



Market Development Initiative Assessment

First Assessment



Acknowledgements

This assessment was prepared for the Ameren Illinois Company (AIC). The JPI Group partnered with Opinion Dynamics to complete this assessment of AIC's Market Development Initiative (MDI).

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Ameren Illinois Market Development Initiative

The Ameren Illinois Market Development Initiative (MDI) aims to foster new economic and energy efficiency opportunities for diverse and local individuals, communities, and businesses. As a progressive industry leader committed to being intentional about diversity, equity and inclusion, Ameren Illinois engaged The JPI Group to assess the MDI.

The implementation of a comprehensive MDI is vital to successfully achieving energy efficiency savings goals for under resourced communities, preparing diverse talent for career pathways in the sector and increasing capabilities, opportunities, and profitability for diverse businesses.

The JPI Group & Opinion Dynamics

The JPI Group, along with partner Opinion Dynamics, facilitated assessments of the MDI's Community-Based Organization Strategies and the Diverse Vendor Procurement Program.

The JPI Group, a minority-owned company founded by Yom and Paul Douglas, equips organizations with the tools and expertise to navigate the ever-changing business landscape. The company offers expertise and flexibility needed to meet unique business challenges creating partnerships with organizations and minority-owned businesses facilitate growth and positive change for socially disadvantaged communities.



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Market Development Initiative (MDI) Overview

- MDI aims for Energy Efficiency, building greater community engagement, while creating energy industry jobs and delivering cost savings to those that need it the most.
 - Engage customers who have not previously benefited from energy efficiency.
 - Increase number of energy efficiency jobs available to local and diverse candidates.
 - Support new or growing energy efficiency businesses.
- MDI was established in 2018, with the implementation period covered in this assessment spanned 2021-2023.
- Implementation composed of distinct areas:
 - Community-Based Organization channel*
 - Diverse Vendor Procurement channel*
 - Workforce Development channel
 - Integration of above channels into Ameren Illinois Energy Efficiency programs*

- *denotes programs covered under this assessment

Considerations

- Ameren MDI is the first utility program of its kind since 2018 and therefore cannot be benchmarked against other programming
- Eventually there will be opportunity to benchmark against other programs as all other Illinois Utilities were required to launch MDI in 2022 following the success of the Ameren Illinois MDI
- Unique challenge to achieve newly established equity goals through community-based partnerships without disrupting day-to-day operations of these important organizations
- Goals are set at the individual partnership level - not at the channel level - to ensure each agency's unique needs are met



MDI Assessment Goals

Assess MDI performance to date and recommendations strategies to:

- Improve the impact of MDI activities and implementation
- Innovate at the intersection of energy efficiency and diversity, equity, and inclusion
- Strengthen CBO partner engagement
- Build an infrastructure of tools, resources, and mentors for diverse vendors
- Grow diverse spend in an equitable manner
- Better measure and communicate accomplishments

Key Areas Assessed for CBO & DVP Channels

- Accomplishments to date
- KPIs
- External and internal progress reporting
- Data tracking practices and implementation processes
- Marketing, education, and outreach strategies
- Performance from the perspective of multiple stakeholders
- Alignment with best practices

Methods

- Data and KPI Review
- MDI staff interviews:
 - Leidos
 - Resource Innovations
 - Walker-Miller Energy Services
 - SEEL
 - National Energy Foundation
- CBOs Partners Interviews (8)
- EE Channel Partner Interviews (10)



Key Terms

- **KPI (Key Performance Indicator):** Metrics used to measure the effectiveness and impact of MDI initiatives, including diversity engagement and community outreach.
- **MDI Staff:** Entities responsible for executing program strategies and activities within the MDI framework.
- **EE Channel Partner:** Third-party implementers of Ameren Illinois's Energy Efficiency Programs
- **CBO Partner:** Community-Based Organizations that engage with local communities to enhance participation in Energy Efficiency Programs .
- **Tier 3 Spend:** Spending by Ameren's vendors (e.g., EE Channel Partners) to procure goods and service

