

Installer Update–2023 #3
2023-08-07

We highlight below the key activities of the HeatSmart Alliance since our April 2023 update.

Progress by the Numbers

Description	2023 Start	Current Status	2023 Goal
Grow No. of Members/Associates	71	102	100
Grow No. of Communities Represented	31	44	40
Support Educational Events	–	24	24 - 30
Accept New Coaching Assignments	–	87	500
Train/Mentor New Coaches	–	15*	25

* *Includes coaches for community-based coaching programs—not just Alliance coaches.*

Coaching: We continue to experience high demand for heat-pump coaching. While we try to keep up, we sometimes have to decline requests. If we get a request from someone in a community that we know has a local coaching program, we refer the requestor to that program. Our 87 coaching assignments in 2023 includes those the Alliance coached directly as well as those we referred to community-based coaching programs. We estimate that community-based coaching programs collectively handled several hundred direct requests.

The lead of our Coaching Working Group was again interviewed, this time by [Yale Climate Connections](#), for a 90-second radio story that will be distributed to over 700 public radio stations.

In our April 2023 update, we discussed the need for state-wide support (tools, training, etc.) for community-based coaching programs. The Alliance had some very positive response to our [Vision for Scaling Residential Energy Coaching](#), and we anticipate a renewed promotional effort this fall.

Heat-Load Analysis Tool: This spreadsheet tool allows our coaches to benchmark the thermal integrity of a home against other Massachusetts homes and to approximate a home’s overall design heating load based on historical fuel consumption. While not a substitute for an ACCA Manual J load calculation, it can provide a valuable independent check. In July, we released a new version of the tool with updated HDD data and a total of 95 MA homes against which users can benchmark their results. Several professional home energy experts and HVAC installers have used this tool and found it useful. Anyone can request a copy of the new tool (with instructions) [through our website](#).

Educational Events: We've participated in 24 educational events so far this year. Most of these have been in-person (or hybrid) community presentations, and the remaining were tabling at community environmental fairs. Based on the caliber of their questions, MA homeowners are much more knowledgeable about heat pumps compared to just a few years ago.

Senator Brownsberger: Massachusetts Senator William N. Brownsberger is remarkably conversant with heat pumps, and regularly posts about them on his [website](#). We differ, however, with some of his recent positions in which he suggests that currently available heat pumps do not ensure emissions benefits for those who heat with natural gas, and that natural-gas users may be better off waiting for the next generation of heat pumps that will use more climate-friendly refrigerants and be more energy-efficient. Our analyses show that a properly sized, selected, and installed air-source heat pump will reduce greenhouse gas emissions by about 60% compared to the best available gas-fired furnace or boiler, excluding the impacts of gas leakage and the benefits of voluntarily procuring electricity from renewable sources. We see no reason for any homeowner to postpone their decision to install heat pumps, and we are communicating our position to other political representatives. That said, we concur with the senator's research showing that annual refrigerant leakage rates average about 5% of system charge for residential split-system air conditioners and heat pumps, and we encourage the HVAC industry to reduce refrigerant leakage rates, regardless of refrigerant choice.

Question to Installers: In each update, we pose a question to you. We hope you'll take a moment to respond. Our question is: ***With the EPA's phase-down of refrigerants having GWP's over 700, when do you envision installing heat pumps meeting the new requirements? Beyond using lower-GWP refrigerants, what are key benefits of these new products? Key risks?***

If you have any other questions, comments, or suggestions, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Best regards,
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About us: The [HeatSmart Alliance](#) is a volunteer group that grew out of the HeatSmart Mass program sponsored by the Massachusetts Clean Energy Center and the Massachusetts Department of Energy Resources. Our mission is to accelerate the adoption of energy-efficient heat pumps in Massachusetts homes and buildings. We focus on air- and ground-source heat pumps, heat-pump water heaters, and weatherization as vital components of the overall strategy for reducing greenhouse gas emissions. We accomplish our mission by:

- Educating and coaching homeowners, landlords, and business owners
- Simplifying installer evaluation and selection

- Collaborating and sharing information with community groups and other like-minded organizations.