



Button Up Hero Team Handbook

This Handbook is for Community Partners who are participating as Button Up Heroes. It is designed to accompany the “Participation Guide for Community Partners” – which can be found [here](#).

Contents

1	Overview
2	Community Partner Roles and Efficiency Vermont support
3	Button Up Hero Timeline
3	Community Partner Checklist
4	Button Up Hero Volunteer Tips
5	Attachment A: Talking Points for Communicating with Community Members
10	Attachment B: Button Up Hero Kick-Off Event
12	Attachment C: Button Up Hero Volunteer Team Roles

Overview

Button Up Vermont 2018 is a community-based public outreach campaign to help Vermonters reduce their heating and cooling costs, and be more comfortable in their homes. This year’s campaign is designed to help all Vermonters take action – from simple weather stripping to comprehensive home energy efficiency improvements like air sealing and insulation upgrades. Button Up is a project of Efficiency Vermont, in partnership with a broad range of statewide and regional organizations working to help Vermont reach its statewide goal to weatherize 80,000 homes by the year 2020.

The Button Up Hero option builds upon the *Weatherize* model that was successfully field-tested in the Upper Valley by the non-profit organization, Vital Communities. *Weatherize Upper Valley* was specifically designed to help neighbors receive comprehensive weatherization improvements for their homes. The success of the Weatherize model can be credited to the strong partnership between community groups and contractors. In the Upper Valley, the Weatherize model was implemented in 14 Vermont towns in 2017. 187 homeowners received a free walk-through assessment from an Efficiency Excellence Network Home Performance with ENERGY STAR® contractor and 101 moved forward with completing the work – representing a conversion rate of 54%.

The Button Up Hero option is essentially the *Weatherize* option for Community Partners. Communities that participate as a Button Up Hero will offer residents a free walk-through assessment, scope of work, and cost estimate from a qualified contractor who participates in Efficiency Vermont’s Efficiency Excellence Network. Residents sign up by completing a brief survey before December 15. Walk-throughs will be completed between November and March, and homeowners who commit to moving forward

with their projects by Earth Day (April 22nd) will be entered into a statewide prize drawing for an additional payment to be added to the Efficiency Vermont rebate for their qualifying weatherization project.

Button Up Hero community partners will host a fall kick-off event and engage in other creative local outreach before the December 15 sign-up deadline. Community partners will receive a list of participating residents, including status updates throughout the winter so community partners can provide personal encouragement to neighbors who are in the process of weatherizing their homes.

Summary of Partner Roles

Efficiency Vermont will:

- **Recruit participating contractors:** Engage with contractors in the Efficiency Excellence Network (EEN) and encourage them to partner with community groups in their service territory to offer free walk-throughs.
- **Hold informational calls and regional workshops:** Organize several informational phone calls and regional workshops, and provide a handbook for partner communities.
- **Provide campaign, educational, and promotional materials:**
 - Provide campaign materials including sample agendas, press releases, and scripts for volunteers.
 - Provide educational materials to distribute to residents, including the Button Up Vermont checklist and other offers from Efficiency Vermont.
 - Provide promotional materials including lawn signs, table top posters, and samples of weatherization materials.
- **Supply free products to distribute:** Provide free energy efficient product kits to community partners to distribute to residents and homeowners. Energy efficient products kits include weather stripping, a refrigerator thermometer, and information about a new DIY offer.
- **Offer paid advertising:** Work directly with newspapers to provide paid advertising for one outreach event.
- **Update the Button Up website:** The website, ButtonUpVermont.org, provides educational videos, tools for communities as well as individual residents.
- **Provide status updates:** Track participants and provide this data to community partners.

