

NH COMMUNITY ACTION AGENCIES Weatherization Assistance Program

The Community Action Agencies (CAAs) are the sub grantees of the Department of Energy (DOE) Weatherization Assistance Program. The State of New Hampshire received approximately \$23 million dollars of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) funding for the term beginning April 1, 2009 to March 31, 2012. The CAAs are also recipients of electric (CORE Program) and natural gas utility energy efficiency funding at an average of approximately \$3 million per year. The CAAs also are able to leverage additional funding sources through other programs such as the Single Family Rehab Program (housing rehab) and Lead Abatement Program. In 2009 the CAAs production with DOE funding included a 95% collaboration rate with other funding

These Programs directly relate to RCI 1.2 which is the recommended action of maximizing energy efficiency in existing residential buildings with a target of low income clients (200% federal poverty guideline (fpg), or less)

On April 1, 2009 DOE increased the income guidelines from 185% fpg to 200% fpg and the average investment per household was raised from \$2800 to \$6500. This allowed the CAAs to accomplish better household energy savings with the increased funding and average allowable cost per household. Savings are now approaching an average of 25% to 30% of energy usage reduction per household where they were in the 10% to 15% range prior to the ARRA funding. With the ARRA funding the CAAs were able to increase production by doubling the number of state certified auditors, training of new contractors, purchasing of vehicles and equipment for crew based CAAs, improving technology and weatherization methods for increased savings. To date, the CAAs have employed 72 new positions within the Agencies and retained or added a total of approximately 220 contractors (individual workers). The current goal of the CAAs as filed with the DOE is 1600 households per year but is expected to surpass the 2000 goal.

Many of the current success stories were highlighted with a press event with Governor Lynch at a client's house. A press event with Senator Shaheen at a client's house <http://www.concordmonitor.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20100126/NEWS01/126035> and a section aired on Channel 9 Chronicle at a client's house that showed the "art of auditing" as shown on the link. <http://www.wmur.com/chroniclevideo/22229053/index.html>

The challenge to the enhanced expansion was to meet the unit goals while maintaining quality and maximizing energy savings. This involved a tremendous amount of training for the new auditors and new contractors that needed to be educated and trained with new methods to meet DOE requirements. Also the ARRA release of production funds did not happen until late July due to the Department of Labor and the new Davis Bacon rates. Almost 6 months was lost from production while waiting for a release of funds. The New Hampshire CAAs were able to make up ground and meet production goals. New Hampshire is currently number 11 in the country for production goals.

The continued implementation will be an issue after 4/1/12 as this is when the ARRA funding is complete. It is the goal of the CAAs to begin exploring avenues for sustained or increased funding to maintain the increased infrastructure in the weatherization field for the low income clientele. There is also an option to continue weatherization with non low income home owners if need be. As the Climate Action Plan calls for 30,000 homes per year to be weatherized the CAAs will be an important partner in reaching this goal. Through the CAA delivery programs more than 120,000 family members are recipients. This is an appreciable percentage of the state population and a great avenue for education and energy awareness (RCI 4.6)