

**Alisa Lembke**

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**From:** Chris Granger <cgranger@cooldavis.org>  
**Sent:** Thursday, February 22, 2024 2:06 PM  
**To:** Meetings @ Valley Clean Energy; Sierra Huffman; Rebecca Boyles; Mitch Sears  
**Cc:** Kristin Heinemeier  
**Subject:** Item #6 CAC Agenda 24-02-22  
**Attachments:** Cool Davis Questions & Suggestions VCE ERRO Program Item #6 24-02-22.pdf

Dear Members of the Valley Clean Energy Community Advisory Council:  
Cool Davis is grateful for your service to the Yolo communities and households served by VCE.  
Item #6 on your agenda today is one example of the many hopes for VCE programming to better serve the needs of the most vulnerable households.  
On behalf of the Board and volunteers of Cool Davis I have attached some questions and suggestions regarding the ERRO program.  
Cool Davis stands ready as always to support the efforts of VCE in our region to ensure energy resilience and equity for all households in our region.  
Sincerely,

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**Christine L. Granger**  
(She, Her, Hers)  
Cool Davis, Executive Director  
530-219-1712 cell;  
[cgranger@cooldavis.org](mailto:cgranger@cooldavis.org)

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**To:** VCE Community Advisory Committee

**From:** Chris Granger, Cool Davis Executive Director

**Subject:** Item 6 - Electrification Retrofit Rebate Outreach Program (ERRO) Update and Concierge Service Discussion and Action

**Date:** February 22, 2024

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It is with great excitement and anticipation that Cool Davis is providing questions and suggestions regarding the ERRO program and proposed Concierge Service. In 2021 Cool Davis first encouraged VCE to engage with the County on pursuing ARP funds to support low-income households especially to respond to difficulties paying energy bills in COVID. We look forward to seeing these plans come to fruition for the sake of those households who would most benefit from assistance.

Item #6 provides a basic summary of the ERRO Program and the Concierge service to be conducted by the SMUD Customer Service team which already provides support to VCE customers. Cool Davis is providing the following questions and comments to understand better the program design as well as make suggestions to support and strengthen the desired outcomes of the project.

#### **Questions Regarding the ERRO Program:**

**How will different households audiences within the target low income population be addressed successfully in the program?** How big are each of these groups and how will the program address them as their eligibility for rebates and incentives may depend on ownership and residency by building type?

- Single family and townhome, condo low-income home owners?
- Rental households living in single family homes
- Rental households living in multifamily locations

**Will the ERRO program provide information, materials and staffing that are in language and culturally appropriate?**

**Typically State and Local Rebate Programs come and go as funding is used up** (only the Federal tax credits and rebates are stable) how will this program support and protect low-income households when engaging expensive retrofits if funding could disappear from the program after a household is encouraged to participate?

**How will the non resident property owners and property managers that control energy retrofit decision-making** for rental households be addressed in the ERRO program?

**How will the VCE staff for the ERRO program work with community based organizations serving these populations to ensure and support household participation?** A number of community based organizations along with County Health and Human Services staff regularly assist and refer households to home energy support programs like LIHEAP as well as State and Federal Emergency funds to avoid shut off or establishing service for households transitioning to new housing (Utility deposits). Other organizations like Cool Davis advise many types of households on implementation of home energy strategies to reduce costs and energy use.

**Since ARP funding is limited in time but the rebates and tax credits will continue to for many more years, what are the plans for future funding to continue the program if successful?**

### **Questions & Regarding the ERRO Program “Concierge Service”:**

**Is the SMUD Team building a Concierge service for low-income households based off of experience in doing this service with low-income households** in SMUD territory which then they are customizing to VCE customers and the rebates/tax credits available to them **or** is this a unique and new service they are creating to provide to VCE customers? If the former what is their experience with success in engaging low-income households successfully in accessing of rebates?

**How will different households audiences within the target low income population be addressed successfully within the “Concierge” services?** Will the program address each group and their differing eligibility for rebates and incentives and residency by building type? How will “Concierge “ program staff address split incentive issues?

- Single family and townhome, condo low-income home owners?
- Rental households living in single family homes
- Rental households living in multifamily locations

**Will the “Concierge” program provide information, materials and staffing that are in language and culturally appropriate?**

**How will VCE/SMUD track rebate access success?** Does VCE have data relationships with the County State and Federal programs to track actual use and/or installation of solutions?

**Will the team address all the issues that arise when helping a household?** Other home retrofit issues affecting energy use, health, air quality, or grid fragility?

**Since ARP funding is limited in time but the rebates and tax credits will continue to for many more years, what are the plans for funding to continue the “Concierge” program?**

### **Suggestions:**

**Consider contracting with several community based organizations** and establish an advisory outreach team to support the ERRO program. The County has done this successfully with their County CAAP outreach. Those CBOs provide advice to the program design and also provide staff/volunteer hours to support the outreach.

**Make sure that the program design has pathways for all the households.** Many different households will show up to participate. What happens to rental households not eligible for rebates when their property owners refuse to participate? What happens to income ineligible (for ERRO) households? Will they be referred to other resources support their efforts. Marginally ineligible households still deserve good advice. Be prepared to offer solutions to key barriers to action that will be articulated during advising sessions?

**Consider setting up an emergency triage plan & fund for households who start projects but are told later that the rebate funding is exhausted.**

**Consider this a pilot program for the future and examine other sources of funding now so that those are ready to go for a smooth transition at the end of the ARP funding.**