

Weatherization Plays a Starring Role in Mississippi

Mississippi is the birthplace of a wealth of stars, from “The King of Rock and Roll” Elvis Presley and talk show maven Oprah Winfrey to Nobel Prize-winning author William Faulkner and Jim Henson, creator of the Muppets. These self-made celebrities propelled themselves from relative obscurity to the national spotlight by tapping creative resources. Mississippi boasts another local resource that employs innovative approaches to improve standards of living for low-income families across the state. The Weatherization Assistance Program (Weatherization) reduces energy costs for low-income households by increasing the energy efficiency of their homes, while ensuring their health and safety. Mississippi partners with the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) to implement the program.

SETTING THE STAGE

Low-income families bear a disproportionate energy burden. These households typically spend 14% of their total annual income on energy, compared with 3.5% for other households. Rising energy prices compound this heavy burden. Low-income families often have to cut back on other necessities to pay their energy bills. Weatherization measures reduce home energy consumption, which lowers the total energy bill and improves the household’s self-sufficiency.

Mississippi’s abundant rainfall and steamy summer temperatures can create an uncomfortable, sticky environment. Many residents depend on sophisticated cooling systems to keep their homes comfortable. However, low-income families typically occupy older housing stock, which lacks adequate cooling capabilities. Many are unable to afford the high utility bills that result from running the air conditioner. These households often rely on a single fan to circulate air or they suffer without any relief. Weatherization measures improve the energy efficiency of a low-income family’s home, making it easier to keep cool in the summer and stay warm in the winter.

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

MISSISSIPPI

Homes weatherized in 1999 (with DOE \$)	362
DOE funding in 1999	\$960,216
Clients served in 1999	624
Elderly	47%
People with disabilities	19%
Families with children	38%

*Percentages reflect some instances of households occupied by more than one priority group.

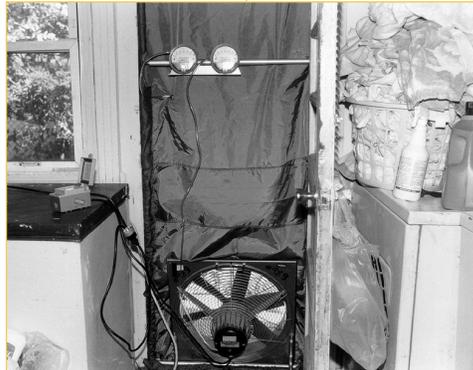
Severe heat and humidity pose a serious health risk for the elderly, people with disabilities, and children. Mississippi’s Weatherization Program prioritizes services to these households, due to their increased health risk, and also because these families are typically on fixed incomes and are highly vulnerable to energy price increases. Weatherization measures provide long-term relief for low-income families and protect them from future fluctuations in energy prices and supplies.

INNOVATIVE PRODUCTION

Mississippi's Department of Human Services administers the Weatherization Program and a network of 11 local agencies delivers energy efficiency services to every county in the state. Weatherization crews use computerized energy audits and advanced diagnostic equipment, such as a blower door, to determine the most cost-effective energy efficiency measures appropriate for each home. Mississippi crews also test heating units and appliances for carbon monoxide, an odorless, colorless gas that can be deadly in large quantities.

Typical weatherization services for single-family and mobile homes include installing insulation; sealing and repairing ducts; cleaning and tuning heating systems; and mitigating heat loss through windows, doors, and other infiltration points. Clients are also educated on the proper use and maintenance of the installed measures.

Mississippi 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. Weatherization crews also serve as an energy efficiency resource to the community. Local agencies can bridge the service delivery gap between federal, state, and community programs and agencies. Mississippi has partnered with Habitat for Humanity, local utilities, private companies, and others to expand Weatherization Program services and increase the program's impact.



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

FOUR STAR PERFORMANCE

Mississippi encourages self-sufficiency not only for individuals but the community as well. Weatherization measures create energy, economic, and environmental benefits for the entire community. Weatherization reduces the export of local energy dollars; up to 80% of the money spent on energy in low-income communities immediately leaves the area. Keeping money in the community spurs local economic growth and creates additional jobs. Every \$1 retained in the community produces an estimated \$3 in multiplier benefits.

In addition, reducing residential energy demand decreases electricity generation and avoids emissions of nitrogen oxides, sulphur dioxide, and other pollutants. This improves local air quality and reduces adverse health effects, particularly asthma. Weatherization measures also mitigate residential and power plant emissions of greenhouse gases. Weatherization reduces annual carbon dioxide emissions by an average of one metric ton per weatherized home or one-third the emissions of an average automobile.

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 dampen demand for imported oil. Weatherization works for Mississippi 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

