




ORANGE COUNTY
NORTH CAROLINA



THE UNIVERSITY OF
NORTH CAROLINA
CHAPEL HILL

Electrification Social Marketing Campaign

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Executive Summary

What if the next big step toward a greener Orange County started right inside its rental homes? With more than 35% of households renter-occupied, rental properties are a critical, yet often overlooked, frontier for electrification. Our campaign tackles the disconnect between the clear benefits of electric appliances and the slow pace of adoption in rental units. By targeting property managers with cost-saving, practical messaging and empowering renters to advocate for change, our social marketing campaign aims to make electrification the smart, mainstream choice. Through community-driven outreach, strategic digital promotion, and public engagement, this campaign builds on existing momentum to normalize electric upgrades and drive lasting environmental and economic impact.

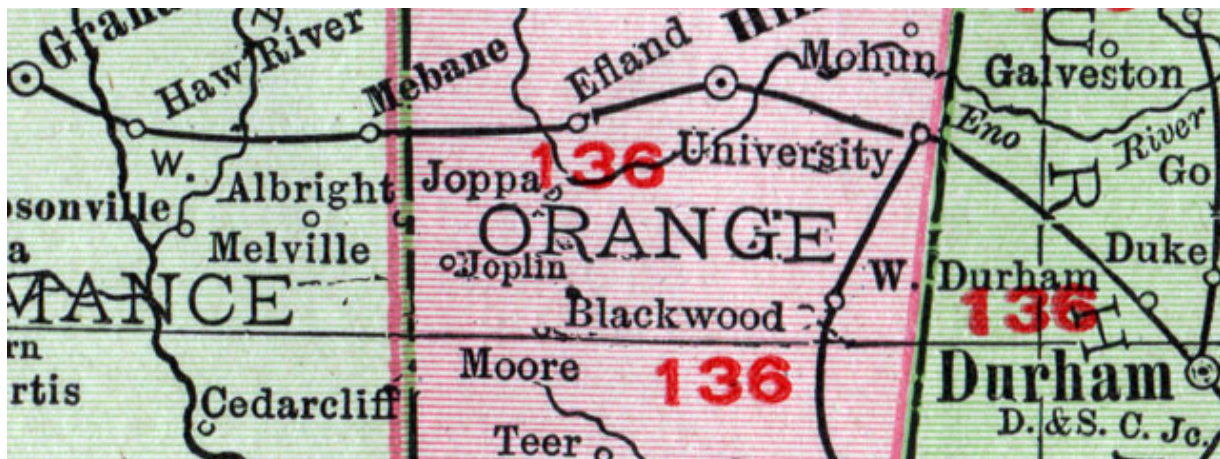
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BACKGROUND

About 35% of Orange County, N.C. homes are renter-occupied (U.S. Census Bureau, 2023), yet electrification in rental units remains limited. Even though switching to electric appliances is both cost-effective and better for the environment, many people hesitate to make the change, usually because they're unaware of the benefits or are put off by perceived upfront costs (GeoTab). This campaign aims to close that gap by educating renters and property managers about what electrification means, why it matters, and how it can save money over time. The goal is simple: boost the adoption of electric appliances in Orange County's rental properties by making the case clear, accessible, and actionable.



SITUATIONAL ANALYSIS



Orange County has already laid the groundwork with its “A Greener Orange” campaign, which can serve as an umbrella for eco-friendly social marketing efforts and their messaging. They’ve also seen strong momentum with past environmental initiatives like “Solarize the Triangle” and “Leave the Leaves,” showing that the community is willing to engage when the right message meets the right moment. Still, there are some clear gaps. Orange County doesn’t have a defined budget to support a thoroughly segmented, comprehensive social marketing campaign, which could limit both scale and impact. The Orange County Health Department also lacks direct communication channels for reaching Chapel Hill property managers and renters, meaning any campaign targeting these groups will need to lean harder on smart, strategic messaging — not just channel choice — to connect with them.

On the upside, there’s a real opportunity. Extreme weather events, like the damage caused by Hurricane Helene in Western North Carolina, have heightened public awareness and media coverage around climate change.

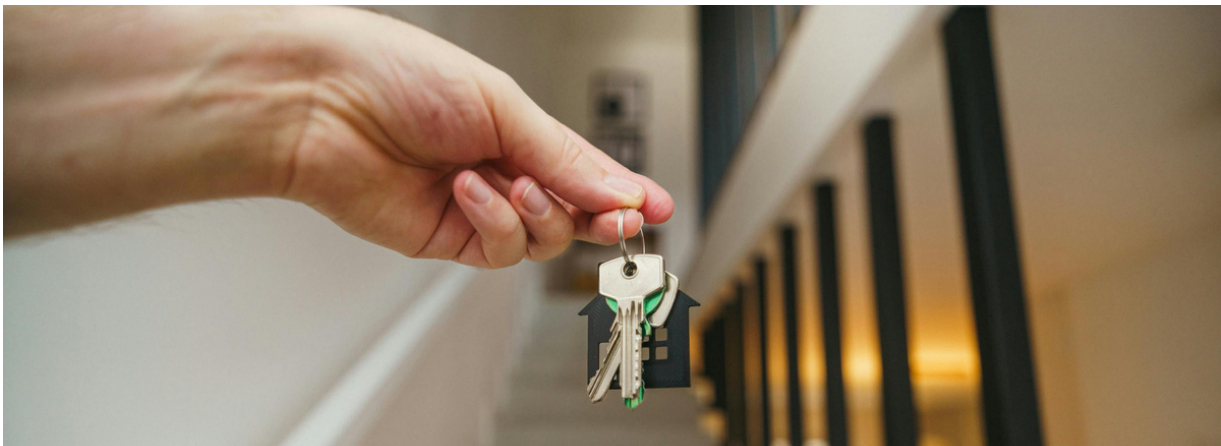
Situational Analysis Continued:

In Orange County especially, where a Democrat-leaning voter base is already primed for environmental action, climate issues are starting to feel less like abstract concerns and more like immediate, local problems that demand personal and civic engagement. At the same time, staying alert to broader threats is essential. Public programs, particularly those grounded in Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion values, face sharper scrutiny from the federal government than in previous years, making future funding for environmental initiatives a bit more uncertain and politically vulnerable.



TARGET AUDIENCE

Our target audience is primarily property managers in Orange County — a small segment of the overall population. They tend to be a little older, with an average age of around 50, skew more female, and usually don't live in the properties they manage. National polling shows that property owners generally lean more conservative than democratic. Still, given Orange County's political landscape, it's likely that local property managers lean more moderate to progressive compared to the national average. Our polls show that the biggest concern for this audience is cost. They're motivated by cost savings and long-term value, and they're likely to prioritize convenience and a strong return on investment when making decisions.



OBJECTIVES AND GOALS



Our campaign aims to persuade property managers in Orange County to choose electric appliances over gas when replacing equipment in rental units. We are pursuing our goal through three key objectives:

1. Raising Awareness for Cost Savings
2. Normalizing Electrification in the Community
3. Empowering Renters to Advocate for Electric Options

Our first objective is awareness of the costs associated with electric versus gas. This is a major focus as our target population is highly concerned with costs. Our survey responses during our research phase showed a clear priority among property managers for affordable appliances & heating.

Our second objective is to normalize electrification through visible, community-driven messaging. To push for electric appliances, we want our audience to consider electrification to be mainstream and an obvious choice to save money. The politicization of electrification does work against us, and it's our objective to overcome that stereotype through community-based messaging.

Objectives and Goals Continued:

Our final objective is to empower renter populations to advocate for electric options. Our research - including focus groups, interviews, and surveys - shows that landlords and property managers are highly considerate of tenant needs. The power of renters to influence the decision-making processes of property owners is significant. We hope to use this campaign to directly market to property owners, but also to tenants, as they deeply influence decision-making.

We plan to track our campaign's impact over the course of a year using explicit, measurable goals:

- Increase campaign site traffic by 40% in one year
- Convince 25 property managers to commit to switching
- Boost social media engagement by 30% in 6 months
- Reach 100 renters with campaign materials or pledges

By closely monitoring these metrics, we will be able to assess and refine our strategies, ensuring the campaign effectively promotes electrification across Orange County's rental properties.

FACTORS INFLUENCING BEHAVIOR ADOPTION



Many property managers face knowledge gaps when it comes to electric alternatives, such as EV charging, electric appliances, and HVAC systems. Some may hold outdated views or misconceptions, believing that electric systems are unreliable or lack sufficient infrastructure to meet their needs. This lack of understanding can hinder adoption and prevent property managers from exploring these alternatives. Additionally, misinformation about the costs, installation processes, or long-term benefits—such as assumptions that electric systems require higher maintenance or will lead to increased electricity costs—can further contribute to reluctance. While some property managers are aware of the environmental benefits of electric alternatives, fewer recognize the financial incentives available, such as tax credits and rebates, or the operational cost savings these systems offer. There is also limited awareness of the health and safety advantages of electric systems, like reduced exposure to CO₂ emissions. Furthermore, property managers may be unaware of the long-term risks associated with gas systems, including potential regulatory changes or rising fuel costs that could impact their operations.

Factors Influencing the Adoption of Behavior Continued:

In terms of attitudes and beliefs, many property managers are skeptical about the effectiveness of electric alternatives, particularly when it comes to heating or high-energy tasks. This skepticism often stems from doubts about whether electric systems can perform at the same level as traditional gas systems. Financial concerns also play a significant role, as the upfront cost of electric alternatives is often seen as a major barrier, even though the long-term savings may be greater. Many property managers are also skeptical of claims regarding return on investment (ROI), further hindering their willingness to switch. Additionally, cultural or religious considerations may influence resistance to change, as some communities may have generational preferences or traditional practices—such as favoring gas cooking due to taste or cultural customs—that make it difficult to adopt new technologies. Finally, a "if it's not broken, don't fix it" mentality can contribute to change resistance, making property managers less likely to adopt electric alternatives unless strong incentives or success stories from peers are presented.

MARKETING MIX STRATEGIES AND 4 P'S



7.1 Product

Our product is not the electric appliances we are promoting, but rather the benefits that can be obtained by making the switch to electric appliances. Our products include saving money, improving home safety, and more convenience in monthly payments.

By focusing on these key products, we hope to encourage property managers to think “electric” upon the loss of a gas appliance, knowing that making the switch can save them money, time, and improve the quality of their property.

7.2 Price

There are multiple prices associated with our campaign. The monetary costs include the upfront cost of switching to electric appliances and potential electrical upgrades needed, but this cost can be recouped by long term savings. One other cost is associated with the time it takes to install the electric appliances.

