

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Frequently Asked Questions

What is the Weatherization Assistance Program?

The Weatherization Assistance Program (WAP) is the U.S. Department of Energy's core program for reducing energy costs for low-income families through increased home energy efficiency, while simultaneously ensuring their health and safety.

WAP operates in all fifty states, the District of Columbia, and anticipates servicing the U.S. Territories in PY 2009. The Program serves low-income families in owned or rented homes, whether single-family, multi-family, or mobile.

How is the Weatherization Assistance Program funded?

WAP funding is derived from annual appropriations from Congress to the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE). DOE then provides core program funding to the states through formula grants.

How Does Weatherization Work?

Weatherization crews use computerized energy audits and diagnostic equipment, such as a blower door, manometer, or infrared camera, to determine the most cost-effective measures appropriate for each home. Typical measures include installing insulation in walls, floors, and attics; reducing air infiltration and pressure imbalances; sealing and repairing ducts; and, tuning and repairing heating and cooling units.

Crews use DOE funds to install only those energy-efficiency measures that meet a savings-to-investment ratio of 1:1 and above. DOE funds can be used to address energy-related health and safety problems, or to perform incidental repairs. This approach ensures the program's cost effectiveness.



Families, like this one, benefit from the services provided by the Weatherization Assistance Program.





Weatherization trucks equipped with insulation machines, tools, and materials spread the message that Weatherization *Works!*

Why is WAP so Important?

Low-income households currently spend 17% of their total annual income on energy, compared with 4% for other households. The weatherization measures installed provide long-term relief for low-income families and protect them against future fluctuations in energy prices and supplies. Additionally, by saving the household an average of 21% of their energy bill (amounting to approximately \$413 or more each year), the heavy energy burden on low-income households is lifted and helps them become more self-sufficient.

Weatherization reduces the nation's dependence on foreign oil imports and plays an important role in the nation's energy security. Weatherization reduces national energy demand by the equivalent of 18 million barrels of oil each year.

Weatherization measures reduce average gas space heating by 32% annually.

According to studies conducted in 2005, the average avoided costs during the winter to all households weatherized is nearly \$1.9 billion annually.

Weatherization also improves the economies of low-income communities known as the "multiplier effect." Every \$1 retained in the community produces an estimated \$3 in multiplier benefits. This means increased spending power in low-income families is used on local businesses; an increased value of housing stock in low-income communities, and a significant increase in the number of jobs available to local residents.

What is the expenditure limit per home?

The new adjusted average expenditure limit for Program Year 2008 is \$2,966. Per the Energy Policy Act, the adjusted average can be increased to \$3,149 when renewable measures are applied.

What are the Results?

Weatherization is a cost-effective investment of taxpayer dollars. For every \$1 invested in the Program, Weatherization returns \$1.65 in energy-related benefits.

In the past 31 years, the Program has provided Weatherization services to over 6.2 million low-income families using a combination of DOE and other funds.

The Program produces "non-energy" benefits as well. Non-energy benefits of Weatherization provide an additional \$1.07 per dollar invested in additional to direct energy savings. Weatherization improves local air quality, avoids emissions of greenhouse gases, reduces risk of fires, decreases cases of homelessness, and much more.

Who is Eligible?

Any household at or below 150% of poverty is considered low-income and is therefore eligible for Weatherization services. A state may elect to use the Health and Human Services Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program criteria of 60% of state-median income.

Additionally, a dwelling which contains a member who has received cash assistance payments under Title IV or XVI of the Social Security Act or applicable State or local law at any time during the 12-month period preceding the determination of eligibility for weatherization assistance.

How many households would qualify for Weatherization assistance if there were no limits on the source of funds?

There are over 38 million households whose income levels make them eligible for Weatherization services. The Department estimates that approximately 15 million homes are good candidates for cost-effective Weatherization.

Who Implements the Program?