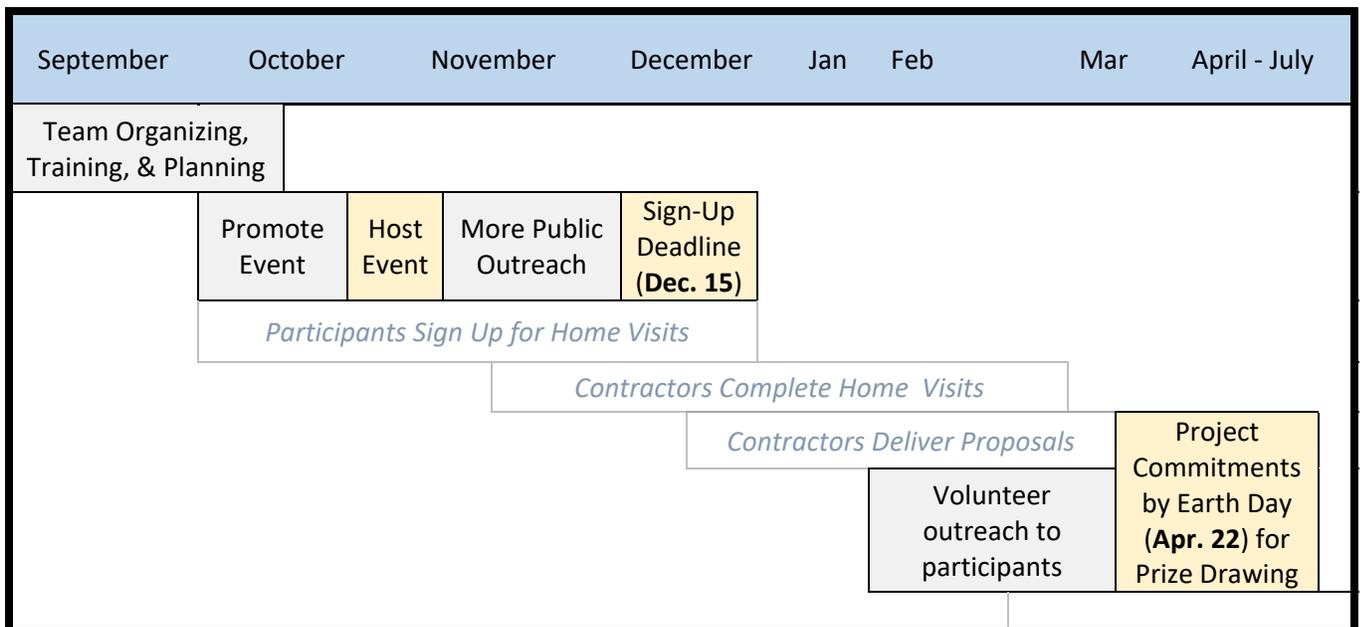
Button Up Hero Community Partners will:

- **Commit to hosting a kick-off event** for residents to encourage their participation.
 - The kick-off event will include participating contractors who will have the opportunity to speak about their company, and meet and greet residents who are interested in weatherization. This event can be done in partnership with participating neighboring communities.
- **Undertake additional public engagement activities:** (at least 2 including the kick-off) with residents and homeowners, including tabling at least one public event or public location. Other engagement activities include home energy parties, workshops, and door-to-door outreach.
- **Follow up with residents** who have received their work scope and cost estimate from the contractor to encourage them to move forward.

- Efficiency Vermont will provide regular status updates throughout the process as well as sample scripts for calls/emails.
- **Distribute free efficient products and the Button Up checklist** to residents and property owners and record the names and contact individuals who receive a free energy efficient product kit. Promote a checklist of energy saving actions that residents/property owners can undertake to reduce heating and cooling costs. Record the name and address of all individuals who receive free efficient product kit and provide this list to Efficiency Vermont.

