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Families benefit from 40 years of weatherization program

With more than 600,000 Michigan homes weatherized since 1976, Michigan Community Action is marking Weatherization Month in October and 40 years of helping families reduce their energy costs.

"Weatherization helps low-income families get closer to economic self-sufficiency," says Kate White, MCA executive director. "As families spend less on their heating bills, they free up money that can be used for other necessities, such as groceries, education and job training."

Community Action Agencies administer the federal Weatherization Assistance Programs (WAP), creating job opportunities for local contractors and workers. WAP began in 1976 to help low-income American families save millions of dollars in heating and cooling costs and provide an economic boost in local communities.

By repairing windows and doors, installing insulation and weather stripping, Michigan's WAP helps low-income Michigan homeowners and renters reduce their energy usage by 15 to 20 percent, saving residents an average of \$250 to \$450 per year in heating, cooling and electrical costs. The program helps improve housing stock and neighborhood housing values. Most importantly, WAP improves residents' health and safety, reducing hospitalizations and missed work and school days.

Founded in 1975, MCA serves its 29 member agencies throughout Michigan to strengthen their capacity to alleviate the causes and circumstances of poverty.