

# ENERGY EFFICIENCY PROGRAMS



The origin of utility-sector energy efficiency programs traces back to the energy crises in the 1970s, when a new concept of "energy conservation" emerged to help customers cope with soaring energy prices. Over time, this led to the development of an expanded set of customer energy efficiency programs provided by electric and natural gas utilities.

Since then, energy efficiency has evolved to become recognized as an integral and highly valuable element of utility investments and operations.

Utility energy efficiency programs have yielded significant energy and

economic benefits to the utility system and to ratepayers. Energy efficiency programs have also led to job growth in many fields, including the building trades.

Utility energy efficiency programs have expanded fairly steadily over the years, despite a temporary period of decline during the utility deregulation in the 1990s. (One enduring effect of the deregulation phase, however, is that non-utility organizations now administer and provide ratepayer-funded customer energy efficiency programs in several states.)

Now, in the 21st century, energy efficiency is regarded as an important utility system resource that can also reduce greenhouse gases, save money for customers, and generate jobs. In response to both economic concerns and climate change, legislators and regulators have supported energy efficiency at unprecedented levels.

The industry is growing rapidly. In pursuit of higher savings goals, electricity and natural gas programs are expanding their efforts and seeking new sources of savings, including behavioral change. States that did not previously engage in efficiency programs are now taking advantage of this opportunity.

Source: <http://aceee.org/portal/programs>