Button Up Hero Community Partners' Timeline

The campaign will run from September 2018 to April 22nd, 2019



Button Up Hero Community Partner Checklist

A suggested checklist of activities for Button Up Hero Community Partners

Sept	<input type="checkbox"/> Recruit volunteer team <input type="checkbox"/> Assign volunteer roles <input type="checkbox"/> Make a plan for community outreach
Oct	<input type="checkbox"/> Receive list of participating contractors <input type="checkbox"/> Attend a community partner training in your region <input type="checkbox"/> Set a date for your Button Up kick-off event and plan your event <input type="checkbox"/> Promote your kick-off event with lots of creative outreach <input type="checkbox"/> Host Button Up Hero event (between Oct 22 and Nov 8)

Nov	<input type="checkbox"/> Conduct outreach encouraging neighbors to sign up before the December 15 deadline
Dec	December 15 deadline for residents to request a free walkthrough <input type="checkbox"/> Send Efficiency Vermont a list of residents who received free energy efficient products
Jan - Mar	<i>Participants are meeting with contractors and receiving proposals</i> <input type="checkbox"/> Receive lists of participants from Efficiency Vermont, including status updates <input type="checkbox"/> Personal outreach to participants as needed (e.g. phone call or email to check in)
Apr	<input type="checkbox"/> Outreach to all participants about Earth Day deadline for project commitments Earth Day (April 22) deadline for homeowner to commit to moving forward with their weatherization project <input type="checkbox"/> Prize drawing winner(s) announced <input type="checkbox"/> Plan a team celebration (<i>optional, but recommended</i>)
May	<input type="checkbox"/> Host a celebration for participants and volunteers (<i>optional, but recommended</i>) <input type="checkbox"/> Send feedback to Button Up organizers <input type="checkbox"/> Discuss lessons learned and next steps as a team

Button Up Hero Volunteer Team Tips

- **Plan on a flurry of outreach** activities in the weeks leading up to your Button Up Hero event. People who attend that event will be more likely to weatherize their homes – so you want to get as many people there as possible!
- **There is no “silver bullet”** outreach strategy. Every town is different. Prioritize outreach strategies you think will work in your town with the volunteer power you have in your community. You can sign up for our email listserv to discuss successful strategies with other participating communities throughout the state.
- **Don’t let one person do it all!** As a team, decide early on who will take on which roles, and who is available to help if given a specific assignment.
- **Go where the people are**, don’t expect them to come to you. Good places to go include the town dump, post office, library, grocery store, and school. Good events to attend include community festivals, arts events, sports events, and meetings of popular local clubs.
- **How will you get beyond the choir?** Who in your community are the hardest to reach? How might you reach them? Assign a volunteer to each participant for personal outreach throughout the campaign.

Attachment A: Talking Points for Communicating with Community Members

Below, please find some tips on how to communicate with members of your community about how to participate in Button Up. This attachment includes the following sections:

- Overview of Button Up Vermont
- How to Participate
- Typical Weatherization Projects for Button Up Participants
- Benefits of Weatherization
- Frequently Asked Questions

Overview of Button Up Hero

This winter, our town(s) is/are teaming up with local home energy contractors and Efficiency Vermont to **help you save money and stay warm by weatherizing your home**. Here's how:

- **Qualified local contractors** – participating contractors are experienced, certified by the Building Performance Institute, and members of Efficiency Vermont's [Efficiency Excellence Network](https://www.efficiencyvermont.com/efficiency-excellence-network) (EEN). Find a full list of EEN contractors here: <https://www.efficiencyvermont.com/find-contractor-retailer>
- **Free and Easy** – Sign up by December 15 and receive a FREE professional home visit, including a proposal listing possible energy efficiency improvements. Typically, homeowners may pay \$300-400 for a home energy audit before receiving a quote.
- **We've got your back** – Once you sign up and schedule your home visit, our volunteer team will check in with you periodically to help you through the process and make sure you have what you need to make the right decision for your home.
 - **Efficiency Vermont's Customer Support staff** will also be available for more information about rebates and services. You can reach them at 1 (888) 921-5990, or through their online chat feature.
- **Prize Opportunity** – Commit to a project with your contractor by Earth Day 2019 (April 22) and be entered in the statewide drawing to win a prize of \$500 toward the cost of your weatherization project, in addition to available rebates of up to \$2,000 from Efficiency Vermont for qualifying projects.

