

Accelerate the Weatherization of Vermonters' Homes

Weatherizing our homes and businesses in Vermont is an urgent need for our economy, affordability, and our climate. Weatherization supports thousands of jobs, saves Vermonters millions of dollars every year, and is a foundation of our state's comprehensive energy plan.

We ask the Vermont General Assembly and Governor Phil Scott to heed the recommendation of the Governor's Climate Action Commission to **double the number of low- and moderate-income homes weatherized per year starting in 2020**. This would take us from roughly 2,000 homes weatherized to 4,000 per year. This achievable and modest step forward would leverage the existing services of Weatherization Agencies that serve low-income Vermonters, private contractors who serve moderate-to-higher income Vermonters, and the incentives and services offered statewide through Efficiency Vermont.

Why double low-income weatherization, and why now?

1. Weatherization keeps money in our state's economy.

According to the Energy Action Network's 2018 Annual Report, 78 cents of every dollar spent on fossil fuels leaves Vermont, equating to nearly \$1.5 billion per year.

2. Weatherization supports jobs and grows our economy. According to the 2018 US Energy and Employment Report, over 10,900 Vermonters are employed in energy efficiency, with over half working in construction, manufacturing, and trades. Every dollar spent on weatherization stays in Vermont and supports local jobs in the building trades.

3. Weatherization helps the most vulnerable

Vermonters, those who bear the highest burden of energy costs. Many Vermonters spend over \$2,000 per year to heat their homes. For those living in fuel poverty, this can equal 5-10% of their annual incomes, sourced by fuel oil and propane.

4. Weatherization reduces greenhouse gas emissions.

According to the Energy Action Network's 2018 Annual Report, 80% of Vermont's heating comes from fossil fuels. Weatherizing an additional 60,000 homes (as required by statute) would remove 340,000 metric tons of carbon dioxide from the atmosphere, the equivalent to removing 72,805 cars from the road for a single year.

5. We are woefully behind in meeting our state's

climate commitments to weatherize 60,000 homes by 2017 and 80,000 by 2022. According to the most recent report issued by the Department of Public Service, in the ten years since the state's goals were set in 2007, we have weatherized over 25,400 homes, over half of which were low-income.





What steps must be taken in 2019?

As a start, we ask the Legislature to reauthorize the current funding sources for the low-income Weatherization Assistance Programs offered to Vermonters with incomes at or below 80% of HUD Area Median Income.

Next, we ask the Legislature to double the number of low- and moderate-income homes weatherized, focusing on customers earning up to 120% of median income, as recommended by the Governor's Climate Action Commission.

We recognize that these modest advancements – while achievable from a market and workforce standpoint – are not sufficient in meeting our state commitments to affordability and efficiency. However, it's a step in the right direction – one we must take in 2019.

Lead organizations working on this initiative that you can contact for additional information include:

Building Performance Professionals Association
Capstone Community Action
NeighborWorks of Western Vermont - Heat Squad
Energy Futures Group
Renewable Energy Vermont
Vermont Affordable Housing Coalition
Vermont Natural Resources Council
Vermont Conservation Voters
Vermont Public Interest Research Group
Vermont Businesses for Social Responsibility
Efficiency Vermont
Vermont Climate and Health Alliance