CBO Partnership Program Findings

CBO Channel Strengths

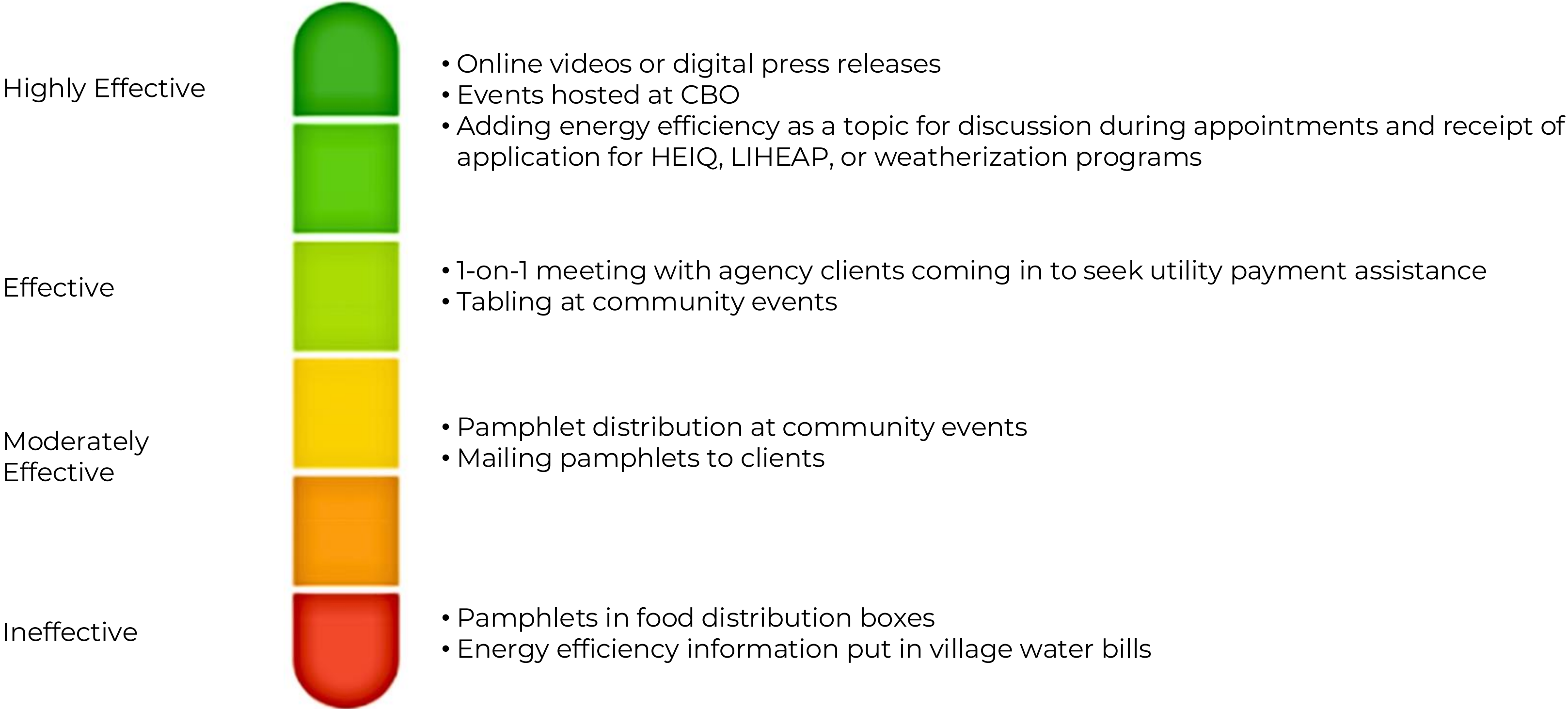
Strengths

- Expanded the number of partnerships since inception in 2018
- Significant increase in overall partnership spend from \$450,000 to \$850,000
- Partners are satisfied with support levels
- Positive connection and interaction with MDI Workforce Development program
- Partners consider marketing practices offered in partnership with Ameren Illinois to be effective
- Current metrics align with best practices
- Addition of tracking program referrals in 2023 provides visibility to impact for partners

Exceeded KPIs In 2023 (Q1/Q2):

- Customers Engaged
- Events
- Energy kits
- Program Referrals

Outreach Activities Described in CBO Partnership Program Interviews



CBO Representative Quotes

“

I've told people that Ameren is not there to be against you. They are there to help you. They have a lot of programs, and they make a lot of funding available to help people, so you ought to take advantage of these programs.

-CBO Representative

”

“

A best practice is to participate, be present, and do things with them one-on-one. Don't just send the information. Send a person. Someone who has customer service skills and who can answer the questions and feel like they are part of the community.

-CBO Representative

”

CBO Channel Opportunities for Improvement

- Enhance customer engagement metrics
- Staffing levels and continuity at CBOs
- Training on marketing, education, and outreach
- Support reaching specific segments
- Supply chain issues
- Technical support for CBO related to digital tools and data tracking systems
- Feedback mechanisms



