

# MINNESOTA DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

*For Immediate Release*

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## **Governor proclaims Oct. 30 Weatherization Day**

*State's Weatherization Assistance Program helps low-income residents save money, stay warm and safe*

SAINT PAUL – Every year thousands of Minnesotans benefit from the state's Weatherization Assistance Program. To raise awareness of the program, Governor Mark Dayton has proclaimed Oct. 30, 2014 [Weatherization Day](#) in Minnesota. The state's Weatherization Assistance Program helps reduce energy use for low-income residents who struggle to pay their utility bills.

The Weatherization Assistance Program is administered by the Minnesota Department of Commerce in cooperation with a network of 31 local service providers, community action agencies, nonprofit organizations, and local governments. Approximately 3,000 households per year benefit from weatherization assistance.

The Weatherization Assistance Program has been a lifeline for many Minnesotans to fix their homes so they can cut energy costs," said Commerce Commissioner Mike Rothman. "In many cases, heating system improvements are needed to ensure the safety of families."

The Weatherization Assistance Program (WAP) is federally funded through the U.S. Department of Energy. The program helps income-qualified households permanently reduce their home energy bills by increasing energy efficiency while protecting the health and safety of family members.

Households at or below 200 percent of the federal poverty income guidelines or 50 percent of state median income (\$47,700 for a family of four) are eligible for WAP. Priority is given to households with elderly or disabled family members, children, or high energy consumption. WAP services include energy audits to evaluate potential weatherization work; air infiltration and bypass sealing; exterior wall and attic insulation; testing, repair, or replacement of mechanical systems; and participant education.

## Homeowners can see big savings

“Weatherization Day is an opportunity to showcase our services,” said Cindy Webster, director of the Energy Conservation Program for Community Action Partnership of Ramsey and Washington Counties (CAPRW), which administers WAP services. “In some cases, furnace upgrades combined with insulation, air leak sealing, and new efficient appliances, could result in a 30 percent reduction in energy bills for a family. The weatherization services can reduce energy use for years to come. The long-term benefits can really add up.”

Webster says there are many examples of Minnesotans who have benefited from WAP. One elderly St. Paul couple had an aging furnace with a cracked heat exchanger – a condition that could lead to dangerous levels of carbon monoxide, a serious health risk. Two years ago, their home received air sealing, insulation, a new 96 percent efficient furnace. They also received a new refrigerator, water heater, bathroom exhaust fan, and dryer venting. The result: gas savings of \$333 per year, decreasing their gas bill 28 percent to \$866; and electricity cost savings of \$368 per year, cutting their electricity bill by 23 percent to \$1,239.

“We have been so warm in the winter and the house has been so nice and cool in the summer that we did not have to turn on the air conditioning until mid-July,” the homeowner said. “I didn’t have money to do all the work that was needed... The CAP agency really saved my whole house. There’s no way I could pay back what was done for me.”

The [CAPRW office](#) (450 Syndicate St. N. in St. Paul) is holding an open house today to inform residents of WAP and share more client experiences.

## Apply for Weatherization

[Income-qualified people](#) can apply for assistance via a combined application for the Energy Assistance Program (EAP) and WAP. About 160,000 people apply for the companion programs each year; most will receive heating bill assistance help from EAP. About 3,000 will receive weatherization assistance. Last year (July 1, 2013-June 30, 2014), WAP served 2,974 households with \$18,324,707. This year (July 1, 2014-June 30, 2015) WAP has about \$19 million in funding and expects to serve 3,076 households.

For information on how to apply for both programs, call the Energy Information Center at [1-800-657-3710](tel:1-800-657-3710) or visit the [WAP section](#) of the Commerce website. Determine the local service provider in your area, fill out the application, and send it to the appropriate service provider. Qualified applicants will receive an energy audit to identify the measures needed to improve the energy efficiency of their homes. After the

audit, the applicant and auditor will determine a work plan. All work is energy-related, and the health and safety of clients is a priority.

**The Minnesota Department of Commerce is here to help.**

For more information about the Weatherization Assistance Program contact the Department's Energy Information Center at [1-800-657-3710](tel:1-800-657-3710) or visit the [Weatherization Assistance Program](#) page of the [Commerce Department's website](#).