DOE awards grants to state-level agencies, which then contract with local agencies, usually community action agencies, to deliver Weatherization services to eligible residents. Weatherization programs operate in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, among Native American Tribes, and anticipate serving the U.S. Territories in PY 2009.

State and local agencies leverage core DOE funding with other federal, state, utility, and private resources to weatherize more low-income homes and to deliver more services while in the homes. Every \$1 million of program funding supports 52 direct jobs and additional jobs are created for subcontractors and material suppliers.

What other sources of funding can the Weatherization Assistance Program leverage?

- In many states, the major source of supplementary funding for WAP is the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP).
- Other funding sources include, but are not limited to: Petroleum Violation Escrow settlements, public/private utilities, federal and state rehabilitation programs, rental property owners, etc.

How do individuals apply for the Weatherization Assistance Program?

- Individuals and families apply through their local WAP office.
- Once families are approved for services, professionally trained WAP technicians perform on-site home energy audits using state-of-the-art equipment to identify energy-related issues.
- Crews then make repairs to increase energy efficiency, including installation of insulation, sealing air leaks, or modifying existing heating systems. The work is inspected upon completion to ensure quality compliance. Family members are thoroughly educated on work completed and techniques to ensure energy-efficient living.

What effect does the Weatherization Assistance Program have on local communities?

- Federal investment in WAP supports more than 25,000 direct and indirect jobs within related industries, and creates 52 new jobs for every \$1 million of federal funds invested.
- For every \$1 invested in WAP, Weatherization returns \$2.72 in benefits—\$1.65 in energy-related benefits and \$1.07 in other benefits including reductions of pollution, unemployment, and adverse health concerns.
- Low-income families save an average of \$413 or more each year on their energy bills after their homes have been weatherized. These homes avoid 1.79 tons of carbon dioxide emissions annually, and thereby lessen the need for imported oil.
- By decreasing the amount of personal income spent on home energy, WAP makes housing more affordable, reduces cases of homelessness, lowers the demand for public assistance, and keeps more money in local communities.
- For every \$1 invested, Weatherization returns \$3 in multiplier benefits.

Where can I get additional information on the DOE Weatherization Assistance Program?

- For additional information on the Weatherization Assistance Program please visit our Web site at www.eere.energy.gov/weatherization.

What is the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP)?

The Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) is a U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) funded block grant program that is implemented at the State, Tribal, and Insular Area levels. Grantees serve low income households who seek assistance for their home energy bills. LIHEAP has been operating since 1982 and its purpose is: “to assist low-income households, particularly those with the lowest incomes, that pay a high proportion of household income for home energy, primarily in meeting their immediate home energy needs.”

The program prioritizes funding for those with the “highest home energy needs,” meaning low-income households with a high energy burden and/or the presence of a “vulnerable” individual in the household, such as a young child, disabled person, or frail older individual.

Some forms of assistance available to low-income households through state LIHEAP programs include: financial assistance towards a household’s energy bill, emergency assistance if a household’s home energy service is shut off or about to be shut off, and a range of other energy-related services that states may choose to offer, such as Weatherization improvements, utility equipment repair and replacement, budgeting counseling, and so forth.

What is the difference between WAP and LIHEAP?

- LIHEAP is a block grant, a large sum of money granted by the national government to a regional government with only general provisions as to the way it is to be spent.
- WAP is a formula grant, a large sum of money granted by the national government to states with rules and regulations as to the way it is to be spent.

Where can I get more information on HHS LIHEAP?

- For additional information on the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program please visit the HHS Web site at www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/ocs/liheap/.

A Strong Energy Portfolio for a Strong America

Energy efficiency and clean, renewable energy will mean a stronger economy, a cleaner environment, and greater energy independence for America. Working with a wide array of state, community, industry, and university partners, the U.S. Department of Energy's Office of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy invests in a diverse portfolio of energy technologies.



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EERE Information Center
1-877-EERE-INF (1-877-337-3463)
www.eere.energy.gov