Marketing Mix Strategies and 4 P's: Price Continued

The installation process can take up to a few weeks depending on the appliance and whether electrical upgrades or permits are needed. Additionally, homeowners might face resistance or skepticism from neighbors or other community members accustomed to traditional gas systems, especially in places where electrical adoption remains low, which is a price to consider.

While these costs are important to take into consideration, there are also monetary incentives for homeowners and property managers in the state of North Carolina to implement energy efficiency projects. These include:

- Energy Saver North Carolina
- Weatherization Assistance Program
- Duke Energy Income Qualifying Program
- Upgrade and Save North Carolina

The non-monetary incentives include recognition for the work that the property managers are doing and this certificate will ideally incentivize others to want to adopt electric.

7.3 Place



Our advertising placement strategy is designed to meet our audiences—primarily property managers and renters—where they naturally engage, shop, or seek information. Because property managers make up a relatively small and specialized population, we are focusing our efforts on strategic, high-impact channels that allow us to connect directly and meaningfully with them. One of our primary placements will be at the North Carolina Property Management Conference, a key gathering where we can engage directly with our target demographic. By having a presence at this event, whether through sponsorships, exhibitor booths, or branded collateral, we will be able to establish trust and deliver our messaging in a highly relevant setting.

To expand our reach and also target renters alongside property managers, we plan to implement a mix of physical advertising tactics that increase visibility and resonance. Transport advertising will be utilized through placements on buses and transit routes that serve areas with high renter populations. This ensures regular, repeated exposure to our messaging during daily commutes.

7.4 Promotion



We will also distribute yard signs in high-traffic residential areas with significant renter populations, providing an on-the-ground presence that is hyperlocal and easy to spot. In addition, we will create and hand out bumper stickers to help organically spread awareness among community members. These low-cost, high-visibility materials can be placed on cars, notebooks, or windows, serving as moving billboards for our message.

Our digital strategy is equally robust, with a focus on convenience, accessibility, and user experience. We will leverage digital access points—including our website, social media platforms, and email outreach—to ensure that the broader Orange County community can easily access and engage with our messaging. Our social media campaigns will include targeted ads, boosted posts, and engaging content tailored to reach both younger renters and digitally connected property managers. The campaign website will be optimized for mobile use, designed with intuitive navigation, and include clear calls to action for users seeking more information or resources.

Marketing Mix Strategies and 4 P's: Promotion Continued

To improve search visibility, we will implement basic search engine optimization (SEO) practices, helping our content surface in response to relevant queries. Segmented email outreach will also support our goals by delivering tailored content to key stakeholders and community networks.

Throughout all campaign efforts, we are prioritizing convenience and accessibility. Advertising placements will be chosen for their ease of access via public transportation and visibility during hours convenient to our audience. We will also work with trusted community-based organizations—such as housing authorities, libraries, and local nonprofits—to distribute materials and increase message credibility. Furthermore, we will ensure that all materials, both digital and physical, meet accessibility standards and are inclusive of diverse populations, including providing multilingual content when appropriate. Through this multi-pronged, intentional strategy, we aim to maximize.

PLAN FOR MONITORING AND EVALUATION



The campaign should be evaluated to determine the effectiveness of educating the public on the benefits of switching to electric appliances. It will measure not only the willingness of participants to make the switch but also the number of participants who make the switch within a specified amount of time. The monitoring will be conducted by the Orange County Health Department's Sustainability Department.

The effectiveness of the campaign can be measured through social media analytics, pre- and post-campaign surveys, and qualitative data from participants' comments, messages, etc. Baseline measurements should be taken before the launch. It should be repeated periodically throughout the year of electrification and the year after the campaign. Measurements will be reported to the Orange County Health Department's Sustainability Department and shared with any partners aiding in implementation.

BUDGET

Our budget will depend on the available funding from the resources provided by Orange County. We recommend a minimum budget of \$4000. This budget covers boosted social media content, print materials and live event attendance for the year. The promotional plan is explained in more detail above. If funding above the allocated budget is necessary, Orange County could explore state or federal grants, nonprofit partnerships, or sponsorships.

ITEM:	BUDGET:
Yard signs, stickers, etc	2,000
Social Media Content Creation	500
Social Media Boosted Ads	500
Event attendance	700
Misc.	300
TOTAL:	4,000

PLAN FOR IMPLEMENTATION AND PROGRAM MANAGEMENT

Gantt Chart

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Website												
Social Media Advertising												
Facebook												
Instagram												
Twitter												
PR												
Reactive PR												
PR Training Session												
Media Outreach												
NC Property Management Conference												
Media Kit												
Earth Day Fairs												
Materials												
Print Materials												
Distribution												

Plan for Implementation and Program Management Continued:

The implementation of our campaign is scheduled to begin in January 2026 and run for a full calendar year. The first month is dedicated to publishing our website, training employees in PR and how to garner media attention, and circulating our media kit internally. The first step is all about getting everyone on the same page implementing the campaign. At this time we will also produce all of our materials (yard signs, bumper stickers). Beginning in February, we will make these materials available through a sign-up on our website. While distribution begins in February, we anticipate increased engagement and participation later in the year as promotional efforts expand.

Early in the year, in February, we'll partner with the N.C. Property Management Conference to promote our initiative distribute our campaign materials. Starting in April, we will initiate a comprehensive social media campaign aimed at expanding our reach, raising awareness about the initiative, and generating increased interest and engagement from our target audience. April's Earth Day also offers a great chance to align our campaign with local clean energy events & fairs.

