



**Department of Energy**  
Washington, DC 20585

**WEATHERIZATION PROGRAM NOTICE 08-5**  
**SUPERSEDES WPN 93-12**  
**EFFECTIVE DATE: September 22, 2008**

**SUBJECT: WEATHERIZATION DISASTER Planning and Relief**

**PURPOSE:** To provide guidance on allowable activities using the Department of Energy (DOE) Weatherization Assistance Program resources in the event of disasters.

**SCOPE:** The provisions of this guidance apply to all grantees applying for financial assistance under DOE Weatherization Assistance Program.

**LEGAL AUTHORITY:** Title IV, Energy Conservation and Production Act, as amended, authorizes DOE to administer the Low-Income Weatherization Assistance Program. All grant awards made under the program shall comply with all applicable law including regulations contained in 10 CFR 440 (as amended), and other procedures applicable to the regulation as DOE may, from time-to-time, prescribe for the administration of financial assistance.

**BACKGROUND:** 10 CFR 440.18(e)(2)(ii) has allowed for re-weatherization if a, “dwelling unit has been damaged by fire, flood, or act of God and repair of the damage to weatherization materials is not paid for by insurance.” This has been allowable whether a disaster has been declared or not. If a grantee is **only** using this existing re-weatherization provision for ordinary weatherization activities without any other special considerations, then a Disaster Response Plan is not necessary or required. This guidance expands to include additional opportunities when disastrous situations occur.

**POLICY:** The Project Management Center (PMC) is authorized to exercise discretionary authority in interpreting the Weatherization rules and allow grantees and subgrantees to use Weatherization resources to help out with disaster-related activities, on a limited time and limited scale basis.

For weatherization purposes, a disaster is determined by a Presidential or Gubernatorial order declaring either a Federal or State Emergency. The crisis may be naturally occurring or man-made and generally will involve at least three phases: the crisis itself, the clean-up, and the rebuilding of the affected area. It is not uncommon for weatherization work to be suspended

during the crisis and early clean-up phase until basic community services such as electricity, water, food and medical supply activities can be returned closer to normal.

The disaster time period may be from several days to a month or more and this period can have a critical impact on program operations. Since disasters create many problems and opportunities in furthering energy efficiency goals, the Weatherization network has traditionally supported use of weatherization workers in normalization activities.

The grantee may consider developing a “General Disaster Response Plan” which addresses the needs of the affected low-income clients and also takes into consideration the limited funds available in weatherization. After the early stages of the clean-up, grantees need to ensure the focus of any additional effort is primarily on the interests of low-income households and residents. Because Program resources are so limited, weatherization efforts may only be used to supplement and not supplant other resources and services.

## **PROCEDURES:**

**1. General Disaster Response Plan:** Grantees are encouraged to be pro-active and develop an optional section in their state plan to address the most-probable types of disasters likely in their service area. This should be a general approach that can be implemented immediately or once the threat becomes imminent. Since the crisis itself may be sudden, mobilizing forces in the early stages of clean-up are usually of a short duration on the overall disaster timeline.

Considerations for a General Disaster Response Plan component to the state plan may include:

- A. contact and coordination with the appropriate disaster site leadership in charge to explain the role and resources that weatherization can provide;
- B. availability and use of grantee and/or local agency staff, equipment and resources;
- C. any other systematic provisions the grantee plans to utilize based on previous disaster-related experiences;
- D. consideration for the preservation of local agency (subgrantee) weatherization files, records, materials and equipment if they would be at risk; and
- E. the Planning and Reporting Elements addressed later in this guidance.

The advantage to having provisions already approved in the state plan would allow an immediate ability to respond at the local level without the concern proposed activities would over-step the bounds of both the grantee and DOE.

**2. Notify A PMC Project Officer As Soon As Possible Regarding A Disaster:** Whether or not the grantee has a Disaster Response Plan, the grantee needs to notify DOE about the specific nature of any disaster which would involve or affect DOE weatherization. First contact PMC staff by telephone, then provide a follow-up in writing (email is fine). Discussion by telephone would allow PMC staff to explore ideas and options that may be available using weatherization resources and begin to explore whether the currently approved state plan adequately addresses the circumstances and possible proposed actions.

**3. Assess Circumstances And Determine The Need To Develop And Submit An Event-Specific Disaster Response Plan:**

The grantee should assess the needs of the affected subgrantees, and if appropriate, identify potential assistance available from other subgrantees in the network that may be willing to volunteer assistance. The grantee has a responsibility to assure production in areas which were not declared a disaster area is not compromised at the expense of assistance to affected subgrantees.