If you're curious to learn more, you should plan on attending one of our regional workshop events. These workshops are a chance to learn from the experts at Efficiency Vermont what it means to weatherize your home, meet our participating contractors, and chat with neighbors who have already weatherized their homes.

How to Participate

1. **Sign Up for a FREE Home Walkthrough with a Participating Contractor**
Sign up before December 15 by completing and submitting the Button Up questionnaire. Answer the questions about your home and energy use as best you can, then select your preferred contractor. We'll forward your information to the contractor of your choice, who will follow up within a few days to schedule your home visit.

Visit ButtonUpVermont.org to learn how to sign up.

2. **FREE Professional Consultation, Home Visit, and Quote**

When your contractor reaches out to schedule a home visit, they may ask a few follow-up questions to make sure they are a good fit for your needs. Otherwise, go ahead and get a home visit on your calendar and feel free to choose a date after the New Year. The home visit itself should last ~60-90 minutes and you will want to be present. After the visit, your contractor will send you a proposed scope of work and quote, typically within a few weeks.

It is important to set the expectation that home visits will occur between January 1st – March 15th, 2019, unless the contractor has time before the new year.

3. **Commit to a Project by Earth Day (April 22)**

Once you receive your quote, schedule time with your contractor to talk it over. With your contractor's help, you can decide to tackle all, some, or none of the proposed work scope. Your contractor can also direct you to financing options. If you sign an agreement with your contractor by Earth Day, you'll be entered to win a statewide drawing for \$500 toward the cost of your project. You do not need to complete your project by Earth Day – you just need to commit to completing a project sometime before the end of the year.

Also, set the expectation that the homeowner may hear from you or another volunteer in your community to check in and see how things are going.

Your volunteer team and Efficiency Vermont are here to help. No need to do this alone! Feel free to contact us anytime.

What does a typical weatherization project look like?

- **Rebates** – All Button Up weatherization projects will be eligible to participate in Efficiency Vermont's Home Performance with ENERGY STAR program, with rebates available up to \$2,000 for qualifying projects.
- **Work Scope** – Most weatherization projects focus on air sealing and insulation, often targeting the home's basement and attic where most leakage occurs and where unfinished spaces allow for easy and cost-effective improvements.
- **Cost** – Efficiency Vermont reports that the average residential weatherization project in Vermont costs \$7,800 (before rebates averaging \$1,500) and results in 26% average energy savings.

Regarding Window Replacement – Replacing windows is commonly NOT a cost-effective way to improve energy efficiency, unless you were planning to replace those windows anyway for a different reason. Because windows are so expensive, it is often better to use that money for more air sealing and insulation instead.

- From Efficiency Vermont – “When to repair or replace your windows”:

<https://www.efficiencyvermont.com/tips-tools/guides/when-to-repair-or-replace-your-windows>

Benefits of Weatherization

- **Increased Comfort** - Almost anyone who has completed a home energy project will tell you they were amazed by the increase in comfort – warmer in winter, cooler in summer, and quieter living spaces.
- **Savings** – Efficiency Vermont reports that the average weatherization project results in 26% average energy savings.
 - From Efficiency Vermont, “Save on heating with these four steps”:
<https://www.encyvermont.com/tips-tools/guides/save-on-heating-with-these-four-steps>
- **Solving Problems** – Weatherization can help homeowners resolve common home problems such as ice dams, moisture, and ventilation.
 - From Efficiency Vermont, “The case for air sealing”:
<https://www.encyvermont.com/tips-tools/guides/the-case-for-air-sealing>
- **Health Benefits** – Air leaks are a common cause of respiratory problems, especially in winter. Air sealing can improve indoor air quality and help families breathe easier.
 - From Efficiency Vermont, “Is your home taking a toll on your health?”:
<https://www.encyvermont.com/tips-tools/guides/is-your-home-taking-a-toll-on-your-health>

Frequently Asked Questions

What if I rent my home?

