

Memorandum

To: Members of House Ways and Means
From: Ken Schatz, Commissioner, Department for Children and Families
Date: January 22, 2016
Re: Reauthorization of the Weatherization Assistance Program

Thank you for affording us the opportunity to speak to the re-authorization of the Weatherization Assistance Fund today. We support re-authorizing the Fuel Gross Receipts tax, the primary funding source for the Weatherization Assistance Program. We also support eliminating the rebates to utility companies.

Attached to this memo, please find an overview of the program.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to reach out to Karen Vastine, the Legislative Liaison for DCF: Karen.vastine@vermont.gov.



Weatherization Assistance Program Overview

The Vermont Low Income Weatherization Assistance Program creates warmer, safer, and more energy efficient homes. Weatherization is an anti-poverty program that puts money saved through energy savings back into the pockets of low income Vermonters.

Service:

- **Efficiency Coaching** on energy saving behaviors and upgrade of electrical efficiency (for all recipients including those on waitlist)
- **One Touch Screening & Referral** for health and social service programs, such as the Vermont lead-based paint program, Head Start, or aging services
- **Energy Audit** of home to identify where cost effective energy efficiency improvements can be made – including blower door testing, infra-red scan and inspection of attics, knee walls, basements and crawl spaces
- **Energy Renovation** such as insulation and sealing up drafts.
- **Health & Safety Improvements** for home owners receiving Weatherization, such as improving ventilation, addressing carbon monoxide and unsafe heating issues.
- Average cost of job: \$8,500

Impact:

- 7,708 homes weatherized in the past 6 years.
- 750 homes to be weatherized in FY 2016
- Estimated 20% energy savings per home

Who: Vermont homeowners and renters with household income below 80% of area median income, priority is given to those who are:

- Fuel Assistance (LIHEAP) Clients
- Household income is less than 60% of the state or county median income
- High energy intensity homes
- Families with children under 6
- People who are elderly and/or are living with a disability (SSI/SSDI)

Program Structure:

Weatherization services are provided statewide by four Community Action Agencies and one non-profit organization. The statewide program is administered by the Department for Children & Families Office of Economic Opportunity, which monitors programs for effectiveness and provides ongoing training and technical assistance to ensure quality.

Program Budget (FY2016)*:

US Department of Energy	\$1,000,000
Home Weatherization Assistance Fund (Fuel Gross Receipts Tax)	\$7,000,000
TOTAL	\$8,000,000

* This does not include the costs for the Office of Economic Opportunity Administration of the Program

Weatherization and LIHEAP:

Weatherization makes homes more efficient, LIHEAP (Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program) provides a fuel assistance benefit to households. LIHEAP recipients are prioritized for Weatherization allowing them to maximize their benefit.

Weatherization Assistance Program and other Home Efficiency Programs: The Weatherization Assistance Program is the only program providing 100% of services to low income individuals and families at no cost.

"We never leave an uninsulated surface." - Geoff Wilcox, director since 2010