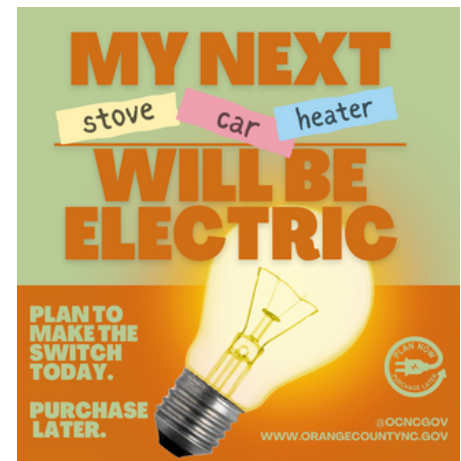
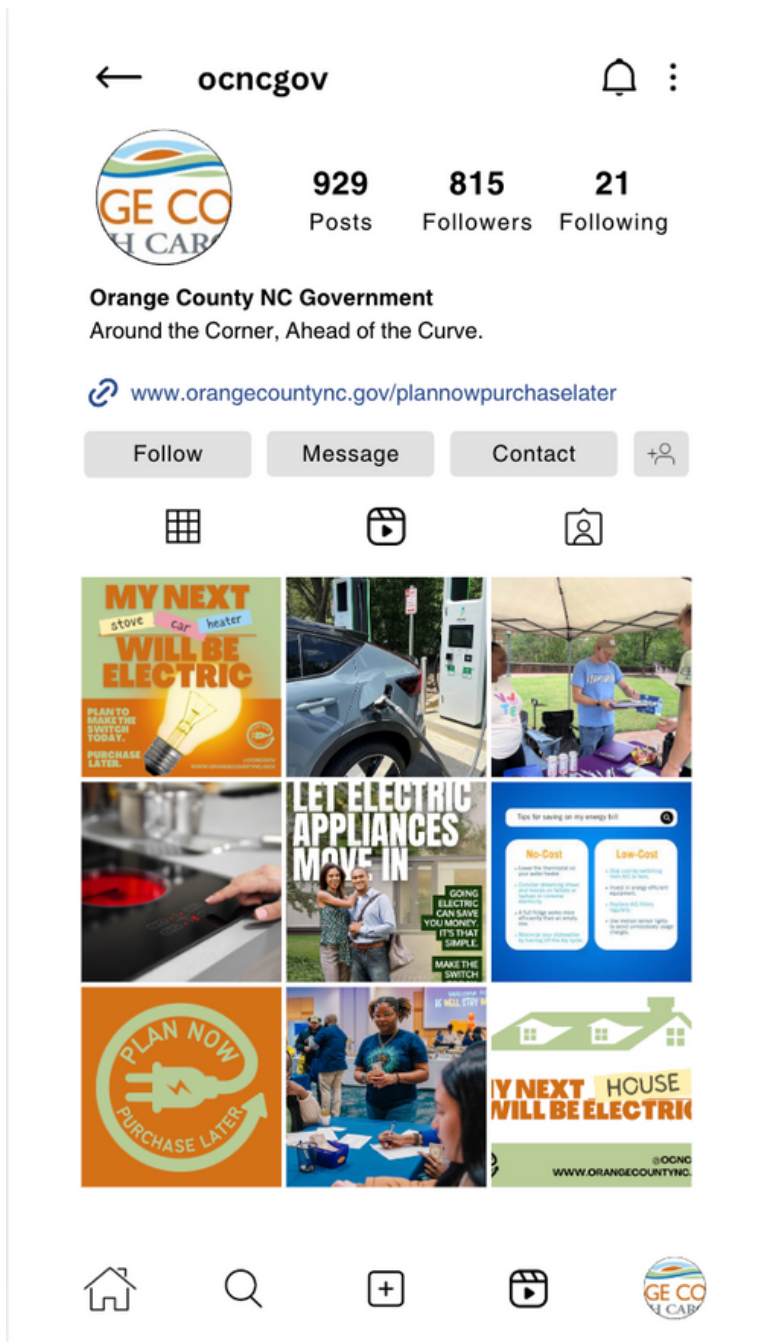
Plan for Implementation and Program Management Continued:

We plan to actively participate in these events to increase our visibility and promote the benefits of electrification. Around this time, we will also begin to engage in targeted media outreach to amplify our campaign's visibility across a range of media channels, including local press, online publications, and community newsletters. Our plan is to sustain these efforts through the rest of the year, maintaining consistent outreach in efforts to reinforce the campaign's impact over time.

As the campaign progresses through 2026, we will continue to monitor engagement, adapt our strategies, and explore new methods of outreach. Our goal is to maintain momentum and make electrification an accessible choice for property managers and residents in Orange County. By the end of the year, we aim to raise awareness and lay the groundwork for lasting behavior change and future adoption of electric alternatives.

APPENDIX

Sample Instagram Feed



APPENDIX

Sample Press Release

Orange County NC
300 W. Tryon St.
Hillsborough, NC
United States



PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

DATE HERE

CONTACT: Jack Wilson, publicist
919-302-5903, jdwils@ad.unc.edu

ORANGE COUNTY'S NEW ELECTRIFICATION CAMPAIGN BRIGHTENS THE FUTURE

CHAPEL HILL, N.C. – Orange County is proud to announce the launch of the "Plan Now, Purchase Later" campaign, a new year-long initiative designed to promote the adoption of electric appliances in rental properties across the region.