You need your landlord’s permission and/or involvement in order to participate in Efficiency Vermont’s Home Performance with ENERGY STAR program. Can we help you connect your landlord with Efficiency Vermont? If your landlord isn’t interested, there are still many low-cost steps a renter can take to reduce energy use without altering the building. Check out our Button Up Checklist for ideas, and contact Efficiency Vermont with any questions.

Efficiency Vermont also has an energy efficiency guide specifically designed for renters:

<https://www.encyvermont.com/tips-tools/guides/the-renters-guide-to-energy-savings>

Can small businesses or nonprofits participate?

Efficiency Vermont has a program for “small commercial” energy users that can help businesses and nonprofits reduce their heating and electricity use. Contact Efficiency Vermont to learn more.

What are the Button Up deadlines? What do I have to do by when?

- **December 15 – Sign Up Deadline** – Complete and submit a Button Up sign-up form by December 15 to receive a FREE professional home visit and quote.
- **April 22 (Earth Day) – Commitment Deadline**: either complete the work or have a signed contract with your weatherization contractor by April 22 in order to be entered in the \$500 Button Up prize drawing.

What happens during the free professional home visit?

Your home visit will likely last 60-90 minutes and you should be present. The contractor will want to take a look around your home, especially in your basement and attic. The contractor will be looking for clues related to air infiltration and insulation levels, as well as opportunities for energy savings.

On the day of your home visit, be ready with a list of questions and concerns for your contractor. What issues are you most concerned about (ice dam, cold bedroom, drafts, high energy bills)? They can tailor their recommendations to address your specific concerns.

During your home visit, your contractor will likely NOT complete a blower door test, use an infrared camera, or test the efficiency of your combustion appliances. Should you decide to go ahead with a weatherization project, the contractor will come back to perform a blower door test before and after your project is completed, as required by Efficiency Vermont.

A few days or a few weeks after your home visit, your contractor will send you a proposal listing the improvement opportunities you discussed together and an estimated cost for each piece of recommended work.

Do I have to do EVERYTHING my contractor recommends? It seems like a lot...

You are free to narrow (or add to) the scope of work your contractor gives you. You should not hesitate to contact your contractor for help defining a work scope to meet your priorities and budget. That's part of their job.

How long will this process take, start to finish?

Expect the entire process to take several months.

After you request your free home visit (before December 15), your contractor will contact you within about three business days. They will aim to schedule your home visit at the earliest convenient time for you both, **but may not occur until after January 1st**, as this is the busiest time of year for contractors. All home visits should be completed by March 2019.

Once your home visit is complete, your contractor will deliver a proposal with a recommended scope of work within a few weeks (this could be a while if your contractor is busy – they will communicate with you if they expect a delay). You may want to narrow your scope of work or ask your contractor to do additional work – that's fine. Just talk to your contractor about your needs, your budget, and your priorities to make sure you're getting exactly what you expect.

When you're ready, you can commit to a scope of work, sign a contract with your contractor, and get ready to schedule your project. At this time you might also apply for financing. Your project might be scheduled as early as a few weeks after you sign the contract, or within a couple months.

If you commit to a project on or before Earth Day 2019 (April 22) you'll be entered in a statewide drawing to win a prize of \$500 toward the cost of your Button Up weatherization project. Many home weatherization projects are completed in the fall (especially attic work, which can be too hot for our contractors in the heat of the summer).

What should I expect when the contractor comes to do the work?

Depending on the project size, the work could take anywhere from a few days to a few weeks. You should talk with your contractor so you know exactly what to expect. Most contractors bring a crew of several people to your home to complete the work. You will need to clear your belongings out of the work area ahead of time. The contractor may need to ventilate the work area by opening windows and using large fans. If you are having spray foam installed, you will need to stay away from the house while the foam cures – check with your contractor to determine how long this may be (often a day or two, but it depends on the size and scope of the job).

Before you finalize your project schedule, be sure to clarify what work will be done and how it will affect you and your household. Establish clear expectations BEFORE your project begins to avoid any surprises.

What if something goes wrong?

