



## Public Housing Energy Conservation Clearinghouse News

**December 2005**

This monthly e-mail update is brought to you by HUD's Public Housing Energy Conservation Clearinghouse (PHECC). It features news and resources to help public housing authorities manage energy and water costs. To see past issues of this newsletter, and to access more information and tools for public housing authorities, visit the Public Housing Energy Conservation Clearinghouse Website at <http://www.hud.gov/offices/pih/programs/ph/phecc/>.

### Three Steps to Lower Heating Bills This Winter

1. **Plug those leaks.** Air infiltration may contribute to as much as 30% of heating and cooling costs.
2. **Keep the heat in.** Insulation is a cost-effective way to save energy and improve comfort.
3. **Optimize your heating equipment.** Maintain your furnace, use programmable thermostats, and insulate water heaters.

Read more about these steps from [HUD's Partnership for Advancing Technology in Housing \(PATH\)](#).

### News:

- Best Practices for Preventing Mold and Moisture
- PHAs Benefit from Energy Bill, PIH Tools

### Success Stories:

- St. Louis Housing Authority Invests In ENERGY STAR® and Teaches Residents to Minimize Energy Use

### Technology Tip:

- Plan for Energy Savings with Monthly Maintenance

### ENERGY STAR® in Focus:

- ENERGY STAR Advanced Lighting Package Brightens New Construction

### Websites Worth a Click

## Best Practices for Preventing Mold and Moisture

Mold problems can be avoided by addressing moisture problems early on, so it is vital that building maintenance staff recognize moisture problems in their buildings and address them promptly. Tenants should also be encouraged to report moisture problems as soon as they are discovered.

These are just two findings from ***Controlling and Preventing Household Mold and Moisture Problems: Lessons Learned and Strategies for Disseminating Best Practices***, a new report on residential mold- and moisture-related research, findings, and tools developed by HUD. Other lessons learned include:

- Moisture and mold-related interventions can be conducted at relatively low cost along with other hazard reduction or home improvement strategies, including lead hazard control and weatherization.
- Many steps can be taken during construction to help minimize the likelihood that a building will develop moisture and mold problems. These steps include keeping construction materials dry and under cover, selecting the appropriate foundation and building materials, using proper construction detailing like flashing and moisture barriers, and providing adequate ventilation to control indoor humidity.
- Addressing mold problems in Indian housing requires addressing special Indian housing issues. An effective strategy will combine education, training, assessment, and remediation.

[Download the report.](#)

## PHAs Benefit from Energy Bill, PIH Tools

The Energy Policy Act of 2005 calls for the Secretary of HUD to develop an energy strategy to reduce expenses through energy conservation and energy-efficient design and construction of public housing. While the deadline for the strategy is next August, PIH has already implemented a number of activities that will meet this goal. PHAs can take advantage of these tools to reduce energy use and cut costs:

- [Energy Performance Contracting Guidance](#) has been updated. This standardized guidance can make the EPC process easier for PHAs.
- [Management Plan Goals](#) have been developed to implement [HUD's Energy Action Plan](#) [large PDF file].
- [The PHECC Website](#) and newsletter provide housing authorities with up-to-date information on ways to increase energy efficiency and conservation.

HUD is also developing a prototype benchmarking model based on data received from Regions II and III. When complete, this benchmarking system will allow PHAs to determine how the energy use in their buildings compares to that of similar buildings in the public housing stock. Data collection will begin for the remaining HUD regions in late January.

The Energy Bill also states that housing authorities shall purchase ENERGY STAR qualified appliances when cost-effective. Look to these resources for further guidance from PIH:

### Do You Understand HUD's Energy Incentives?

**Q.** *Under the three-year rolling base, how much of the energy cost savings does the PHA retain?*

**A.** Without using an energy performance contract, the PHA keeps 150% of the value of the first year of energy cost savings. For example, if an energy conservation measure (ECM) saves \$20 during the first year, the PHA will retain \$30.

**Q.** *If that 150% is not enough to cover the extra up-front costs, why should a PHA consider energy efficiency?*

**A.** PHAs are encouraged to undertake ECMs when cost effective—that is, when the payback period for the combined energy savings to the PHA, HUD, and residents is shorter than the equipment lifetime. ECMs also improve property values and resident comfort, reduce utility costs for residents, and help the environment.