With over one-third of Orange County households living in rental units, electrification, switching from gas to electric appliances, presents a major opportunity to cut utility costs, improve indoor air quality, and reduce climate impact. However, many property managers remain hesitant due to upfront costs or lack of information. This campaign addresses those concerns directly with a simple message: you don't have to make the switch today—just plan for electric when it's time to replace.

"We want property managers to see electrification not as a burden, but as a smart investment in their properties," said [Spokesperson Name], [Title] of the Orange County Health Department. "By normalizing the idea of 'electric as the next step,' we're helping renters, landlords, and the environment all at once."

-MORE-



Earth Day activations, and targeted
ents. It also features creative
signs and "My Next _____ Will Be

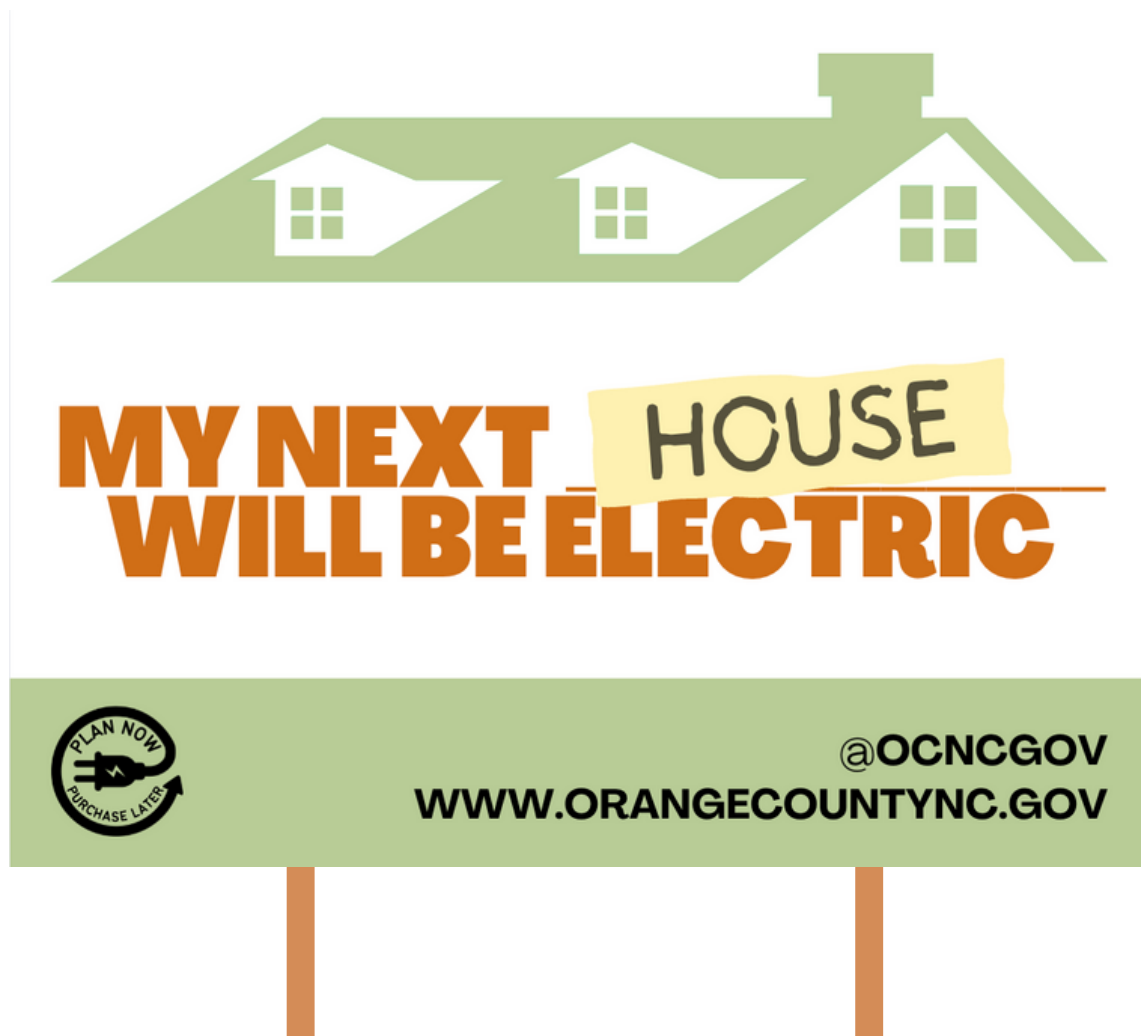
ty Health Department's
ative.

ve public services and policies
's Triangle region, the county
is home to the University of
environmental leadership and
Orange County is working to
community for all residents.

APPENDIX

Physical Materials

Yard Sign



APPENDIX

Physical Materials

Stickers



APPENDIX

Physical Materials

Flyer



APPENDIX

Formative Research Plan

The cheap cost of electric appliances is suggested as a large incentive for property managers, particularly in circumstances where renters bear the most monthly energy costs. While Orange County has limited available public information on landlords and renters, we understand relationships to exist on a spectrum between larger rental companies and individual home renters. As such, we will cater our formative research plan to this diverse set of renter/property manager relationships.

Purpose

Our formative research aims to understand how renters and property managers in Orange County, N.C., view home electrification. More than a quarter of residents are renters, meaning property managers significantly influence whether these homes transition to electric appliances. Yet, despite electrification's cost-effectiveness and environmental advantages, adoption remains slow – often due to a lack of awareness or perceived upfront costs (GeoTab).

