

Background

The Navajo Nation spans an area of over 27,000 square miles in the southwestern United States (US), primarily in Arizona and New Mexico. The New Mexico Mortgage Finance Authority (MFA), the state's Weatherization Assistance Program (WAP) grantee, provides weatherization services to Navajo Nation residents in New Mexico. Seeking to increase the number of Navajo Nation homes it serves through WAP each year, MFA identified a subgrantee for dedicated Navajo Nation WAP service in 2024.

Through a competitive request for application process, MFA awarded the WAP contract to Red Feather Development ("Red Feather"). Red Feather has long supported Navajo Nation residents across the Four Corners region, making it an ideal partner to deliver efficient and effective WAP services. Red Feather works with Hooghan Honeezili to provide the on-the-ground weatherization services from energy audits to measure installation to final quality control inspection. Hooghan Honeezili means "Warm Homes" in the Navajo language.

"Thanks so much to the contractor and crew that did the amazing job. They were so awesome. I didn't have anyone to do this for me, I am so grateful. I cried before because my winter was cold and summer just hot, now I cry with happiness."



Customer Impact

Navajo homes primarily heat with wood. Other heating fuels include propane, electricity, and coal. Many homes have older or homemade wood stoves that are highly inefficient and dangerous, both for fire risk and poor indoor air quality. As part of WAP, these stoves are replaced with high-efficiency, modern wood stoves that significantly reduce the amount of wood burned each winter while substantially improving health and safety in the home.

Rob Foley, owner and operator of Hooghan Honeezili, says, "The vast majority of the stoves that they use are, first of all, very inefficient, and second of all, profoundly dangerous. [It's] very common for houses to burn down because of poorly installed wood stoves, and [in the] average home, the ceiling is covered with soot from their leaky wood stove."

Mr. Foley estimates that a typical, un-weatherized Navajo Nation home burns between six and 10 cords of wood each winter. Meanwhile, a cord of wood on the Navajo Nation costs roughly \$450. As a result, a typical Navajo Nation home that purchases wood by the cord will spend between \$2,700 and \$4,500 on heating fuel each year, prior to weatherization. "Our number one success is removing those old, unsafe, dangerous wood stoves and putting in a much more efficient and correctly installed wood stove. It has a dramatic impact," Mr. Foley continues.

In addition to wood-burning stove replacement, the other most commonly installed measures on Navajo Nation homes are air sealing

Weatherization Assistance Program Success Story: Customer Impact for Navajo Nation Residents



and attic insulation. Air sealing reduces air infiltration into and out of the home. Homes receive more efficient attic insulation that results in improved energy efficiency.

With wood stove replacements, air sealing, and attic insulation – along with additional energy-efficient measures installed – Mr. Foley estimates wood usage is cut in half. This means \$1,350 to \$2,250 in savings for Navajo Nation residents purchasing firewood. The impact on clients has been real and significant.

Program Impact

Due to challenges with outreach, intake, and travel, it was difficult to effectively serve Navajo Nation residents. Before Red Feather’s involvement, about five homes per year were weatherized on the Navajo Nation in New Mexico. Now, with Red Feather as the WAP subgrantee, New Mexico’s MFA can provide weatherization services to over 50 homes each year, a more than tenfold improvement in production.

The key efficiency improvement that Red Feather provides is outreach in the communities it knows. Roy Hosteen, one of Red Feather’s outreach coordinators, is the driving force behind this success. Mr. Hosteen is a Navajo Nation resident and has been working in the Four Corners region for programs like WAP for over seven years. Mr. Hosteen uses his community connections and knowledge to engage potential clients and shepherds them through the WAP application and intake process.



“I have gone to the chapters, the local community centers, and any type of gathering that’s out there.” Mr. Hosteen says. “Then I [work] with them individually once I get to their home. If there’s a missing document, [we find it and get their WAP application submitted].” Natasha Begay, Red Feather’s program manager, says about Roy’s work, “The reception and the response that we have from the community is very positive. We’ve already established a good reputation. [Roy] has built that reputation.”

“I am writing to express my heartfelt thanks for the incredible support and assistance your organization provided in weatherizing my home. I am deeply grateful for the services that were offered to me at no cost, which have already made a noticeable difference in the comfort and energy efficiency of my home. This kind of generosity and community support truly makes a difference. Thank you once again for all that you do for individuals and families like mine.”

MFA, Red Feather, and Hooghan Honeezili have effectively and efficiently partnered over the past year to deliver dedicated WAP services to New Mexico’s Navajo Nation residents. Residents are seeing estimated savings of over a thousand dollars each year through WAP, not to mention significant health and safety improvements in their homes.

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