulder, Colorado, [EnergySmart](#) [4] used spreadsheets to manage data for its predecessor energy efficiency programs. As the program expanded under the Better Buildings Neighborhood Program, it became clear that EnergySmart needed to pursue a more user-friendly, real-time, cloud-based IT system for tracking customers through the implementation process. They selected a system to allow for tracking of many metrics in a much more consistent, accurate, and organized fashion than the previously used spreadsheet. The system can be accessed in the field by EnergySmart Energy Advisors using iPads or tablets to enter basic customer information, building baseline information, assessment findings for upgrade opportunities, completed upgrades with associated energy and cost savings, rebates and financing received, and the supporting documentation. The collected data is compiled for reporting to various stakeholders, including the U.S. Department of Energy, county commissioners, and city staff and leaders. The ability of Energy Advisors to access the system in the field allows for much greater efficiency and accuracy than the static logging of data upon returning to the office.

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Source URL: <https://rpsc.energy.gov/tips-for-success/invest-information-and-communications-technology>

Links

- [1] <http://aceee.org/research-report/ie1503>
- [2] <http://www.garfieldcleanenergy.org/>
- [3] <https://enhabit.org/>
- [4] <http://www.energysmartyes.com/>