

UCI Health Multi-Facility Water Heater Electrification Project

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UCI Health

Project Summary

In 2025, University of California, Irvine Health (UCI Health) became the **first higher education** institution to complete a project through SoCalREN's **Rural-Hard-to-Reach (HTR) Direct Install Program**. This successful project replaced eleven aging gas water heaters with twelve high-efficiency electric heat pump water heaters (HPWHs) across five of their facilities, including medical laboratories and community health clinics located in Orange and Santa Ana. By eliminating on-site fossil-fuel combustion and reducing energy use intensity, the new HPWHs support UCI Health's long-term decarbonization strategy while improving air quality and system reliability in critical healthcare facilities. As a result, essential facilities—ranging from family health clinics to neurology and women's health centers—now benefit from faster, more dependable hot-water delivery.

The project was fully funded through SoCalREN incentives, with installations completed in just **ten days** and construction finished **less than two months** after initial planning meetings. When early cost estimates exceeded program limits, UCI Health leveraged SoCalREN's contractor network and single-source procurement options to obtain revised quotes, ensuring the project stayed within budget and on schedule.

The upgrades are projected to save more than \$674,000 over the lifetime of the new water heaters. Building on this success, UCI Health plans to explore additional opportunities to electrify water and space heating across its campuses. A milestone for both higher education and SoCalREN, this project demonstrates how impactful energy improvements can be achieved quickly when partners align around shared goals and a commitment to decarbonization.

“

We would not have proceeded with these projects without the available incentives. The full cost coverage made the decision straightforward and highly compelling.

”

Tony Dover, UCI Health Energy Management & Sustainability Officer

Project Overview



\$674,000+

Lifetime energy cost savings



100%

Percent cost covered by SoCalREN incentives



1,241,000+ therms

Lifetime energy savings



1,430+

Cars taken off the road
lifetime kWh savings greenhouse gas equivalency

Project Timeline

SoCalREN guided UCI Health through an efficient and well-coordinated process, with installations across five facilities completed in under **three months**.

- April 2025** Initial project vetting
- May 22, 2025** Eligibility review
- May 30 - June 6, 2025** Job walks and cost quoting
- July 9, 2025** Incentive coverage results shared
- July 16 - 26, 2025** Installations completed
- September 2025** Incentive approval and payment made directly to SoCalREN's contractor



Picture: Heat pump water heaters installed in UCI Health medical facilities, Orange, CA.

SoCalREN Services

Below are the no-cost services SoCalREN provided that led to a successful project!



Energy Survey



Construction Support



Incentive Application



Audit Calculations



Project Management



Single-Source Procurement