**There is a way for PHAs to retain more savings.** An energy performance contract (EPC) allows a

- [Notice 2005-25](#) on using ENERGY STAR to promote energy efficiency in public housing.
- The [HUD Fact Sheet](#) on how PHAs can use ENERGY STAR.
- The [PIH Webpage on purchasing refrigerators in bulk](#).

PHA to use non-HUD funding and keep 100% of the cost savings from improvements, after loan payments, for the life of the loan. There is now simplified guidance to help PHAs carry out EPCs—in some cases without third-party assistance. [Learn more.](#)

## SUCCESS STORIES

### St. Louis Housing Authority Invests In ENERGY STAR® and Teaches Residents to Minimize Energy Use

Money saving opportunities are lost when your residents don't follow energy-saving practices. Investing in energy efficiency will go a long way toward lowering your energy costs, but your investments will have a much greater impact when combined with [resident education](#).

The St. Louis, Missouri Housing Authority uses ENERGY STAR qualified refrigerators to cut energy costs. Additionally, all residents of the authority's Renaissance Place at Grand HOPE VI development must complete an orientation before moving into their unit. The orientation addresses common ways for residents to minimize energy use, and efficient use of appliances and HVAC (i.e., adjusting vents for the cooling and heating seasons, etc.).

With ENERGY STAR, you can save up to 30% on energy bills per year. [[Learn how](#)]. To learn more about the combination of ENERGY STAR and education at Renaissance Place at Grand, contact Marian Stewart at (314) 286-4269 or [mstewart@slha.org](mailto:mstewart@slha.org).

## TECHNOLOGY TIP

### Plan for Energy Savings with Monthly Maintenance

Proper maintenance means more than just fewer repair calls. Well-maintained older equipment can sometimes be more efficient than new equipment that is poorly maintained and operated. Minor repairs can mean major savings. For example, fixing leaky ductwork can save up to 25 percent on energy costs. Keeping the furnace tuned up can easily save ten percent of your heating costs. Well-maintained equipment also lasts longer and can increase property values.

#### Developing a Monthly Maintenance Schedule

Start in January and maintain equipment all year with a [monthly maintenance schedule](#). These do-it-yourself maintenance activities can lower utility costs by increasing efficiency.

Look to [Fifteen O&M Best Practices for Energy-Efficient Buildings](#), a publication that will help you develop a maintenance training plan and budget for each facility staff member.

Other training resources include:

- [Property Maintenance and Risk Management](#). Offered by the Institute of Real Estate Management, this home-study course teaches managers how to develop a property maintenance program that preserves real estate assets.
- [Building Operator Certification](#) offers a set of courses in efficient operation and maintenance of building systems.
- The [ACI Home Performance Conference](#) is the largest conference on energy efficiency practices for affordable housing. The conference will include a 2-day trade show.

## ENERGY STAR® IN FOCUS

### ENERGY STAR® Advanced Lighting Package Brightens New Construction

Building new units? Ask for the ENERGY STAR [Advanced Lighting Package](#) for new construction. This higher quality lighting will actually cost you less money since the money you save each month with lower energy bills will offset the initial cost.



ENERGY STAR qualified lighting:

- Uses about 2/3 less energy than standard lighting.
- Generates about 70% less heat than standard lighting so your building will stay cooler in the summer.
- Meets strict efficiency criteria set by the Environmental Protection Agency to assure bright, long-lasting lighting. ENERGY STAR qualified pin-based bulbs last up to seven years, so you spend less time changing bulbs. This can be especially beneficial for hard-to-access lighting.

## WEBSITES WORTH A CLICK

### Find Funding Faster

You know that there are funding opportunities and incentives for energy-efficient systems and equipment but you don't have the time to sort through them all. Sound familiar? These Websites will put some of those opportunities right at your fingertips:

- The Department of Energy has compiled [incentives offered by utilities](#), such as energy-efficiency and load management programs.
- The [Database of State Incentives for Renewable Energy](#) is a source of information on state, local, utility, and selected federal incentives that promote renewable energy.
- PHECC provides a short overview of [HUD's funding and incentives](#) and provides links to other resources.

To learn more about performing cost/benefit analyses and options for financing, read [How to Finance Your Energy Program](#).

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