APPENDIX

Formative Research Plan

We want a clear picture of what motivates property managers to switch, what makes them hesitate, and how renters' attitudes might influence their decision-making. Specifically, we aim to answer these key questions:

For Property Managers:

- What factors have influenced property managers to implement the appliances and heating systems they currently have?
- Are property managers aware of the financial, logistical, or environmental benefits of electrification?
- What can motivate property managers to implement electric appliances and heating systems in their properties?
- What is the best way to target this demographic for a marketing campaign?

For Renters:

- How do renters feel about electric vs. gas-powered appliances?
- Are renters aware of energy efficiency benefits?
- Do energy costs play a role in their housing choices?

These findings will aid in creating a social marketing strategy that speaks to both audiences – highlighting the benefits that matter most to them, such as lower maintenance costs and tenant satisfaction. The goal is to make electrification an easy and appealing choice and encourage broader adoption in rental properties.

Participants

Our study aims to combine the qualitative and quantitative responses of both renters and property managers in Orange County to understand how electrification is perceived by both groups. Our ultimate goal is to encourage property managers to switch to electric heating and appliances within their properties. To achieve this, we hope to gather essential background knowledge on renter attitudes as compared to property manager attitudes through our survey. The participants for our initial survey will consist of both property managers and renters, while our in-depth focus groups and interviews will be focused on property managers. Additionally, we may consider conducting an online discussion board for renters and property managers as an alternative to focus groups to allow participation in a more flexible format. We hope that our data about renter sentiments can help us to better market to our target group of property managers throughout our campaign, as their actions surrounding their properties are likely impacted by renter sentiments.

Methods

We will use surveys, focus groups, and interviews to get a mix of qualitative and quantitative data surrounding opinions of appliance/energy use and electrification amongst property managers and renters in Orange County. We believe that surveys will effectively generate useful averages and standard deviations surrounding our audience's understanding of and commitment to electrification. In contrast, focus groups and interviews will generate more authentic and personal conversations around energy use, helping us to gather anecdotal evidence around utility management and appliance selection. We intend to include a diverse set of property managers in our samples to adequately understand discrepancies that may exist between those that own one versus multiple properties.

Recruitment and Setting

The initial stage of the formative research includes a survey for property managers and renters. A focus group and individual interviews with property managers will follow this. To recruit renters, we will distribute the survey through online student group chats (eg. GroupMe, iMessage, Instagram), peer networks, and university communication channels.

For property managers, we will email and phone various management organizations and landlords to recruit participants for the survey, focus group, and interviews. We have identified Millhouse, Louise Beck, Park Real Estate Management, Dunlap Lilley Properties, HCO Properties, Mills Rentals, Yellow House Management, Connect Properties, and Onyx Management & Consulting as potential contacts. To ensure a flexible and accessible process, the research will occur primarily online, with surveys conducted via Qualtrics and the focus group hosted on Zoom. Depending on participant preferences, some interviews may be conducted in person. We will make sure to communicate that this research is solely for the purposes of understanding how to best communicate these ideas and not about regulating electrification in Orange County.

Incentives

To encourage participation and accommodate participants for their time, all individuals participating in the interviews or focus groups will receive a \$10 Amazon gift card. In addition, everyone who completes the survey will be entered in a giveaway for a chance to win one \$20 Amazon gift card. The gift card will be emailed to participants 5-7 business days after we email them that they have been chosen.

The incentive is intended to compensate for the insights gained from our participants. We will be transparent and disclose the incentive before participation. Participants must complete the entire session and provide a valid email address to receive the incentive. Participants will be contributing to research that supports clean and sustainable energy and potentially gaining insights on how electrification can save them money, which will be another incentive in itself.

SURVEY QUESTIONS:

Description: Defines electrification: “refers to the process of replacing traditional gas-powered systems with electric alternatives”

- Explain the purpose of the study

Property Manager:

- Do your homes use gas or electrical heating and cooking?
- Percentage estimates from each property manager of houses they manage
- How would you rate your understanding of electrification?
- How important is electrification to you? (0 = Not at all important, 10 = Very important)
 - 0-10 (most important) Sliding scale
- FOLLOW UP: Give yourself an honest grade on your understanding of electrical appliances and its environmental impacts compared to natural gas?

- How important do you believe electrification is to your tenants?
 - Sliding scale
- Rank the following in importance:
 - a. Cost of appliances
 - b. Safety of tenants
 - c. Environmental impacts of energy source
 - d. Maintenance costs
 - e. Costs of utilities to tenants
- Select all of the following initiatives that you have either heard of from Orange County?
 - a. Leave Your Leaves
 - b. Solarize the Triangle
 - c. Electronic Waste Recycling Program
- FOLLOW UP: Did you participate in any of these initiatives?
- If cost and installation were not barriers, would you prefer electric or gas appliances? Why?

Property Manager Demographic Questions:

- Where do you rent?
- Estimation of how many homes you own?
- Average age of properties?