All contractors offer some level of workmanship guarantee. You should thoroughly read your contract to ensure you understand what protections they offer BEFORE your project work starts. While your project is underway, don't hesitate to ask questions if you are uncertain of what you are seeing. We also recommend you visually check that all the promised work was completed. It's perfectly fine to be a curious, attentive, and informed customer. Your contractor will appreciate that you care enough to ask questions.

If you aren't satisfied with your contractor's work and cannot resolve the issue with your contractor directly, Efficiency Vermont has a quality assurance process to address your concerns and ensure the work was installed to a satisfactory level. Contact Efficiency Vermont with any concerns or complaints.

Why are there so many questions on the Button Up sign up form?

In order to give you a high-quality home visit and project proposal at no cost, participating contractors need to know as much as you can tell them about your home and your energy use – BEFORE they get you on the phone or visit your home for a closer look. Just fill out the questionnaire as best you can and your contractor will take it from there.

What if I can't answer all the questions on the sign-up form?

Just answer the questions as best as you can or make your best estimate. Our participating contractors can work with whatever information you are able to give them.

How do I choose a contractor?

See guidance from Efficiency Vermont here: <https://www.encyvermont.com/tips-tools/guides/how-to-avoid-hiring-the-wrong-contractor>

All Button Up contractors are:

1. Certified by the Building Performance Institute
2. Part of Efficiency Vermont's Efficiency Excellence Network and able to help you secure rebates and financing through Efficiency Vermont
3. Able to provide comprehensive home energy services

Your goal: choose a contractor you like and trust and who feels like a good fit.

Tips for choosing a contractor BEFORE you complete the Button Up sign up form:

- Explore the contractors' descriptions at ButtonUpVermont.org and visit their websites
- Call one or more contractors and get to know them a little before you make your choice. You might ask what they specialize in, what their approach is, what makes them unique?
- What are the issues you most want to address in your home? Energy costs? Comfort? Ice Dams? Are there non-energy improvements you would like to take care of at the same time? Ask your contractor if they can help with more than just energy.

Out of respect for your time and your contractors' time, we recommend starting with one contractor and one home visit. That said, you may choose up to two if you wish, and you are welcome to come back before December 15 and submit another request for a home visit with a different contractor if you need to.

Attachment B: Button Up Hero Kick-Off Event

Preparing for the Kick-Off Event

BENEFITS of attending the Button Up Kick-Off Event

1. Meet neighbors who are also curious about weatherization
2. Learn the facts about weatherization and leave with accurate expectations
3. Meet the contractors and sign up for a free home visit
4. Go home and encourage friends and neighbors to get involved

WHEN should we hold our kick-off event?

After October 22, to allow time to promote the event and get LOTS of people to attend. And **before November 8**, to allow time for more outreach before Thanksgiving and the December 15 sign up deadline.

WHERE should we hold our kick-off event?

A public, familiar place (e.g. school, town hall, church) with plenty of parking, chairs, and tables on site. Ask about rental fees, whether food/drink are allowed, and whether a projector, screen (or white wall), and/or audio equipment are available on site.

WHO needs to be there? (besides general public attendees)

- **An “MC”** – One volunteer who will welcome everyone, introduce speakers, etc.
- **Other Volunteers** – Wear nametags so attendees can easily identify you
- **Participating Contractors** – Available to chat with attendees before and after the presentation
- **Champions** (*optional*) – Residents who have already completed a home energy project
- **Presenter from Efficiency Vermont** – Efficiency Vermont will coordinate this for you

WHAT needs to be there?

