

Weatherization: A Savvy Investment for Louisiana

In 1803, America purchased nearly 600 million acres of land from France for \$15 million. The Louisiana Purchase was considered a savvy investment for America. Thirteen states were carved out of this expansive territory, including Louisiana. Today, Louisiana spends more than \$15 million a year just on energy. While the state ranks second in the nation for total energy production, many residents still struggle to cope with mounting energy bills. Low-income families in particular bear a heavy energy burden. To alleviate this situation, Louisiana partners with the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) to deliver the Weatherization Assistance Program (Weatherization). Weatherization reduces energy costs for low-income households by increasing the energy efficiency of their homes, while ensuring their health and safety.

PAYING A HIGH PRICE

Nearly one-fifth of Louisiana's population falls below the poverty line. These low-income households typically spend 14% of their total annual income on energy, compared with 3.5% for other households. This burden becomes even more unmanageable when energy prices soar or summer temperatures swelter. Low-income families often have to cut back on other necessities to pay their energy bills. Many families face the painful decision of paying for food or fuel. Weatherization averts this difficult choice by reducing a household's total energy costs. Weatherization measures provide a permanent boost to the household's budget.

Louisiana's Weatherization Program prioritizes services to the elderly, people with disabilities, and families with children. These low-income households are often on fixed incomes or rely on income assistance programs, and are most vulnerable to volatile changes in energy markets. Weatherization measures offer long-term relief for low-income families and provide a buffer against future fluctuations in supply and price.

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

LOUISIANA

Homes weatherized in 1999 (with DOE \$)	396
DOE funding in 1999	\$1 million
Clients served in 1999	1,604
Elderly	25%
People with disabilities	20%
Families with children	44%

The Department of Natural Resources administers Louisiana's Weatherization Program and a network of local agencies delivers energy efficiency services to eligible residents in every parish. In 1999, Louisiana weatherized 396 low-income homes with DOE funding, assisting more than 1,600 individuals.

Weatherization crews use energy audits and advanced diagnostic equipment, such as the blower door, to determine the most cost-effective energy efficiency measures appropriate for each home. Louisiana crews also test space heaters and cooking appliances for carbon monoxide, an odorless, colorless gas that can be deadly in large quantities. Typical weatherization services include installing insulation and mitigating heat loss through windows, doors, and other infiltration points.



Louisiana crews use the blower door to identify and mitigate air infiltration.

IMPRESSIVE RATE OF RETURN

The Louisiana Purchase is considered one of the best real estate buys of all time. Thomas Jefferson negotiated the deal with Napoleon and purchased the land from France for an average of four cents per acre. America has realized an invaluable return on this early investment. The Weatherization Program also demonstrates an impressive rate of return. Nationally, for every \$1 invested in the program, Weatherization returns \$2.10 in energy-related benefits.

Weatherization creates a vast range of energy, economic, and environmental benefits. 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. Every \$1 retained in the community produces an estimated \$3 in multiplier benefits.

Reducing residential energy demand decreases electricity generation and associated power plant emissions, a significant source of air pollution. Helping low-income families lower their energy consumption improves local air quality and reduces adverse health effects, particularly asthma. Weatherization measures also reduce annual emissions of carbon dioxide, a leading greenhouse gas, by an average of one metric ton per weatherized home.

Louisiana prides itself on the professionalism and courtesy of its workforce. Weatherization crews receive technical training at national conferences, regional training meetings, and in the field. These skilled technicians provide comprehensive energy efficiency solutions for low-income families and serve as a resource to the community. Local agencies can bridge the service delivery gap between federal, state, and community programs and agencies.

WEATHERIZATION WORKS!


The Louisiana Purchase played an integral role in our nation's security. With the acquisition, America nearly doubled its territory and became a world power. Today, Weatherization contributes to the nation's energy security by reducing consumption of imported oil and keeping more money in the local economy. Weatherization works for Louisiana and America!



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

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