

HUD and DOE Partner to Streamline the Weatherization Process

On May 6, 2009 the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) announced that the two agencies have signed a [Memorandum of Understanding \(MOU\)](#) to coordinate the use of \$16 billion (\$11.2 Billion for DOE and \$4.75 Billion for HUD) in funds appropriated by Congress through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009.

These funds include \$4.5 Billion in HUD capital funds for public and Indian housing and \$250 Million to retrofit privately-owned federally-assisted housing. DOE received \$5 Billion to fund the Weatherization Assistance Program, \$3.2 Billion for Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grants for cities, counties, states and Indian Tribes, and \$3.1 Billion for the State Energy Program, and additional funds for other programs.

This partnership is an important step forward in streamlining and coordinating federal weatherization programs. These efforts will make it easier for low-income families to weatherize their homes which will save money for working families, create tens of thousands of new green jobs, and will lower the carbon footprint of these families.

The MOU is intended to streamline the

weatherization eligibility process for residents in approximately 1.1 Million public housing units, another 1.2 Million privately owned federally-assisted units, and some 950,000 units financed with Low Income Housing Tax Credits (LIHTC).

This collaboration will help to minimize administrative barriers while simplifying the process for residents of HUD public and assisted housing that are seeking to weatherize their homes under the DOE's Weatherization Assistance Program.

HUD Secretary Shaun Donovan said "HUD is committed to making public housing more green, while keeping it as affordable as possible for working families, particularly in these challenging economic times. This partnership will ensure that HUD and DOE together can play a significant role in the Administration's goal to weatherize one Million homes, while at this same time serving a population in need. I am proud of the work our agencies have done and look forward to a continued partnership with Secretary Steven Chu and DOE to make all housing affordable and energy efficient."

The DOE's Weatherization Assistance Program (under part A of Title IV of the Energy Conservation and Production Act (42

U.S.C. 6861 et seq.)) is the largest residential energy conservation program in the Nation and operates in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, the U.S. Territories, and on several Native American reservations (collectively, "States"). This program provides funding for the improvement of the energy efficiency of low-income dwellings, often employing advanced technologies, thereby reducing our country's carbon footprint and dependence on foreign oil, while decreasing the cost of energy for American families in need. The program presently provides weatherization assistance to more than 100,000 homes each year, but with the substantial funding increase under the Recovery Act, significantly more weatherization projects may be undertaken in an effort to achieve the President's goal.

HUD and DOE wish to facilitate the use of Weatherization Assistance Program funds in HUD Qualified Housing and in the LIHTC projects, where such assistance is consistent with the Weatherization Assistance Program and can benefit residents. This may also help achieve economies of scale, public housing, assisted housing, and LIHTC projects to lower energy costs, train and increase the industry workforce, and further the purposes of the Recovery Act.

DOE and HUD Seek Your Input

DOE is publishing a notice of Proposed Rulemaking in the Federal Register that is intended to reduce the review and verification burden related to income verification, rent increases and property enhancement criteria under the Weatherization Assistance Program for certain properties identified by HUD. The notice of Proposed Rulemaking provides for a 30-day comment period. To read the Proposed Rule and offer comments, please visit the Federal eRulemaking Portal at www.regulations.gov and follow the instructions for submitting comments. Comments should reference the regulatory information number (RIN) 1904-AB97. Comments with this RIN in the subject area may also be submitted to WXHUDNOPR@ee.doe.gov. **Comments are due by July 6, 2009.**

The Proposed Rule focuses on the weatherization and retrofit of the following properties:

- (1) Public housing;
- (2) Project-based Section 8 assisted housing, Section 202 Supportive Housing for the Elderly, Section 811 Supportive Housing for Persons with Disabilities; and
- (3) Certain Low Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) properties.

These properties are collectively defined as "HUD

Qualified Assisted Housing" in the Proposed Rule. Section 221(d)3 and d(5), and Section 236 Below Market Interest Rate properties without project-based assistance are not addressed by the Proposed Rule. Section 8 tenant-based rental vouchers are also not addressed.

The Proposed Rule, if made final, would eliminate duplicative income verification requirements for residents of public housing, qualified assisted housing, and LIHTC projects. To be eligible for weatherization assistance, a unit must be occupied by a family whose income is below 200 percent of the federal poverty level; at least 66 percent of the units in multifamily buildings (50 percent for properties with fewer than 5 units) must be occupied by families who fall below this income threshold.

Under the Proposed Rule, states would be able to accept HUD's annual verification procedures for resident incomes in public and assisted housing, as well as income verification procedures in LIHTC properties, as evidence of their eligibility for the weatherization program. HUD would provide a listing, to be posted on DOE's web site, of all properties where at least 66 percent of the residents have income below the DOE income threshold (50 percent of the residents for smaller properties). The presence of a property on this list would provide automatic evidence of

its eligibility for weatherization assistance.

The Proposed Rule, if made final, would not require states or local Weatherization agencies (LWAs) to provide weatherization funds to income-qualified public housing, assisted housing, or LIHTC properties. The state and/or the LWA retain the authority to set priorities for the use of weatherization funds. The Proposed Rule simply would eliminate key barriers that have historically constrained or prevented states and their local weatherization agencies in utilizing weatherization funds in multifamily buildings.

Under the procedures outlined in the Proposed Rule, HUD would provide a list of income-eligible HUD Qualified Assisted Housing projects and LIHTC properties that, based on HUD data, would meet the income eligibility requirements under the Weatherization Assistance Program. This list would be posted on DOE's web site. Note that appearance on the list simply would mean that the building is income-eligible for the weatherization assistance program – not that the building automatically qualifies for weatherization assistance. Funding for individual projects will be a function of state or local weatherization priorities, and funding availability.

