

On behalf of Heartland Community Action Agency, Prairie Five Community Action and Western Community Action you are invited to attend an on-site Weatherization Assistance Program Open House and demonstration.

During the Open House Weatherization Assistance Program contractors and staff will display diagnostic equipment such as the blower door, infrared camera, heating system combustion analysis equipment, and explain how they use these tools to determine energy retrofits using the "house-as-a-system" approach. Contractors working with the Weatherization Assistance Program will be demonstrating insulation installation methods, air infiltration reduction measures, and much more. Additionally, we will provide information about the integration of the Weatherization Assistance Program and the Healthy Homes Initiative.

The Weatherization Assistance Program's mission is to reduce energy costs for low-income families, particularly for the elderly, people with disabilities, and children, by improving the energy efficiency of their homes, while ensuring their health and safety. Reduced energy cost helps people stay in their homes. Recipients have more money to pay their mortgages, buy school supplies and food, pay for health and dental care, while enjoying better living conditions. Communities benefit from energy efficient housing stock, increased economic activity and stable communities.

The Healthy Homes Initiative is a comprehensive approach to combating disease and injury in the home driven by scientific evidence that links substandard housing and poor health. Environmental hazards in the home harm millions of children each year. Housing conditions can significantly affect public health. Childhood lead poisoning, injuries, respiratory diseases such as asthma, and quality of life issues have been linked to the more than 6 million substandard housing units nationwide. Residents of these units are also at increased risk for fire, electrical injuries, falls, rodent bites, and other illnesses and injuries. Other issues of concern include exposure to pesticide residues, indoor toxicants, tobacco smoke, and combustion gases. Healthy homes interventions take a holistic approach to coordinated mitigation of housing-related hazards, rather than addressing a single hazard at a time. This method allows healthy homes practitioners to address a wide array of health and safety issues, including lead poisoning; asthma exacerbated by moisture, mold, and pests; exposure to radon and other toxic chemicals; and injury caused by old or dilapidated housing, among others.

Integrating the Weatherization Assistance Program and the Healthy Homes Initiative is a national effort. For decades, innovative Weatherization providers have leveraged resources to deliver top quality, all-inclusive solutions to low-income families for the energy efficiency, health, and safety of their homes. To expand upon existing strategies connecting Weatherization to Healthy Homes, Weatherization Plus Health will make building these essential connections easier and more effective.

Please come prepared to share your experiences and resources for reducing or eliminating housing deficiencies and hazards. Building a strong collaborative network of resources will enhance our communities, build strong partnerships and promote healthy housing for all Minnesotans.

The open House will be held at 501 Lakeland Drive SE, Willmar, MN 56201 in Willmar, Minnesota on October 25, 2012 from 4:00 pm to 8:00 pm. At 5:00 pm, Marilou Cheple, State Weatherization Program Supervisor will provide an overview and updates on the Weatherization Assistance Program. Following Marilou's presentation, Dan Symonik, Environmental Impacts Analysis Unit Supervisor, Minnesota Department of Health, will talk about the statewide initiative to develop and implement a Healthy Homes and Communities strategy. Program staff and contractors from three agencies will be available to explain the use of diagnostic equipment, home air leakage assessments and talk about health and safety issues commonly found.

The Weatherization Assistance Program is an effective public investment and has a large impact on our local economy. We are proud of the opportunity to offer the Weatherization Assistance Program in our communities and look forward to building strong networks to address health and safety issues. I hope you will be able to attend our Open House.

Invitations are being sent to public officials/representatives, utility representatives, businesses, health care providers, fire departments, etc. from the following counties:

Big Stone	Chippewa
Jackson	Kandiyohi
Lincoln	Lyon
McLeod	Meeker
Redwood	Renville
Swift	Yellow Medicine
Cottonwood	Lac Qui Parle

This Open House event is a perfect opportunity for you to learn the real facts about the Weatherization Assistance Program and its benefits to our communities.

Please RSVP to Jude Deming at (320) 235-0850 or 800-992-1710, extension 1122 or at juded@heartlandcaa.org

Sincerely,

Joan Macik
Executive Director
Heartland Community Action Agency, Inc.