CBO Channel Recommendations

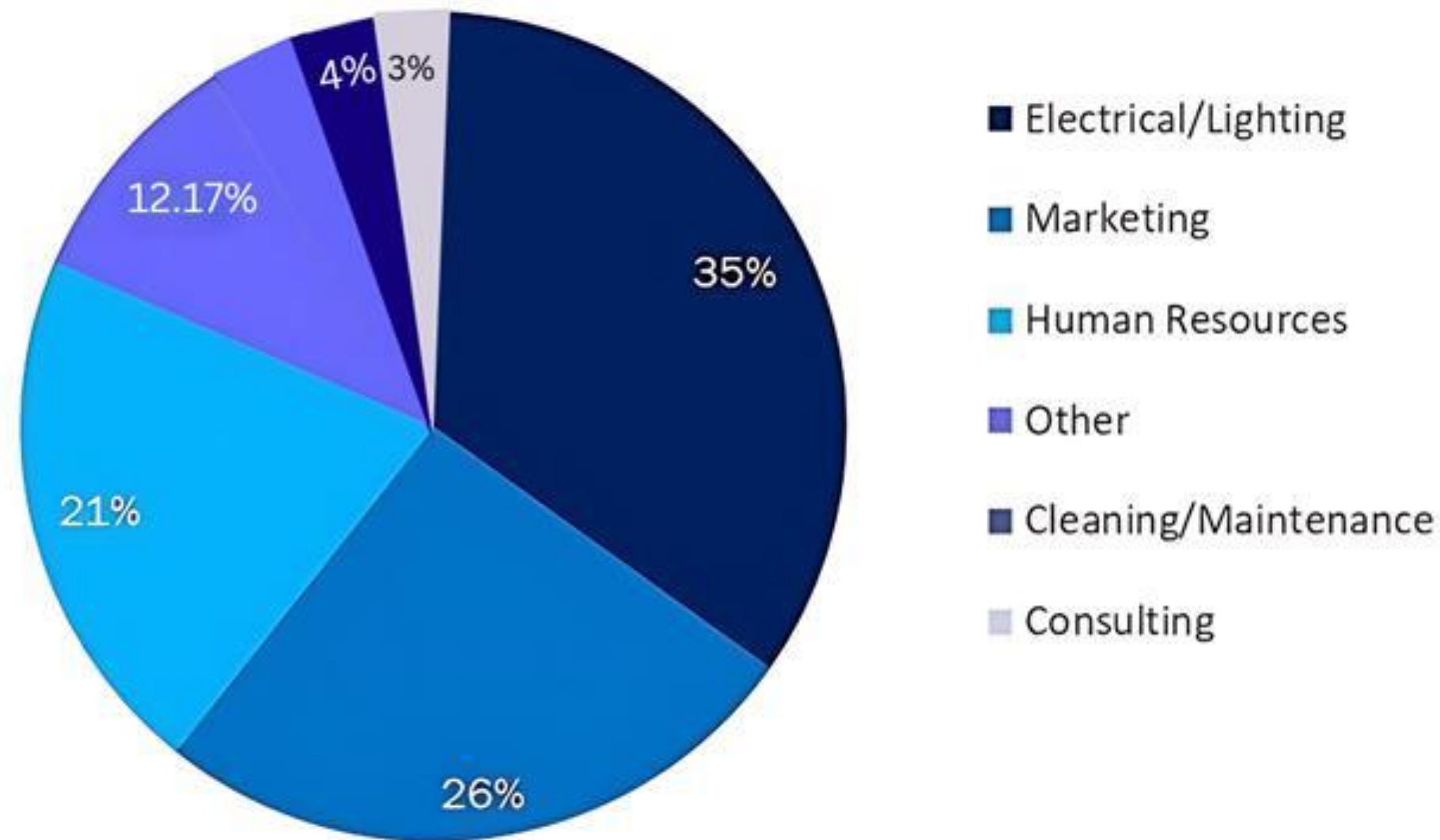
- Broaden diversity and quantity of partnerships
- Expand metrics to measure the quality of partnerships
- Increase the visibility of CBO funding in external reporting
- Clearly track CBO referrals through Energy Efficiency Program
- Support CBOs in adopting customer relationship management (CRM) systems
- Provide clearer definitions of KPIs in reporting portal
- Ensure CBOs have materials and training to specifically reach single family renters
- Facilitate CBO workshops and other forms of knowledge sharing among CBOs



Diverse Vendor Procurement Channel (DVP)

Category of Spend Tracked for EE Channel Partners

Breakdown of total tier 3 spend as a result of DVP



Strengths

- Substantial database growth - 400 vendors from 2021 -2024
- From 2021 through June 2023, spending goals consistently exceeded -\$7 million
- A multi-faceted approach to identifying new vendors
- High-quality meetings with open communication channels
- User-friendly reporting systems
- Vetting for Procurement Readiness



Opportunities For Improvement

- Further diversify the base of vendors in addition to increasing overall diverse spend
- Increase consistency of metrics across various stakeholder reporting and presentations
- Find solutions within limited spending opportunities during the Energy Efficiency Plan Cycle
- Increased support to resolve the following challenges with diverse vendors:
 - Inconvenient procurement processes
 - Continued focus on supporting vendor employees in AIC territory