- **Tables:**
 1. **Sign-In Table**
 2. **Handouts Table** – Efficiency Vermont will provide printed material
 3. **Refreshments Table**
 4. **Table(s) for Participating Contractors** – ½ or 1 table per contractor
- **Sign Up Forms** – Place one on each chair
- **Food** - Basic snacks are fine (e.g. cheese, crackers, cookies, fruit, and seltzer)
- **Nametags** - To identify your volunteer team and any “champions” in the room
- **Projector, screen, extension cords, audio equipment (if needed)** – Contact Efficiency Vermont if you are having trouble securing any of these items for your event
- **Enough Space/Chairs** – Plan on 20 to 60 attendees, depending on your community size (see examples on the following page from past weatherization campaign events)

HOW MANY attendees to expect

Attendance at Kick-Off Events for Similar Campaigns:

Community Team	Combined Population	# of Event Attendees
Springfield & Chester, VT	9103	20
Bethel, Royalton, & Sharon, VT	6218	21
Cornish & Plainfield, NH	4119	23
Braintree, Brookfield, & Randolph, VT	7306	27
Cavendish, Reading, Weathersfield, & Windsor, VT	8643	30
Bridgewater, Pomfret, & Woodstock, VT	3980	30
Orford, Piermont, & Lyme, NH	4059	38
Hartford, Hartland, Norwich, & Thetford, VT	19255	50
Lebanon, NH	13474	62
Montpelier, VT	7,535	45

Event Agenda and Script

Welcome and Introductions (10 min) – Team MC

- Welcome, Housekeeping (bathrooms, exits, etc.), Thank you's (e.g. venue, food)
- Recognize key people (volunteers, contractors, champions, sponsors)
- Explain how the volunteers got involved in Button Up and why you are excited about it
- Explain the sign-up form on their seat and point to the resource table
- Review the agenda and introduce presenter

Button Up Presentation (20-30 min) – Presenter from Efficiency Vermont

Meet the Contractors (8 min) - Each contractor gets a minute or two to introduce themselves

*(IF APPLICABLE) **Introduce Champions to briefly share their story** (10 min) – Identify one or two neighbors who have had energy work done and had a good experience. Each can speak for a few minutes about what work was done, why, and what the benefits have been.*

Q&A (15-20 min) – Team MC moderates; contractors and presenter answer questions

Wrap Up (5 min) – Team MC; try to wrap up no more than 90 mins after you started

- Reminder to complete sign up forms, stick around to chat, and tell their friends

Stick around, mingle, and chat with contractors (20-40mins)

**Attachment C:
Button Up Hero Volunteer Team Roles**

<p>Team Leader <i>Oct - May</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coordinate team meetings and activities • Primary contact for Efficiency Vermont, participating contractors and the public
<p>Stuff Coordinator <i>Oct - Dec</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Store material from Efficiency Vermont (and distribute to the team as needed), including giveaway bags, print material, and yard signs
<p>Event Planner <i>Oct - early Nov</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plan and coordinate the Button Up kick-off event, including location, food, signage, and coordination with presenters and contractors.
<p>Tech Wiz <i>Oct - May</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Receive email notifications from Efficiency Vermont and share participant status reports with the rest of the team • Email messages to the entire contact list of participants as appropriate • Post content to community discussion lists / listservs / Facebook / etc. • Set up computer, projector, and/or audio equipment at the kick-off event
<p>Community Partner Outreach <i>Oct - Dec</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coordinate with community partners (e.g. town clerk, library, school, churches). Ideas include sending updates for newsletters, delivering handouts/posters, and arranging for volunteers to set up a table or speak.
<p>Entering New Sign-Ups <i>Oct - Dec</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collect paper sign up forms after events and tabling sessions, and send them to Efficiency Vermont.. • Keep track of contact information from people who fill out the checklist and receive a package of weatherstripping; share that list with Efficiency Vermont after each event.
<p>General Outreach <i>Oct - Dec</i></p>	<p>Ideas include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Placing posters and yard signs around town • Posting in local calendars and letters to the editor • Setting up a table at existing community events and/or in public locations • Speaking at community group meetings (e.g. church service, civic club) • Sending handouts home with kids at school
<p>Personal Outreach <i>Jan - Apr</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Call or email specific participants to check in and offer encouragement • If participants have questions or concerns, point them in the right direction
<p>Home Energy Champions <i>Oct - Apr</i></p>	<p>“Champions” are people who have already weatherized their home. They can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Write up a story / case study of their weatherization project • Attend the kick-off event and speak briefly about their experience • Host an open house