

Qualified Member Appliance Replacement Program-QMARP

Do you qualify?

By *Claudio Bueno*

During hard economic times, it may be difficult for some with a fixed or limited income to participate in KIUC energy-efficiency programs that require a co-payment. If you qualify for QMARP, KIUC pays 100 percent of the cost of the new refrigerator, including removal and recycling of the existing one.

Electric refrigerators became common in American homes in the 1950s. Refrigerators changed in design in the 1960s. Manufacturers started to produce larger, automatic defrost and side-by-side units. These refrigerator units were energy guzzlers. However, in 1987, the federal government set stringent efficiency standards to eliminate the production of energy-guzzling refrigerators.

Assuming an average refrigerator life expectancy of 12 to 15 years, the first crop of energy-efficient refrigerators is reaching the end of its useful life. The cost of a new refrigerator has trended with the increased efficiency, with the most efficient models being the most expensive. As electric rates increase and the price of refrigerators increase, replacing an aging and less efficient refrigerator can become difficult for elderly members on fixed or limited incomes.

After electric water heating, refrigerators are the second-highest consuming appliance in a residential home. Improvements in the efficiency of refrigerators have increased significantly, largely due to government mandates. In 1972, the average refrigerator used more than 1,800 kilowatt-hours (kWh) a year. Thanks to new standards for refrigerators set in 2000, they average less than 500 kWh a year.

The Qualified Member Appliance Replacement Program (QMARP) was developed to help qualifying low-income seniors (age 60+) reduce their residential energy use by replacing older, less efficient appliances with new, more efficient ones at no cost to the participant.

The program also demonstrates KIUC's commitment to the Kaua'i community and the pursuit of

energy efficiency. It may not make economic sense to install a solar water heater for a small family with one or two people in the household. However, replacing an older refrigerator makes perfect economic sense.

KIUC also provides an energy evaluation for the rest of the house. That may qualify a participant to receive compact fluorescent bulbs, energy-efficient showerheads, tank wrap and faucet aerators at no cost, if they are needed.

KIUC takes a "holistic" approach. Once at the house, we try to accomplish as much as possible to maximize use of our time.

KIUC partners with the County of Kaua'i Office of Elderly Affairs on this program. The county performs the "intake," verifying the applicant's age and income, and provides referrals for the program. It is the first point of contact, and the partnership works well. The county has experienced outreach consultants that are aware of many resources and programs that may benefit Kaua'i seniors, including the QMARP. 🌱

Qualified Member Appliance Replacement Program QMARP Program Information

Eligibility:

- a. Potential recipient must be on the residential rate schedule.
- b. Homeowner must be 60 years or older.
- c. Household must meet Federal Poverty Income Guidelines for the program year. Income eligibility will be based on total gross household income from all sources.
- d. Refrigerator replaced must be a minimum of 11 years old and be the primary refrigerator. Existing unit will be removed from the residence at no cost by KIUC.

For more information, please call the County of Kaua'i Office of Elderly Affairs or Kaua'i Island Utility Cooperative's Energy Services.

Office of Elderly Affairs: 241.4487 • Kaua'i Island Utility Cooperative 246.8280 or 246.8284