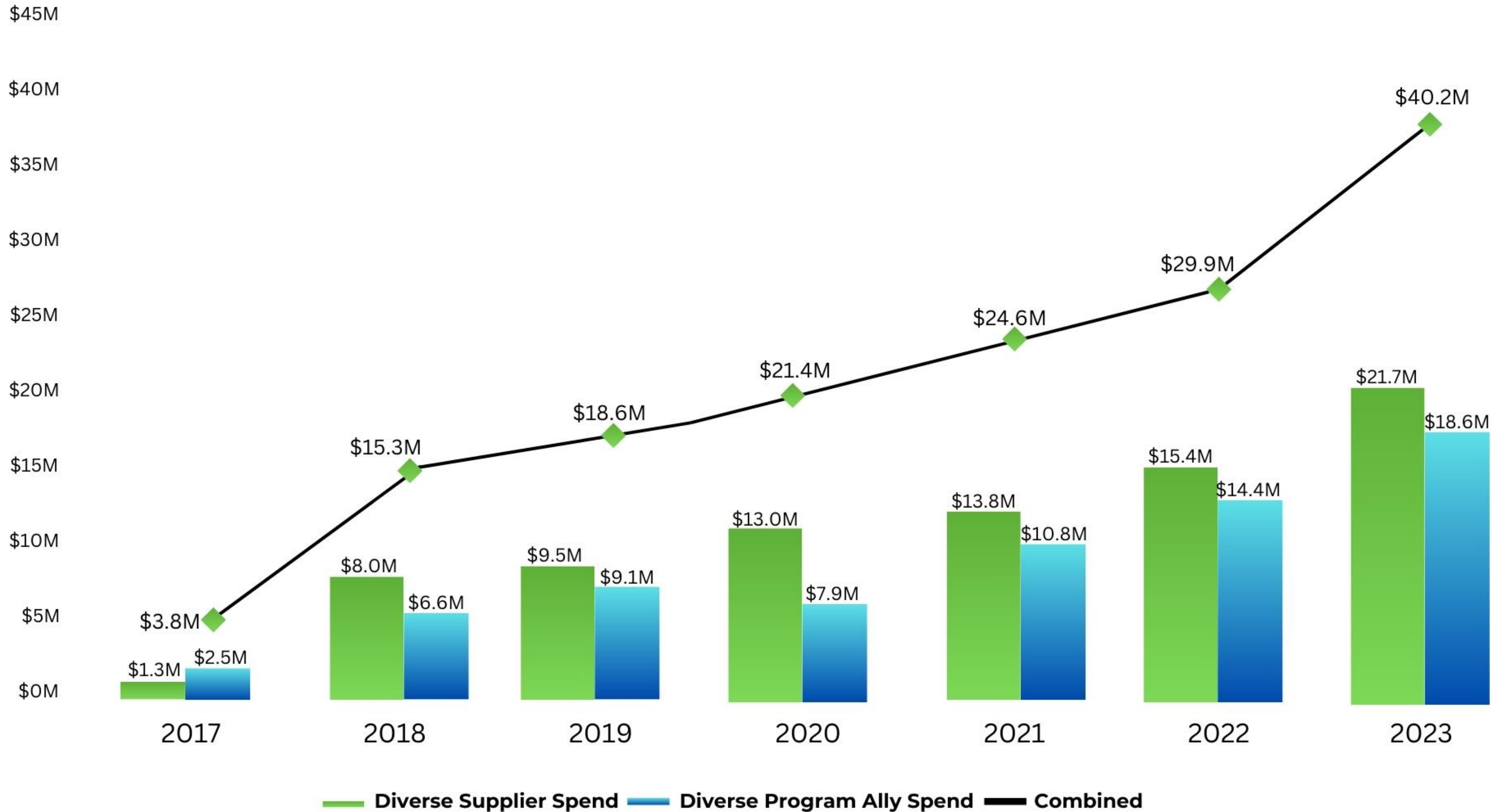
Recommendations

Track

- Percentage of vendors utilized for the DVP database
- Distribution of diverse spending across the vendor's
- Analyze conversion rates from enrollment to participation
- Measure the program's impact on supplier growth
- Track and analyze jobseekers and supplier diversity retention
- Provide clearer documentation of DVP's contribution to overall AIC diverse spending in progress reports
- Conduct a capabilities assessment and offer targeted support



Ameren Illinois Commitment to Increase Diverse Spend



Phase 2 MDI Assessment 2025

- Kickoff: staff interviews, MDI tracking data review, metrics assessment
- Assessments:
 - Surveys with participating diverse vendors
 - Workforce Development Assessment
- Report: Summary report with key findings, conclusions, and recommendations



Questions?

Thank You

