

Installer Update–2023 #4
2023-12-01

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

Progress by the Numbers

Description	2023 Start	Current Status	2023 Goal
Grow No. of Members/Associates	71	107	100
Grow No. of Communities Represented	31	42	40
Support Educational Events	–	38	24 - 30
Accept New Coaching Assignments	–	139	500
Train/Mentor New Coaches	–	30*	25

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

Coaching: We estimate that community-based coaching programs in the Greater Boston area handled over 700 requests year-to-date, including 139 served by Alliance coaches. We just launched our second coach training program for 2023, with 20 registrants. Three Alliance members also participated in the four-session Electric Coach training program recently offered by Rewiring America with support from Abode Energy Management.

Coaching Survey: In July 2023, we surveyed 12 communities that offer, and four communities that are planning to offer, energy coaching services. 14 communities responded. Key takeaways are:

- About 20 MA communities will have coaching programs by early 2024
- In the first six months of 2023, these communities (and the Alliance) received over 900 requests for coaching. About 700 of these requests were assigned, and 400 to 500 engagements were completed.
- Communities documented 123 heat-pump installations, but many don't track installations, so the total number of installations is likely much higher
- Homeowners really appreciate having access to coaches, whether coaches are volunteers or paid professionals
- Measuring the impact of energy coaching is a real challenge for many communities
- Reaching and engaging with low-and-moderate-income (LMI) communities is difficult.

See our [website \(under Local Energy Coaching in MA\)](#) for a video recording summarizing the survey results.

Educational Events: We've participated in 38 educational events in eastern MA communities so far this year, most of which have been heat-pump presentations. This exceeds our goal for 2023, and our presentation services continue to be in high demand. Our typical presentation introduces homeowners to heat pumps, including available types, example energy-cost and emissions comparisons, incentives, and how to get started. We focus on three basic steps to decarbonize one's home: 1) weatherize, 2) electrify, and 3) secure electricity from low-carbon sources. We emphasize evaluating heat pumps (including heat-pump water heaters) before one's current equipment fails. An example is our [Hamilton Wenham presentation](#) from this past April.

Heat-Load Analysis Tool: Code for Boston, another volunteer-led organization, has undertaken a project to convert our Heat-Load Analysis tool to a web-based version called HEAT (for Home Energy Analysis Tool). Not only will HEAT be easier to use and maintain, but it will include weather data for the entire U.S. (Our Excel spreadsheet tool is currently limited to six MA weather stations.) As a reminder, you can request a copy of the current tool (with instructions) [through our website](#).

Tech Note on Ducts: We published a tech note called [Ducting for Central Ducted ASHP or GSHP](#) to help homeowners and coaches understand how best to integrate heat pumps with homes having forced-air heating/cooling distribution systems. Frankly, we found this tricky to write given the various perspectives on how (and whether) to use/adapt existing ductwork. We welcome any comments you may have.

Question to Installers: In each update, we pose a question to you. We hope you'll take a moment to respond.

Our question is: ***As of 01/01/2024, the Mass Save® program will require qualified air-source heat pumps to meet the [ENERGY STAR 6.1 specification for cold-climate heat pumps](#). We estimate that only a third of the systems currently on Mass Save's Heat Pump Qualifying Product List meet the ENERGY STAR 6.1 standard. In addition, [EPA's phasedown of HFC refrigerants](#) is happening faster than many expected. HFC refrigerants (including R-410A) won't be allowed in new installations of split-system heat pumps as of 01/01/2025. As you see it, what are the implications of these events for the MA heat-pump market? What changes should customers expect?***

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.