



Welcome to 2025,

So much is happening in our world; locally, nationally and worldwide since we embarked upon this new year just a few weeks ago. In some ways it is hard to process all of this, living here on our beautiful and wintry (aka cold) island, enjoying muted landscapes and beautiful skies.

Here at Healthy Aging Martha's Vineyard, we are looking forward to the progress we can make in 2025 – with your support – to help Older Adults thrive. We will continue to collaborate with our island's Older Adult service agencies and local governments, advocating for Older Adult causes, celebrating Older Adults' contributions and identifying unmet need, bringing new programs to the island to address these needs.

We also want to make it easier for our Older Adult community to access information that is relevant and helpful. Read on to learn more about a local resource that can provide guidance on improving your energy efficiency and contributing to the future sustainability of our Island

Best,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads 'Cindy Trish'.

Cindy Trish
Executive Director
Healthy Aging Martha's Vineyard

Island Energy Programs: Supporting Residents Today and Tomorrow



With renewable energy making headlines and sparking conversations across the island, many residents are seeking clarity about available energy programs and cost-saving resources. To better understand what resources exist currently and the development of these initiatives, Healthy Aging MV recently sat down with representatives from Vineyard Power to learn about programs available to Older Adults in our community, particularly those designed to help manage energy costs and improve home comfort.

A crucial starting point in understanding these programs is knowing how they're funded. "The way these programs are funded is by all the ratepayers in Massachusetts. Every time you pay an electric bill there's a certain line item that says 'energy efficiency,'" explains Luke Lefebber of Vineyard Power. Since all residents contribute to these programs through their utility bills, it makes sense to understand and utilize the services we're already supporting.

While these programs offer valuable benefits, navigating them can seem overwhelming. That's why assistance is available throughout the entire process. "We help people every step of the way, from signing up to get an assessment scheduled to following up to make sure that the assessment was completed, to following up to make sure that they've received a proposal," Lefebber notes. "It can be so disheartening if you're trying to go through these processes and your application gets lost, or you forgot to put in a form."

This support becomes particularly valuable for Older Adults living on fixed incomes, who may qualify for significant assistance. "If you're on social security, and that's your only form of income, you automatically qualify for all these programs just because of maximum benefits you can claim from social security," Lefebber shares. Through these programs, eligible residents can reduce their energy costs by 80-90%, while also improving their home's comfort and efficiency.

The impact of these improvements can be substantial, especially for older homes on the island. "You hear horror stories about many older folks who are living in homes that are super outdated, they're super leaky from an air perspective, so they're drafting cold all the time," Lefebber explains. Available services include no-cost home energy assessments,

insulation work, and weatherization services that can transform these challenging living spaces into comfortable homes.

Beyond individual residences, these programs also support broader community initiatives. The Tisbury Senior Center, for example, is planning to add backup power capabilities to better serve island residents during emergencies. "Tisbury has plans for that building to be sort of an ancillary shelter to the school, particularly for older adult populations," Lefeber notes. "If there is an emergency, we can use that facility as a kitchen... and they have accommodations there to be able to keep people during an emergency."

For those interested in learning more, information is available through multiple channels, with a focus on accessibility for all residents. "For ones that aren't computer savvy, they can always call us to make that appointment too, and they can come to our office instead of doing it via zoom, or we've even gone to people's homes," Lefeber explains. Regular educational sessions are held at island libraries and Councils on Aging, and starting in 2025, new small group discussions called "Energy Open Mic" sessions will offer additional opportunities to learn about available programs and services in an informal setting.

Looking to the Future

At a time when renewable energy dominates public discourse, understanding the long-term impact of these initiatives is crucial. When asked why Older Adults should care about renewable energy, Lefeber emphasizes both personal and community benefits: "Homeowners in the community are a big lever in achieving that goal of becoming 100% renewable and reducing our impacts on climate change." He adds that it's about "stewarding the island into the next generation and doing as much as you can to enable its success in meeting these community-wide climate goals." This perspective highlights how individual participation in energy programs contributes to the island's broader sustainability objectives, creating a legacy of environmental stewardship for future generations.

Interested in learning more?

Call, email, or visit Vineyard Power's website:

Phone: 508-693-3002

Email: thamiris@vineyardpower.com

Website: vineyardpower.com

Educational sessions:

Hillside, January 22nd, 1pm – 3pm

Edgartown Library, January 23rd, 3pm – 4:30pm

Up-Island COA, February 13th, 1pm – 2:30pm

Open Mic Night at Vineyard Power, 151 Beach Road

Open Mic Night, February 12th, 5:30pm – 6:30pm

Open Mic Night, March 12th, 5:30pm – 6:30pm

Sign up for Open Mic Night [HERE](#)

Community Corner: Understanding Housing on MV

Housing decisions affect our ability to age in place. Join our partners at the Martha's Vineyard Commission on January 22nd for a virtual presentation of the 2024 MV Zoning Analysis for Housing Solutions. Learn how current zoning impacts housing options for older adults and discover potential solutions for our island's future.

Click [HERE](#) to learn more!

**HAMV Advocates!!**

Beach Within Reach: An Accessibility Initiative to improve access to our island's beachesThe MV Times recently highlighted our ongoing efforts to make island beaches more accessible to all. Our recent surveys reveal both progress and persistent challenges in improving accessibility. Click [HERE](#) for the article.If you would like to learn more about Beach Within Reach, click [HERE](#) to visit the HAMV website.

