



The Power of Partnership:
**C.E.F.S. Economic
Opportunity Corporation
and Ameren Illinois**



With a mission to deliver “Energy Efficiency for All,” the Market Development Initiative (MDI) offered through the Ameren Illinois Energy Efficiency Program enlists the help of community-based organizations to raise energy efficiency awareness in underserved communities. These trusted and established organizations help bridge the gap between customers and the energy-saving opportunities available to them through the Ameren Illinois Energy Efficiency Program.

When it launched in 2018, MDI found some of its most enthusiastic supporters at the C.E.F.S. Economic Opportunity Corporation in Effingham. The nonprofit community action agency offers education, housing, crisis response, senior assistance and transportation services that touch nearly 25,000 Central Illinois residents every year. Since partnering with the Ameren Illinois Energy Efficiency Program, C.E.F.S. has made energy efficiency one of its cornerstone services.

C.E.F.S. created an impactful energy efficiency program with the support of MDI funding and resources, such as staffing grants and energy-saving kits. Through a job training grant, MDI also provided C.E.F.S. with the funds to hire and train a weatherization assessor. This supported installation of energy efficiency equipment to customers that C.E.F.S. referred to the Ameren Illinois Home Efficiency Income Qualified (HEIQ) Initiative.



I just wanted to share how grateful we are to participate in MDI. Our customers have benefited greatly from the energy efficiency education efforts we have been able to provide through this partnership.

— Kathy Walk,
C.E.F.S. Energy Program Director

B-I-N-G-O!

The success of C.E.F.S.’ Energy Bingo game caught the eye of University of Illinois’ Extension program researchers, who published a 2022 paper noting how Energy Bingo educated senior, rural and low-income audiences, and increased their “intention to change their home electricity usage behaviors.” The researchers concluded that “this outreach work can serve as a model for other services to . . . reach underserved audiences statewide.”



Engaged 5,500+ customers
one-on-one



Scheduled
40+ events



Distributed 800 energy
efficiency kits



Provided 50 direct
installs of energy-saving
equipment

LEARN MORE

AmerenIllinoisSavings.com

1.866.800.0747

The Home Efficiency Income Qualified (HEIQ) Initiative helps low- and moderate-income customers save money on energy-efficient upgrades by covering large portions of the cost. Participants often see a notable change on their utility bills — and improve the comfort and safety of their homes.

For example, “through the Program, we were able to ensure a disabled senior had a working hot water heater once we completed her furnace replacement,” says Kathy Walk, C.E.F.S. Energy Program Director. “The Program also allows us to do simple, but important things, like buying Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) staff lunch at our training meetings!”

“Working with MDI has been a positive experience,” says Bridgette Lockhart, C.E.F.S. Program Manager for LIHEAP (Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program), who referred dozens of residents to HEIQ in 2023. “The people we serve love the Ameren Illinois energy-saving kits, and our agency gets calls from kit recipients, thankful for the difference their contents have made.”

The most creative way C.E.F.S. has infused its work with MDI has been through its popular Energy Bingo games at Meals on Wheels distribution sites. Custom created by agency staff, Energy Bingo uses flashcards that explain energy efficiency terms and measures, such as “kilowatts” and “vampire power,” and provide energy-saving tips and other helpful information.

Together, as the robust partnership between C.E.F.S. and the Ameren Illinois Energy Efficiency Program grows, we will continue to improve quality of life for underserved customers across central and southern Illinois.

“I just wanted to share how grateful we are to participate in MDI,” says Kathy. “Our customers have benefited greatly from the energy efficiency education efforts we have been able to provide through this partnership.”



Energy Efficiency
PROGRAM