



## Stimulus Plan to Benefit PHAs

President Obama and Congress have approved a \$787 Billion Stimulus Package that may benefit PHAs with additional funding and grants for housing and energy upgrades. This is the breakdown of some of the funds that may be available to PHAs through the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD):

Funding Program	Funding Amount
Repairs and modernization of public housing projects	\$4 Billion
Energy efficiency retrogrades to low-income housing, including new insulation, windows and furnaces	\$2.25 Billion
Funds for building and rehabilitating low-income housing using green technology	\$2.25 Billion
Grants for short-term help with rent and housing relocation for homeless families	\$1.5 Billion
Grants to rehabilitate and improve energy efficiency for Native American housing programs	\$510 Million
Grants for removing lead-based paint in low-income housing	\$100 Million

The economic stimulus will also provide an additional \$5 Billion in home weatherization grants for low and middle-income families. See the article on page 2 for additional information on the U.S. Department of Energy's Weatherization Assistance Program.

As you can see energy conservation is a key component to many of these grant or funding programs. Energy conservation is an excellent way for

PHAs to save on operating funds. It is often the most economical solution to energy shortages, and is a more environmentally benign alternative to increased energy production.

PHAs can find a wealth of information on becoming more energy efficient or "going green" on HUD's Public Housing Environmental and Conservation Clearinghouse [webpage](#). Guidance from HUD will be forthcoming in later editions.

### UPCOMING EVENTS

#### Greenprints 2009 Conference & Tradeshow

▶ Mar 25-26, 2009 | Atlanta, GA  
 ☞ [www.tinyurl.com/greenprints09](http://www.tinyurl.com/greenprints09)

#### Environments for Aging 2009

▶ March 29-31, 2009 | Boston, MA  
 ☞ [www.efa09.com/ME2/Default.asp](http://www.efa09.com/ME2/Default.asp)

#### Michigan Green Jobs Conference

▶ May 11, 2009 | Lansing, MI  
 ☞ [www.tinyurl.com/greenjobsconf](http://www.tinyurl.com/greenjobsconf)

#### Energy Performance Contracting (EPC) for PHAs

▶ ☞ June 22-26, 2009 | Chicago, IL  
 ☞ [Flyer](#)

#### Orientation to Environmental Assessment (OEA)

▶ ☞ August 10-14, 2009 | Chicago, IL  
 ☞ [Flyer](#)

#### Environmental Assessment for Experienced Practitioners

▶ ☞ April 20-22, 2009 | Chicago, IL  
 TEL 312-996-6904

## Shaun Donovan is the New Secretary for HUD

On January 26, 2009, Shaun Donovan was sworn in as the 15th United States Secretary for Housing and Urban Development. He has devoted his career to ensuring access to safe, decent, and affordable housing nationwide, and will carry on that effort in President Obama's Administration. Secretary Donovan believes that America's homes are the foundation for family, safe neighborhoods, good schools, and solid businesses, and that housing represents and confers stability -

a base from which to raise America's children. He joins HUD with the commitment to make quality housing possible for every American.

During Testimony by Secretary Donovan at his confirmation hearing he outlined his priorities which included the importance of energy efficiency, greening public and assisted housing, and transportation and housing issues. "Through HUD we can catalyze the creation of a market

for energy efficient homes, lower the utility bills of families, and decrease the subsidy costs of the government. Here, the Department can lead by example by making efforts to green its own portfolio of public and assisted housing. HUD can help develop communities that are livable, walkable and sustainable. By joining up transportation and housing, HUD can give families the choice to live closer to where they work and, in the process, cut transportation costs."

