

Weatherization Assistance Program

Weatherization Works!

The U.S. Department of Energy's (DOE) Weatherization Assistance Program reduces energy costs for low-income households by increasing the energy efficiency of their homes, while ensuring their health and safety. The program provides energy efficiency services to approximately 100,000 homes every year using DOE funds.

- Weatherization returns \$1.80 in energy savings for every \$1 invested in the program.
- For every \$1 invested by DOE, the program leverages \$1.54 in other federal, state, utility, and private resources.

Eligible Households

Household energy use comprises 22% of total energy consumption in the United States. Americans spend \$230 billion each year on home energy, with low-income households spending a disproportionate share on energy bills.

- Low-income households typically spend 14.2% of their total annual income on residential energy costs, compared with 3.3% for other households.
- The average expenditure in low-income households is estimated to be \$1,800 annually. Low-income families must often cut back on other necessities, such as groceries or medicine, to pay their energy bills.

Thirty-eight million households are eligible for weatherization services. Any household at or below 200% of poverty is considered low-income. However, some eligible households may require services beyond the scope of the Weatherization Program. Just under half of all eligible households are good candidates for weatherization services.



A weatherization crew member blasts insulation into the attic and wall cavities of a client's home.

Impact on Low-Income Americans

Weatherization alleviates the heavy energy burden on low-income households and helps them become self-sufficient.

- Weatherization saves \$437 in heating and cooling costs every year at current prices: Savings are even higher if lighting and appliances are upgraded
- Energy savings average 35% of consumption for the typical low-income home
- Weatherization continues to save money and energy every year
- Weatherization improves health and safety by eliminating energy-related hazards
- In 2010, weatherized homes nationally will save \$2.1 billion for low-income families.

Delivering Services to Low-Income Families

Professionally trained weatherization crews use computerized energy assessments and advanced diagnostic equipment, such as a blower door, manometer, or infrared camera to determine the most cost-effective measures appropriate for each home.

- Typical measures may include installing insulation, sealing ducts, tuning and repairing heating and cooling systems, mitigating air infiltration, and reducing electric base load consumption
- Weatherization crews also perform health and safety tests that may include testing heating units and appliances for combustion safety, carbon monoxide, and gas leaks; assessing moisture damage; checking electrical system safety; replacing unsafe heating and cooling systems; and installing smoke and carbon monoxide detectors.

Impact on Communities

Weatherization helps revitalize communities by spurring economic growth and reducing environmental impact.

- For every \$1 invested, weatherization returns \$2.51 in energy and non-energy-related benefits
- More than 6.3 million homes have been weatherized with DOE and leveraged funding since 1976.

Weatherization:

- Reduces the export of local energy dollars and keeps more money in the community
- Improves energy affordability, making housing more affordable: This reduces cases of homelessness and frequent forced mobility, and lowers demand for public assistance



Weatherization technicians use the blower door test to measure the air tightness of building envelopes and diagnose air leakage problems in a home.

- Decreases electricity generation and resulting pollution: This improves local air quality and reduces adverse health effects, particularly asthma
- Reduces residential and power plant emissions of carbon dioxide, a leading greenhouse gas, by 2.65 metric tons/year per home
- Reduces demand for imported oil: Weatherization decreases national energy consumption by the equivalent of 24.1 million barrels of oil annually.

Funding and Production History

DOE has historically provided core program funding to all 50 states and the District of Columbia, and includes Native American Tribes through formula grants. As of program year 2009, funding is also allocated to the five U.S. territories of American Samoa, Guam, Northern Mariana Islands, Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands. Once DOE awards grants, grantees contract with more than 900 local agencies nationwide. Typical local agencies include community action agencies, other non-profits, and local governments, who deliver services to low-income families.

The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 provided \$5 billion for the Weatherization Assistance Program. As a result, DOE expects that approximately 593,000 homes will be weatherized under the Recovery Act.



A weatherization crew trainer demonstrates the correct method for adjusting a protective mask.

Many grantees use the DOE funding to leverage additional funding sources. Money received from DOE often covers training and technical assistance and administrative needs of the agency; by leveraging additional dollars, the state and local programs increase the services delivered to a home or the number of homes served. Leveraged funds can be credited with increasing our number of families served to 6.4 million over the history of this program.

For More Information

Contact the EERE Information Center at 1-877-EERE-INF or 1-877-337-3463 or visit www.weatherization.energy.gov.