Verbal agreements within the scope of the grant and this grant guidance can be made to clarify details and expedite early action during the disaster and early stages of clean-up. The grantee shall follow-up with PMC staff on verbal understandings and agreements in writing (email) promptly afterward.

However, any Weatherization-funded disaster-related activities beyond what has already been approved in the state plan must be submitted to the PMC Project Officer for approval as an “Event-Specific Disaster Response Plan.” Project Officers (and procurement staff, if available for timely response) will provide grantees with guidance on how to proceed.

“Event-Specific Disaster Response Plans” should provide as much of the applicable reporting element information upfront as available and establish the estimated timeframe and end-date for DOE assistance. (*Planning and Reporting Elements are addressed in a later section of this guidance.*) Almost all disaster response plans are approved by DOE with a letter response. Rarely, there may be a need to amend the grant. In that case, formal requests to amend the state plan should be submitted as agreed upon.

The grantee will also clearly specify when the reporting will be provided to DOE as part of the proposed disaster plan (i.e., 30 days after the approved end-date for DOE weatherization assistance.) If an extension of the end-date is requested, the request needs to indicate the circumstances and provide an updated copy of the reporting information.

Where disaster plans are activated, either as an approved state plan or submitted as event-specific activities, the PMC will keep Headquarters advised on the use of any Weatherization resources.

#### **4. Examples of Eligible Activities:**

- A. Reweathering - The Program Regulation allows any previously weatherized home “damaged by fire, flood or act of God” to be re-weatherized, without regard to date of weatherization, where local authorities deem the dwelling salvageable as well as habitable and if the damage to materials is not covered by insurance or some other form of compensation.
- B. Health and Safety - In the normal course of weatherization or re-weatherization, only energy-related health and safety measures are an allowable DOE expense. Disaster-related health and safety would be allowable as part of an approved Disaster Response Plan.

Each grantee is encouraged to develop a section to address issues and activities related specifically to a disaster. Such activities may include emergency clean-up activities in eligible homes or in low-income neighborhoods that benefit low-income clients (e.g., crews assigned to authorized emergency crews to remove debris from local low-income housing areas, assisting with the distribution of essential items such as food and clothing, filling sandbags to protect all housing in the area, including low-income).

Weatherization participation should be proportionate to the overall effort where possible. In the case of extensive flood damage, grantees should consult with utilities and other state and

local officials relative to the safe inspection and operation of heating and cooling equipment that may have been damaged.

- C. Technical Assistance - The Program Regulation and guidance permits grantees to use technical assistance funds in flexible ways to achieve energy efficiency goals of the program. For example, Weatherization funds and resources may be used to assist local housing agencies and rehabilitation teams, by sharing their knowledge and experience with energy efficient design and advanced weatherization techniques as rehabilitation efforts take place.
- D. Leveraging - The Program Regulation and guidance permits grantees to use a small percentage of DOE grant funds to provide leveraging opportunities at the state and local levels with prior approval. Grantees are encouraged to seek innovative ways of using these funds to increase the energy-related assistance that can be made available to low-income people facing the prospect of rebuilding after a disaster.

**5. Planning and Reporting Elements:** If the General Disaster Response Plan is utilized and/or an Event-Specific Disaster Response Plan is approved, the grantee needs to monitor, track, and report the impacts. Reports to the PMC on the use of Weatherization resources in the DOE grant should include, at a minimum, the following:

- A. A description of the disaster including the counties/local weatherization agencies affected. If possible, please include the state emergency management website that tracks disasters;
- B. A description of the types of DOE weatherization assistance (as indicated in the previous section), the scope and costs of weatherization activities performed beyond what normal weatherization or reweatherization would provide;
- C. The timeframe of the disaster. The date it started, when it was declared a disaster, and the (proposed or approved) end-date for DOE weatherization assistance;
- D. An explanation of how disaster-related costs are being tracked by type of activity and summary of DOE disaster-related expenditures and programmatic reporting information. For example, the number of homes and persons assisted under the Disaster Response Plan provisions; and
- E. Any other applicable items as determined by the grantee or DOE.

If WinSAGA is available, reporting may be submitted as part of Section III. Comments at the bottom of the Quarterly Program Report tab. Otherwise reporting may be sent to the PMC Project Officer, preferably by email.

Headquarters will be contacted as appropriate and will expedite resolution of any issues as required by the PMC.



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