

PY2021 EM&V Key Findings and Recommendations 2021-2024 CDMF Small Business Program (SBP)

No.	KEY FINDINGS	2021 EM&V RECOMMENDATIONS	IMPACT	IESO RESPONSE
1.	<p>Reported Peak Demand Savings – Coincidence Factors (CF). The SBP reported peak demand savings seem to be calculated based on a predetermined coincidence factor (CFs). This is an improvement from previous years (i.e., Small Business Lighting program) where connected demand was reported instead of actual peak demand. However, the CFs used seem to be conservative and result in a high demand realization rate (198%).</p>	<p>It is recommended to further review and update the CFs used to report the peak demand savings to better align with evaluation results. Another approach that would result in high accuracy of reported peak demand is using facility’s actual hours of use (HOU) to determine project specific CF. The SBP Assessment Tool collects actual hours of operation data for each assessed facility. These hours can be utilized to calculate the corresponding portion of the change in the connected load that occurred during the peak window, or CF of each project. This would help to correctly report summer peak demand savings.</p>	High	<p>The IESO will investigate options for updating coincidence factors.</p>

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2.	<p>Improved Baseline and Retrofit Photos. Assessors and installers of the 2021 SBP submitted photos of the pre-existing baseline and retrofitted fixtures and lamps. These photos are critical when verifying the baseline and retrofit conditions. In most cases, the photos submitted were taken from wide angles and from a few feet away, which do not provide useful information about the lamp wattage or lamp type. There were a few instances where the photos captured enough detail of the lamps or fixtures to definitively determine the wattages. This is Consistent with previous observations from the previous iteration of the Small Business Lighting (SBL) program, where photos did not provide sufficient information to determine the technical specifications of the removed and new fixtures/lights.</p>	<p>As previously recommended for the SBL program, specify what information should be captured in the pre-retrofit and post-retrofit pictures that are taken by the SBL assessors/installers. Specify that pictures of the replaced equipment should capture the wattage of the lamps and, if applicable, the type of ballast. This is specifically critical for direct install programs. The participants of such programs often do not possess/provide sufficient information regarding the baseline and retrofit equipment, and the photos collected by the program delivery vendor would help provide the data required for evaluation.</p>	High	<p>The IESO will continue working with the delivery vendors to specify the information required to be captured in photos and ensure all photos are complete.</p>
3.	<p>SBP Reporting and Tracking (Measure-Level Cost). Consistent with the previous iterations of the SBL program, the SBP reporting database is structured into two sets of data; one for projects' high-level information such as address, contact information and business type, and the other set is for measures' information which details key aspects of the individual measures included within each project, such as quantity and type of equipment installed. Currently, cost data is reported at the project level, and no measure-level information is available.</p>	<p>As previously recommended for the SBL program, along with measure-specific energy and demand savings, and incentive data, the evaluator recommends reporting separate cost values for each measure, as opposed to reporting project-level cost. Having access to such information will increase the evaluator's visibility into the program's performance and allow the evaluator to run various analyses regarding the cost effectiveness and performance of implemented measure types.</p>	Medium	<p>The IESO will consider other options to improve the reporting process for future years.</p>