CONTINUED ON P2

HUD and DOL Partner for Green Jobs

On February 17, 2009, President Obama signed the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (the "Recovery Act" or "Act"). Through the Recovery Act, the President's Administration is making a substantial investment -- \$13.6 billion in U.S. Housing and Urban Development's (HUD) housing and community development programs and \$3.9 billion in employment and training programs administered by the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL). These investments reflect the principal goals of the Act, namely to generate jobs in the near term, lay the foundation for long term economic growth (e.g., through investments in areas like energy efficiency) and mitigate the impact of the economic downturn on distressed communities and the most vulnerable populations in our country.

HUD Secretary Shaun Donovan and DOL Secretary Hilda Solis are working to ensure that this fiscal boost lays the foundation for future growth for all of our communities. Secretary Donovan and Secretary Solis have come together to create a partnership between the two agencies to bolster pathways to training and employment for residents of HUD housing as a part of both Recovery Act Programs.

As a first step in this partnership, HUD and DOL are encouraging local Workforce Investment Boards (WIBs) and Public Housing Agencies (PHAs) to work collaboratively to identify opportunities to train and place public housing residents into jobs created by PHAs' Recovery-funded capital improvement projects. They hope that this collaboration will help residents to find training programs and sustainable employment in the green jobs sector that will be created by the Administration's investments in energy efficiency, Labor's workforce training investments and HUD's investment in public housing through the Public Housing Capital Fund.

Through their One-Stop Career Centers, WIBs offer job training programs and other services that improve the employment prospects of adults, youth, low-income individuals, and dislocated workers, and can be a valuable tool to assist PHAs with meeting the statutory and regulatory requirements of Section 3 of the Housing and Urban Development Act of 1968. Section 3 requires PHAs to direct new employment, training, and contracting opportunities created during the expenditure of HUD funds to low- and very low-income residents of the community where the funds are spent, particularly those receiving housing assistance, and certain businesses that substantially employ these persons.

HUD and DOL encourage PHAs and WIBs to reach out to each other and engage in a dialogue about how they can work together to create green employment opportunities for residents of HUD housing. At a minimum, PHAs and their contractors should list any job openings with their WIB and its One Stop System. WIBs and PHAs should cooperatively engage in outreach activities to inform public housing residents of these job opportunities and corresponding training offerings in their communities. In addition, recognizing that residents of public housing may have significant barriers to employment, the WIBs and PHAs should work collaboratively to identify partners to ensure that quality work supports are in place.

We want to hear from you!
Please send us nominations for projects to be highlighted in the EcoWise success stories.



Contact us at ecowise@deval.us

CONTINUED FROM P1

In addition to meeting the income requirements, multifamily buildings must also meet additional requirements: the benefits that accrue from weatherization projects must be targeted to low-income residents who pay for utility and other energy-related expenses. DOE is seeking comment regarding current practices and experience. Tenants who reside in weatherized units cannot be subjected to rent increases unless it can be demonstrated that the increases are not a direct result of such improvements. The Proposed Rule, if made final, would deem HUD projects eligible under this requirement. No "undue or excessive enhancement" can occur to the value of the property. States may also require a matching contribution from multifamily building owners. The Proposed Rule, if made final, would deem HUD projects eligible under this requirement.

DOE will hold a public meeting on June 18, 2009 from 11 am to 5 pm EDT to discuss the Proposed Rule. The meeting is open to the public and will also be available as a webinar/conference call.

For additional information contact Gil Sperling at Gil.Sperling@ee.doe.gov or Chris Calamita at Christopher.Calamita@hq.doe.gov. For information of the agenda, bridge line and Web link for the conference please send an email to wxhudnopr@ee.doe.gov.

For information on HUD's Economic Recovery Act programs, please visit www.hud.gov/recovery; for information on DOE's weatherization program, go to www.eere.energy.com/wip.

U.S. DOE - National Weatherization Training Conference



The 2009 National Weatherization Training Conference will be held at the Indiana Convention Center and the Marriott Downtown Hotel in Indianapolis, Indiana, July 20-23, 2009.

The Conference is sponsored by the U.S. Department of Energy and is held every two years to address the national training needs of the staff, trainers and other individuals who have consistently contributed to the advancement of the Weatherization Assistance Program. The Program serves every county in the Nation with more than 900 local agencies. Over the last 33 years, the Weatherization Assistance Program has gained a solid reputation as the nation's core program for delivering energy efficiency services to low-income households. More than 6.2 million households nationally have experienced energy efficiency, and health and safety gains through the Weatherization Assistance Program.

The 2009 National Weatherization Training Conference offers a unique opportunity to

disseminate uniform technical training skills and information to a broad cross-section of the Weatherization network.

The 2009 National Weatherization Training Conference will bring together more than 2,000 individuals from across the nation, including state and local decision makers, program managers, and technicians. The Conference provides opportunities to network with colleagues and share best practices among peers. From the pre-conference workshops on Monday to the closing plenary on Thursday, this event is guaranteed to inform and enrich.

The [Weatherization Assistance Program Technical Assistance Center](#) provides guidance for program operations and fosters community partnerships to advance weatherization.

QUESTIONS: Email weatherization@courtesyassoc.com. For phone inquiries, contact the DOE events hotline at 202-973-8609.