## DOE's Weatherization Program Works

In the three decades since its founding in 1976, U.S. Department of Energy's (DOE) Weatherization Assistance Program has provided weatherization services to more than 5.6 million low-income families. DOE's Weatherization Assistance Program has served some of society's neediest citizens. It also benefits our nation by reducing our energy dependency, improving the environment, and stimulating economic development in low-income communities. Weatherization permanently reduces energy bills for low-income clients, thus increasing their spending power, improving the local housing stock, and providing jobs in the home improvement industry. Energy expenses comprise an economic

drain on low-income communities. On average, energy bills account for about 14% of a low-income family's gross income, and for many it may account for 20% or more. Economists estimate that more than 80% of energy expenses leave low-income communities, and thus do not circulate and generate additional economic activity inside those communities.

In contrast, weatherization reduces the drain and keeps investments circulating in local economies. For individual families the gain is immediate: average savings of 15% of their energy bills amounting to approximately \$274 per year depending on fuel prices. Although modest, these savings are significant for many low-income families and directly benefit the communities where they live. DOE provides funding and technical guidance to the states, but the states run

their own programs and set rules for issues such as eligibility. They also select service providers, which are usually nonprofit agencies that serve families in their communities, and review their performance for quality. Together, this group of more than 900 agencies makes up a nationwide weatherization network.

For more information and specific state contacts, refer to DOE's Weatherization website <http://apps1.eere.energy.gov/weatherization/>

## Utility Benchmarking, Prioritizing a PHA's Energy Needs

The Office of Public and Indian Housing (PIH) has created building utility benchmarking tools in partnership with the Environmental Protection Agency, ENERGY STAR Program and the Oak Ridge National Laboratories. PHAs are encouraged to use the tools to compare energy and water consumption in their buildings to similar buildings in their climate zone. The data used to develop the tool was obtained from 349 PHAs nationwide, representing 9,100 buildings (all sizes represented).

Building utility benchmarking is a very useful starting point for a PHA to target energy- and water-savings opportunities and can help with a PHA's overall asset management strategy. Knowing where

your buildings rank compared to other similar buildings is the first step toward improving utility efficiency and the overall financial performance of properties.

The benchmarking tools score each building from 0 - 100. If a building scores low, that building appears to use more energy than it should and has a lot of room for improvement. A score of 50 is average. If it scores high it is probably relatively efficient. After using the benchmarking tools to score your buildings, target low scoring (60 or below) buildings to see how they can be made more efficient. Schedule an energy audit to determine why the buildings are scoring low and make improvements based on cost-effectiveness. Use the benchmarking tool again after the energy conservation measures are installed to check on your improved performance.

Energy and water are benchmarked separately. Each tool requires a few inputs in order to provide a building's or development's energy or water consumption benchmark. These easy-to-use tools are applicable for all residential buildings throughout the entire U.S. public housing stock: multifamily elevator, multifamily walk-up, row house, townhouse, semi-detached and single family residences.

Both benchmarking tools are still under development but provide a "roughly right" indicator for prioritizing projects. Statistically, the energy tool is a very good predictor and the water tool is moderately good. Both tools can be found at: <http://www.hud.gov/offices/pih/programs/ph/phecc/ubenchtool.cfm>

## Incentives and Renewables Website - DSIRE

The Database of State Incentives for Renewables and Efficiency (DSIRE) website <http://www.dsireusa.org/> is a one-stop directory, providing a fast and convenient method for accessing information about renewable energy and energy efficiency incentives and regulatory policies administered by federal and state agencies, utilities, and local organizations. The homepage features a U.S. map for easy access to policies and incentives available in each state. Clicking on a state brings up a list of available programs organized into the following categories:

- (1) *Financial Incentives*
- (2) *Rules, Regulations, & Policies*
- (3) *Related Programs & Initiatives*

DSIRE tracks federal financial incentives that promote renewable energy and energy efficiency - those designed primarily for residents, businesses, and other end-users rather than funding opportunities for research & development, outreach, or inter-governmental programs. New federal programs and incentives for renewable energy will be added to DSIRE as they become available.



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

Contact us at [ahull@deval.us](mailto:ahull@deval.us)