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4.	<p>Many participants who were recommended additional lighting upgrades beyond the project cost cap made those upgrades. Over one-tenth (14%) of participants reported installing additional energy-efficient equipment for which they did not receive an incentive following their participation in the program. Of those, more than one-third (35%) said the upgrades were recommended to them by their assessors or installers. Participants who installed additional lighting upgrades did so because the additional equipment did not qualify for the program (35%), the energy or monetary savings justified the additional cost (27%), or the incentive cap was not sufficient to complete the project (15%). Some participants who did not install additional lighting beyond the project cost cap said they did not do so because the cap was not sufficient to cover the additional upgrades (23%) or the equipment types they were interested in were not offered through the program (9%).</p>	<p>When applicable, encourage assessors and installers to offer additional lighting upgrades to participants beyond those available through the program. Help interested participants identify ways to complete the work, either by installing the additional equipment at the time of participation or by providing them with a recommended equipment list to consider installing in the future.</p>	Medium	<p>The IESO will continue to encourage delivery vendors to make participants aware of all available opportunities, including those beyond the project cost cap.</p>
5.	<p>Expanding the scope of lighting offerings was a common improvement suggestion. Assessors and installers were least satisfied with the number and types of equipment incentivized (rating of 3.9 on a scale of 1 to 5 where 5 meant “extremely satisfied”). Assessors, installers, and participants most often recommended including exterior lighting and signage offerings. Incentivizing fixtures upgrades, LED panels, and UV lighting were mentioned with less frequency. Both IESO staff and delivery vendor staff noted that, while the program offers a wide variety of measures to customers, it must also adhere to cost-effectiveness targets and energy/demand-saving priorities.</p>	<p>The following are recommended:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore the feasibility of including more lighting products that align with program goals and cost-effectiveness targets. • Explore the feasibility of offering a customer co-pay option to expand the scope of customer projects. 	Medium	<p>The IESO will continue to explore additional lighting products that can be included in the program. A customer co-payment for additional measures before reaching the incentive cap is one option that the SBP Team will consider for expanding the program in the future.</p>

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6.	<p>Opportunities exist to improve assessor and installer training and education. Most surveyed assessors and installers reported receiving training and education. Nearly all had received information on the program rules, and many others received information on program offerings. However, program training and education received the lowest satisfaction rating (a 3.9 on a scale of 1 to 5 where 5 meant "extremely satisfied") from assessors and installers. Providing marketing and outreach techniques to better promote the program to customers was the most common improvement recommendation, followed by more information on the program offerings and rules, and training on installation procedures and practices.</p>	<p>The following are recommended:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Revisit the assessor and installer training topics to ensure they cover areas that are most of interest to them (e.g., marketing and outreach techniques, more information on offerings and rules, and installation procedures and practices). • Offer training and education with regularity to ensure that new staff are well-informed about the program and to provide refreshers to others. 	Medium	<p>The IESO will work with the delivery partners to ensure that training materials and processes are up-to-date and effective.</p>
7.	<p>Participant perspectives on the program and its processes were positive overall, but there were some suggestions for program improvement. Most participants had no suggestions for improving the initial site assessment (76%), the installer visit(s) (69%), or the overall installation process (87%), which suggests the program is largely meeting customer needs. Of those with suggestions for improvements, the most common were to reduce the time it takes to complete the assessment and installation visits, provide greater flexibility when scheduling the visits, and improve the assessor or installer's professionalism and the transparency in their practices.</p>	<p>The following are recommended:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce the time it takes to complete the assessment and installation visits. Identify areas where additional program support or resources could allow the assessors/installers to complete this task more promptly. • Improve communication around scheduling the visits (for example, sending reminder e-mails and/or text messages confirming appointments and providing accurate arrival windows). • Encourage transparency about the work performed by being upfront about additional installation costs that may be incurred (e.g., lift rentals, ESA fees), and requiring that installers carefully walk customers through the upgrades made before leaving the site. 	Medium	<p>The IESO will continue working with program delivery vendors to improve the participant experience. We recognize that additional costs are particularly challenging, and processes will be reviewed to ensure that the participant is given as much information as possible up front for installation and equipment costs that are not covered by the program.</p>

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8.	<p>Opportunities exist to expand program marketing. Customers' lack of awareness of the program was cited by assessors and installers as one of the main reasons preventing more customers from participating in the program. The most common suggestion provided to address barriers to participation was to increase marketing of the program.</p>	<p>Increase marketing efforts across different platforms (e.g., social media, online, and through community groups such as small business associations and local community organizations).</p>	Medium	<p>The IESO will continue to market the program on a regular basis on the Save on Energy (SOE) social media channels and quarterly newsletter. A targeted marketing campaign will also be run in the fall of 2022 to further promote the program through paid advertisements on Facebook and Instagram. Delivery partners are also soliciting participating business to gauge interest in providing testimonials on their participation in the program to be used for future marketing efforts (i.e., case studies, promotional video, social posts, etc.)</p>