

Setting the Stage for Success

The Weatherization Assistance Program enables low-income families to permanently reduce their energy bills by making their homes more energy efficient. During the last 32 years, the U.S. Department of Energy's (DOE) Weatherization Assistance Program has provided weatherization services to more than 6.4 million low-income families.

New Territory to Tackle

The addition of the U.S. territories into the Weatherization Assistance Program (WAP) offered the WAP team a significant challenge – to get these new programs up and going without much experience on the ground while overcoming the geographical, language and time differences. Not a small feat.

The Project Management Center (PMC) team at the National Energy Technology Laboratory (NETL) started to devise a game plan in Spring 2009 to support Puerto



Photo credit: U.S. Department of Energy

Puerto Rico's goal is to weatherize over 5,500 low-income homes between 2009 and 2012 using both Recovery Act and regular Weatherization Assistance Program funding.

Rico from 1,600 miles away. NETL assembled a National Weatherization Assistance Team ("the Team"), comprised of DOE staff and contractors to assist the Grantee, Energy Affairs Administration (EAA), and the Subgrantee, Infrastructure Financing Authority (La Autoridad para el Financiamiento de la Infraestructura (AFI)), to help develop and get approval for their ARRA and 2009 State Plans.

In June and September 2009, the Team visited Puerto Rico to provide EAA and AFI with technical assistance on program regulations and guidance, program development, and operational logistics. The Team also made a number of site visits to better understand the housing stock as well as various technical weatherization issues that are unique to the island. The Team identified the best measures to focus on in providing the best energy savings potential for the climate and the local housing.

Building the Foundation

The Puerto Rico team was busy during the last quarter of 2009 establishing the infrastructure needed to start weatherizing homes. EAA and AFI received 176 applications for Auditors and 130 applications for Field Monitors (Inspectors). Out of those applications, 50 Auditors and 50 Field Monitors were selected to be hired. AFI also issued a request for trainers to conduct comprehensive Weatherization training for the newly hired staff. After receiving their internal President of Boards of Awards' approval, AFI and EAA have secured Energy Coordinating Agency (ECA), based

"The working relationship between EAA and DOE/NETL has been excellent and has exceeded expectations, as we manage to work as a real team committed to the Puerto Rican people."

Javier Cortes

Energy Affairs Administration (EAA)

out of Philadelphia, PA, as their training company. ECA will conduct the initial training during early February and then will hold a contractor training in March 2010.

Building the Network

Puerto Rico has also started the process to develop their local crew network. For general contractors that will handle minor electrical, plumbing, and other repairs at the homes, the Puerto Rico team will qualify contractors within specific regions and then will have each contractor submit bids per their assigned area. The plan is to have approximately 12 contractor bids. Puerto Rico estimates that each general contractor will have five crews comprised of two persons per crew.

Along with the general contractors, Puerto Rico plans to hire specialized contractors to handle the appliance installations across the territory. Specifically,

- Two contractors will supply and install energy efficient refrigerators.
- Two contractors will supply and install solar water heaters.
- Two contractors will supply and install the energy efficient air conditioners.

Each specialized contractor estimates they will have three 2-person crews. When you add up all of the crew positions together, it equates to over 150 new jobs created through the new Puerto Rico Weatherization program!

Weatherization Priorities for Puerto Rico

	WEATHERIZATION MEASURES
1	Install low-flow showerheads and faucet aerators
2	Install ENERGY STAR qualified compact fluorescent light bulbs (CFLs)
3	Install window or through-the-wall room air conditioners
4	Replace old, inefficient refrigerators with top-freezer or side-by-side refrigerators
5	Install solar water heater (no pump) (1-7 person household)*
6	Install solar water heater with pump (2-7 person household)*
7	Install split ductless room air conditioners
8	Install electric tank water heater (4+ person household)
9	Install electric tank water heater (2-3 person household)
	<i>*Items 5 & 6 are pending a DOE standards decision</i>

Building the Awareness

Another important activity is to build awareness of the Weatherization Assistance Program within the communities and to the priority groups - the elderly, families with children under the age of six, persons with disabilities, and those with a high energy burden in their household.

To support Puerto Rico's outreach and public awareness campaign, the Team created a *Weatherization Assistance Program Overview* document, in both English and Puerto Rican Spanish, along with several other Weatherization related reference materials in Spanish from other states' weatherization programs. These materials are distributed to potential clients to assist them in understanding who is eligible, what work can be performed on their homes and how to apply for assistance.

The public awareness campaign is making quite an impact. On February 1, 2010, Puerto Rico's

Weatherization call center started its operations after brochures and posters were distributed to Municipalities. At the end of the first week, the call center received 1,984 calls with 1,252 qualified appointments for in-person interviews.

The Team also coordinates "status update" conference calls with EAA and AFI every 2-3 weeks as a means to keep in touch regarding their progress and to provide any necessary program guidance or to answer questions.

Through steady planning and support from the National Weatherization Assistance Team, the stage is set for the Puerto Rico Weatherization Assistance Program to succeed!

If questions remain, contact:

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