- Are utilities included in rental costs to tenants? If yes, are they a flat rate?
 - Yes, flat rate
 - Yes, variable but property manager pays
 - No, tenant pay utilities

RENTER:

- Do your homes use gas or electrical heating and cooking?
 - Electric
 - Gas
- How would you rate your understanding of electrification?
- To what extent do you consider it a priority? (1 = No understanding/not a priority, 10 = Strong understanding/top priority)
 - 1-10 (most important) Sliding scale
- FOLLOW UP: Give yourself an honest grade on your understanding of electrical appliances and its environmental impacts compared to natural gas?
- How important do you think electrification is to your property manager?
 - Sliding scale

- Rate each on scale from 1 being not concerned at all to 5 being extremely concerned: How concerned are you about the following issues in your properties:
 - Ease of paying utility bills (having a gas bill versus not)
 - Gas leaks
 - Environmental impact of energy sources
 - Maintenance costs
 - Costs of utilities
- Select all of the following initiatives that you have heard of in Orange County? (check-off format)
 - Leave Your Leaves
 - Solarize the Triangle
 - Electronic Waste Recycling Program
- FOLLOW UP: Did you participate in any of these initiatives? (check-off format)
 - Leave Your Leaves
 - Solarize the Triangle
 - Electronic Waste Recycling Program

Renter Demographic Questions:

- Where do you live?
 - Chapel Hill, Carrboro, Hillsborough, other

- Are your utilities included in rent costs? If yes, are they a flat rate?
 - Yes, flat rate
 - Yes, variable but property manager pays
 - No, I pay utilities
 - Not sure

- Do you pay for your own rent/utilities?
 - Yes, both
 - Yes, just utilities
 - No, I receive outside help for either one or both

FOCUS GROUP QUESTIONS for Property Managers

Thanks so much for taking the time to meet with us today! We're hosting this focus group in partnership with the Orange County Sustainability department through our Social Marketing Campaigns class at UNC-Chapel Hill. Our discussion today will focus on your experience as property owners and renters in Orange County, N.C. as we're gathering information on experiences and opinions related to electrification in Orange County. The goal of the focus group is to understand how property managers like yourself make decisions about the type of appliances to put in their homes, for example gas versus electric. We want to create an open conversation, so feel free to share all of your honest thoughts.

Steps:

1. Introduce moderator and note taker
2. Obtain consent for recording (if recording)
3. Explain the rules:
 - One person will talk at a time
 - There are no wrong answers
 - Please put away your cellphones and computers
 - Confidentiality statement: "We will not identify you by name in our research nor share your answers outside of this project."

QUESTIONS:

Introduce yourself - name, occupation, company,
residence/town

- Can you talk a little bit about your background in being a property manager?
 - Favorite and least favorite parts of the job?
- Are you familiar with electrification? If so, define what it means to you
 - GIVE DEFINITION
 - Electrification means switching from using things like gas or oil to power things with electricity instead!
- Has your company implemented any electrification in your properties?
 - If you have, why did you switch?
 - If so, how many and what did you do?
 - What was this process like?
 - How much did it cost?
 - If you haven't, why not?
- What do you think the benefits of electrification are?
- What barriers do you think there are to electrification?

- What do you think the benefits of electrification are?
- What barriers do you think there are to electrification?
- In any of your properties, have you had any issues with appliances or heating systems?
 - If so, share your experience and the type of appliance?
- How involved is your company in the maintenance of your property?
 - Do you hire your own lawn service?
 - Who does maintenance work?
 - How often do you check on the functionality of appliances and HVAC?
- Do you or your company have any concerns about the future of appliances in your properties?
- Do you or your company have plans to switch to electric appliances in the future?

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Introduce yourself - name, occupation, company, residence/town
2. What type of properties do you own?
3. How long have you been renting?
4. What factors do you think about when deciding to upgrade or maintain your rental properties?
5. What type of appliances (gas or electric) do your rental units currently have for heating (HVAC), cooking, and water heaters?
6. Have you made any recent upgrades to your properties' appliances? If so, what upgrades did you make?
7. Have you considered switching to electric appliances for any of your properties? Why or why not?
8. What are the biggest barriers preventing you from making the switch (e.g., cost, tenant preference, infrastructure changes, lack of incentives)?
9. What state or federal incentives/rebates are you aware of regarding electrification?
10. What do your tenants think about gas versus electric appliances? Have they ever indicated a preference?
11. Do you think switching to electric appliances could make your rental units more attractive to tenants? Why or why not?
12. How do you balance energy efficiency and cost when making property upgrades?
13. Do you have any properties that use fully electric appliances? If yes, what led you to make that decision?
14. Do you factor in the cost of utilities in pricing the rent for the properties?
15. Would a decrease in energy costs for your properties influence how you price your home?
16. Are there differences in the decisions you make about your own home versus the properties you manager?

SCRIPT FOR CALLING PROPERTY MANAGERS

INTRO: Hi there! My name is _____, and I am calling on behalf of the U-N-C Hussman School in partnership with the Orange County Sustainability Office. A team of U-N-C students and I are working on a research project to gauge how the office can best communicate about electric appliances and heating systems to property managers in the area. I am calling because we would love your help with this study and are curious if you would be interested in being a part of a focus group or interview about your decision-making process when choosing appliances for your properties (for example, gas versus electric). As a major property manager, your opinions would be invaluable. Of course, your participation would be completely anonymous and help us better understand the property managers opinions. Is that something you would be interested in?

“YES”: Amazing!! I am so glad. Is there a good email contact that I could have to set up a call with you soon? *collect email*

“NO”: That is completely okay! Would it be okay if I sent you a short survey to fill out instead? It would help us with our research and it’s much less of a time commitment.

