

Weatherization Shines in California

In the 1800s, miners rushed to California to find gold. Today, tourists flock to see attractions like the Golden Gate Bridge, Redwood National Forest, and Hollywood movie stars. California also commands attention for its proactive efforts to find energy efficiency solutions to energy price and supply constraints. Low-income families are particularly vulnerable to volatile energy markets: they typically spend 14% of their total annual income on energy, compared with 3.5% for other households. To alleviate this burden, California partners with the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) to implement the Weatherization Assistance Program (Weatherization). Weatherization reduces energy costs for low-income families by improving the energy efficiency of their homes, while ensuring their health and safety.

California's Department of Community Services and Development (CSD) administers the state's Weatherization Program and 44 local agencies deliver weatherization services to eligible residents throughout the state. California leverages core program funding from DOE to secure additional funding from the state and utilities. In 1999, California weatherized 3,090 homes with DOE funds and an additional 19,000 homes with other federal and leveraged funds.

A BRIDGE TO ENERGY SOLUTIONS

The Golden Gate Bridge is the product of a visionary collaboration that defied traditional approaches to bridge building. When it first opened, less than 3.5 million cars crossed per year; today, this figure has risen to over 40 million cars per year. Weatherization began as a low-cost program that emphasized temporary measures like covering windows with plastic. Today, weatherization crews use a computerized energy audit to determine the most cost-effective measures for each home. Additional diagnostic tools, such as a blower door, are used to identify and mitigate air infiltration, duct leaks, and pressure imbalances. Crews also test gas furnaces and appliances for carbon monoxide, an odorless, colorless gas that can be deadly in large concentrations.

NATIONAL WEATHERIZATION PROGRAM

Homes weatherized in 1999	68,000
DOE allocations in 1999	\$135 million
Average annual energy cost savings per household	\$300
Average space heating savings	25-30%
Energy benefits returned for every \$1 invested	\$2.10
Jobs supported	7,000

CALIFORNIA

Homes weatherized in 1999 (with DOE \$)	3,090
DOE funding in 1999	\$3.7 million
Clients served in 1999	5,943
Elderly	17%
People with disabilities	10%
Families with children	73%

Typical weatherization measures include installing insulation, air sealing, and tuning and repairing heating and cooling systems. Clients are also educated on basic energy efficiency practices, and instructed on the proper use and maintenance of the measures installed.

A GOLDEN OPPORTUNITY

Weatherization helps low-income families become self-sufficient by offering a hand-up, not a handout. This is especially true for the Weatherization and Energy-Efficient Rehabilitation (WEER) Program, a partnership between CSD and the California Conservation Corps that funds rehabilitation and weatherization services for low-income homes. The program also provides on-the-job training to low-income youths who participate in basic weatherization activities. New recruits, called corpsmembers, also assist local service providers in administrative work. This program provides valuable job skills, which can lead them to new job opportunities. Due to its incredible success, California anticipates expanding this program to help address the increasing demand for weatherization services in the state.

THE AWARD GOES TO...

Safeguarding the health and safety of low-income families is a priority for the Weatherization Program. California was the first state to integrate lead-safe work practices into weatherization services. CSD detailed these practices in a Lead Hazard Control Program to help train California weatherization agencies. The program provides information on purchasing lead-safe equipment, incorporating lead-safe practices into an existing program, and increasing program monitoring and inspections. The program aims to increase the number of energy-efficient, lead-safe homes for low-income households and to ensure a safer work environment for weatherization crews. In 1999, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) honored California's Lead Hazard Control Program with a Best Practices Award.

A FOUR-STAR PROGRAM

Charles and Thalia Meyers* live in a house that used a woodburning stove as the only heating source. For many years, this situation was tolerable. However, when Thalia's asthma worsened, the Meyers contacted the San Bernardino Community Services Department for help. Weatherization crews immediately recognized the need for a better heating system. An audit review proved the stove emitted large quantities of smoke and carbon monoxide, and the house had serious air leakage problems. The crew replaced the faulty heating system and sealed the doors and windows. Now the Meyers breathe easier in their warm, safe home.



To safeguard this family's health and safety, Weatherization used leveraged funds to install a new heating system.

By improving energy efficiency in low-income homes, Weatherization

creates benefits for individuals and communities. Weatherization reduces energy costs for low-income families and helps them to become more self-sufficient. This benefits the community by keeping dollars in the local economy that would typically be exported out to pay for energy. Weatherization also creates jobs for more than 225 energy professionals in California.

WEATHERIZATION WORKS!

Weatherization produces an impressive range of benefits for low-income households and communities. Nationally, for every \$1 invested in the program, Weatherization returns \$2.10 in energy-related benefits. Weatherization measures reduce national energy consumption and curb demand for imported oil. Weatherization works for California and America!

**Names have been changed to protect the privacy of the subjects.*



TO LEARN MORE ABOUT THE WEATHERIZATION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM, CONTACT:

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Visit the Weatherization Web site at: www.eren.doe.gov/buildings/weatherization_assistance
or call the Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy Clearinghouse at: 1-800-DOE-3732

