



ISSUE BRIEF: Weatherization

Weatherization works for Michigan's economy by helping low income families stretch their budgets and providing local jobs to contractors

Every dollar spent on weatherization helps low-income families become more self-sufficient.

Michigan's Weatherization Assistance Program (WAP) provides free home energy audits, energy conservation counseling and weatherization services to low-income Michigan homeowners and renters, to help them reduce their energy usage and lower their monthly utility bills.

According to national studies, energy usage for households that receive weatherization services generally decreases 15 to 20 percent. "As a result, utility bills generally decrease on average about \$250 to \$400 per year. In 2013, 2,910 single-family homes in Michigan were weatherized using a combination of **U.S. Department of Energy** funds and federal **Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP)** funds. Weatherization also improves the state's housing stock which, in turn, improves the surrounding neighborhood and benefits the entire community.

Since the WAP program began in 1977, more than 600,000 homes have been weatherized in Michigan. Every \$1 invested generates \$4.50 in energy savings and non-energy benefits, according to a 2015 national evaluation of WAP programs by the Oak Ridge National Laboratory.

Community Action Agencies' Role

Michigan's network of 29 Community Action Agencies provides weatherization services to low-income residents throughout the entire state. Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) disperses federal WAP dollars to local community action agencies and other nonprofits to assist households that meet the income requirements.

Trained and licensed inspectors assess all eligible dwellings for energy loss and possible conservation needs before contractors can provide services. Typical services include repairing windows and doorways, installing insulation, and using weather stripping to reduce air leakage.

Funding

Weatherization funding in Michigan comes from the U.S. Department of Energy and LIHEAP through the Department of Health and Human Services. Michigan's 2015 federal allocation for WAP was \$12.8 million, down from \$15.2 million in 2004. Following the passage of HB 4544 in 2014, up to \$6 million is dedicated for WAP from the state's annual LIHEAP allocation.

Eligibility is based on household income and federal or state poverty guidelines. Recipients of the Family Independence Program (FIP) administered by the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) or those who receive Supplemental Security Income (SSI) automatically qualify for services.

To learn more about the program or to be considered for weatherization services, residents should contact their local Community Action Agency, which can be found on the Michigan Community Action website www.michigancommunityaction.org.