→ **“YES”:** Amazing! Is there a good email for that? *collect email*

→ **“NO”:** That is also totally fine. If you don’t mind me asking, and this is my last question:

Do you know of any other property managers in the area that you think would be interested in being a part of our study? *collect names and contacts if available*

APPENDIX

Message Pre-Testing Plan

Designing a successful electrification campaign starts with identifying a target audience, which we determined to be property managers. Over 30 percent of homes in Orange County are rented properties, so this campaign will help target this large percentage of homes. Now it is important to ensure that the messaging we are using is clear and aligned with the property managers decision making process. While property managers control energy related decisions across multiple homes, our research revealed that many are hesitant to invest in electric appliances while they still have working gas appliances.

Creative marketing materials play a crucial role in capturing attention, driving engagement, and effectively communicating key messages in our electrification campaign, "My Next ____ Will Be Electric!" Our campaign materials—including bumper stickers, yard signs, social media graphics, interactive digital ads, and visually compelling print designs—are designed to resonate with diverse audiences by addressing common barriers to electric appliance adoption, such as range anxiety and cost concerns.

APPENDIX

Message Pre-Testing Plan Continued

Insights from our formative research revealed that consumers respond best to relatable, future-focused messaging that personalizes the transition to electric appliances. As a result, our materials incorporate dynamic visuals, bold typography, and clear, benefits-driven language to inspire confidence and excitement about making the switch to electric. Through strategic design and messaging, we empower consumers to see themselves as part of the electric future.

This pre-testing research explores how successfully our campaign materials relay the idea that switching to electric appliances is a smart and strategic move for property managers, even if it's not something they need to do immediately. We want to know if the messaging grabs attention, makes sense, and feels relevant to property managers who are thinking about the long-term future of their properties.

Specifically, we want to answer the following questions: Is the message clear? Does framing the cost as a benefit help change how property managers view electrification? And do our materials encourage them to consider making electric appliances their next purchase? By testing these points, we'll be able to adjust our messaging to make sure it resonates and motivates action.

The participants will include property managers, renters, and home buyers, with an emphasis on those who own and control their homes plus more. Our campaign stresses that individuals do not need to immediately go and buy a new stove or HVAC system, but encourages participants to think about the future of their appliances and home, knowing that their next appliance should be electric.

We will use a survey and informal focus groups to test our marketing materials. The survey will have four different sections to learn more about how our materials grab attention, how understandable they are, how relevant they are, and how persuasive.

Through these questions people will be able to score and/or explain in more depth about their thoughts on the bumper sticker, social media post, yard signs, and overall slogan in general. We are using a survey because it is a method of information gathering that will allow people to share their thoughts anonymously, helping us determine the best way to market switching to electrification.

We will recruit this group of people the same way that we recruited for our formative research. This will be through reaching out on social media (LinkedIn, Instagram, Facebook groups), having Orange County send out the survey, and going in person and spreading the survey. For the informal focus groups/interviews, we will ask about the ads in informal settings such as, students in classes, library, and social settings. This is in order to gather candid opinions on the ads and first reactions. Having in person reactions will be important as people can talk easier about the ads and we can ask follow up questions based on their responses.

To encourage participation and accommodate participants for their time, all individuals who completed the survey will be entered in a giveaway for a chance to win one \$50 Amazon gift card.

The gift card will be emailed to participants 5-7 business days after we email them that they have been chosen. The incentive is intended to compensate for the insights gained from our participants. We will be transparent and disclose the incentive before participation. Participants must complete the entire session and provide a valid email address to receive the incentive. Participants will be contributing to research that supports clean and sustainable energy and potentially gaining insights on how electrification can save them money, which will be another incentive in itself.

Message Pre Testing Survey

Overall Slogan:

“Plan Now, Purchase Later, Power Forward”

Marketing Material 1 (Bumper Sticker):

1. Part 1: Attention Getting

- a. What in this ad caught your eye?
- b. Do you think you would notice this on a car or appliance?

2. Part 2: Comprehension and meaning

- a. What is the main idea that this ad is trying to get across?
- b. Are there any other ideas that the ad is trying to convey?

3. Part 3: Relevance

- a. Who do you think this ad is speaking to?
- b. What makes you think the message is for them?

4. Part 4: Persuasiveness

- a. To what extent do you think this ad would convince people to change their appliance to electric in the future, or think about doing so?
- b. How could this ad be changed to make it more convincing?

Marketing Material 2 (Social Media):

1. Part 1: Attention Getting

- a. What in this ad caught your eye?
- b. Do you think you would notice this while scrolling on social media?

Message Pre Testing Survey

1. Part 2: Comprehension and meaning

- a. What is the main idea that this ad is trying to get across?
- b. Are there any other ideas that the ad is trying to convey?

2. Part 3: Relevance

- a. Who do you think this ad is speaking to?
- b. What makes you think the message is for them?

3. Part 4: Persuasiveness

- To what extent do you think this ad would convince people to change their appliances to electric, or think about it?
- How could these ads be changed to make them more convincing?

Marketing Material 3 (Yard Sign):

- Part 1: Attention Getting
 - What in this sign caught your eye?
 - Do you think you would notice this in someone's yard?
- Part 2: Comprehension and meaning
 - What is the main idea that this sign is trying to get across?
 - Are there any other ideas that the sign is trying to convey?

- Part 3: Relevance
 - Who do you think this sign is speaking to?
 - What makes you think the message is for them?
- Part 4: Persuasiveness
 - To what extent do you think this sign would convince other homes to look into switching their appliances to electric?
 - How could this sign be changed to make them more convincing?