

NASCSP 2026 Winter Training Conference

WAP Core Conference Agenda

February 4 - 6, 2026

AGENDA (subject to change)

****Eligible for 1.25 BPI CEUs*

Wednesday, February 4th

8:00 a.m. – 9:00 a.m.

Legislative Breakfast

Join us for a timely legislative update and morning conversation focused on the federal policy landscape shaping our programs and partners across the country. This session will provide an overview of current developments in Congress and the Administration, highlight key priorities impacting CSBG and WAP, and offer insight into what lies ahead. Grounded in the realities facing states and local agencies, the discussion will help participants better understand how national policy decisions connect to on-the-ground work and how the Network can remain rooted in hope while navigating uncertainty.

Presenter(s): **David Bradley**, *Chief Executive Officer, National Community Action Foundation*

9:15 a.m. – 10:15 a.m.

Opening Plenary

Join us as we kick off the conference with remarks from NASCSP's Executive Director and newly elected Board President, who will share priorities for the year ahead and reflections on the opportunities shaping our network. Invited federal partners will provide updates on national policy directions and investments affecting CSBG and WAP. The plenary will also include a special opening performance from the highly acclaimed and national award-winning Duke Ellington School of the Arts Show Choir to inspire and energize us as we begin our week of learning, connection, and collective action.

Presenter(s): **J. Janelle George**, *Acting Director, Office of Community Services, Administration of Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (invited)*; **Michael Li**, *Acting Principal Deputy Director and Deputy Director for Community Energy Programs, Office of State and Community Energy Programs, U. S. Department of Energy (invited)*; **Melanie Sanford**, *Weatherization Manager, Michigan Department of Health and Human Services and NASCSP Board President*; **Cheryl Williams**, *Executive Director, NASCSP*

10:15 a.m. – 10:45 a.m. **Networking Break**

10:45 a.m. – 11:45 p.m. **National Partner Update**

Hear from key national partners as they provide updates on current priorities, emerging initiatives, and developments impacting the Community Services Block Grant and Weatherization Assistance Program. This session offers a broad look at the policy, program, and advocacy efforts underway across the network and highlights how national collaboration supports state and local work.

Presenter(s): **Katrina Metzler**, *Executive Director, National Energy and Utility Affordability Coalition*; **Jonathan Cohen, Esq.**, *Deputy Director and Senior Counsel, Community Action Program Legal Services*; **Denise Harlow**, *Chief Executive Officer, National Community Action Partnership*; **Tommy Sheridan**, *Deputy Director, National Head Start Association*; **Cheryl Williams**, *Executive Director, NASCSP*

11:45 p.m. – 2:00 p.m. **Lunch (on your own)**

2:00 p.m. – 3:15 p.m. **CONCURRENT SESSIONS:**

WAP Member Planning & Action (Members Only)

WAP Member Planning and Action is devoted to in-depth regional peer exchanges facilitated by your elected NASCSP regional representatives, covering critical topics around WAP operations and administration.

Weatherization Succession Planning: Sustaining Workforce, Leadership and Program Excellence***

Today more than ever, succession planning in Weatherization is essential. With an aging workforce, evolving funding requirements, and increasing technical skill demands, programs must be proactive about sustaining leadership and preserving critical operational knowledge. In this session, you'll hear from Weatherization providers and leaders who are building intentional succession plans that include skills inventories, knowledge-transfer strategies, job shadowing, cross-training, and credentialing efforts. We will also explore the *Succession Planning for Success* checklist, a practical tool designed to support strategic thinking and guide agencies in preparing for long-term continuity. Join us for an honest discussion on what it takes to build resilient teams and ensure the future strength of Weatherization programs.

Presenter(s): **Mia Harnos**, *Director of Energy Partnerships, National Community Action Partnership*; **Lance Hostutler**, *Chief Executive Officer, Optimum Performance Solutions*

3:15 p.m. – 3:45 p.m. **Networking Break**

Updated 1/27/2026

3:45 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.

CONCURRENT SESSIONS

WAP Member Planning & Action (Members Only)

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Beyond the Toolbox: Why Soft Skills Matter in Weatherization***

In Weatherization, technical skills may get the job done, but soft skills make the job successful. Through extensive research and conversations with agencies across the country, including North Carolina, West Virginia, Georgia, and Vermont, one theme came through clearly: the need to strengthen communication, empathy, and overall relational skills among field staff. This session makes the case for elevating soft skill development across the WAP network and explores how states can weave customer service, empathy, and communication training into their workforce strategies. Attendees will learn how investing in relational skills leads to safer, more respectful, and more effective interactions in the field.

Presenter(s): **Robert Anderson, Trainer, Joe Keefe, Trainer, Everblue**

Thursday, February 5th

8:00 a.m. – 9:00 a.m.

Continental Breakfast

9:00 a.m. – 10:15 a.m.

Harnessing AI for Better Service Delivery***

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is transforming how government agencies operate by enhancing efficiency, improving service delivery, and supporting data-driven decision-making. This session explores how AI tools can be responsibly and effectively integrated into state offices. Attendees will gain insights into real-world use cases, including technical report writing and data analysis. Whether you are a tech-savvy innovator or just beginning to explore AI, this session will offer practical ideas and resources to help you harness AI's potential in your role.

Presenter(s): **Kris Schoenow, Executive Director, Bureau of Community Action and Economic Opportunity, Michigan Department of Health and Human Services**

10:15 a.m. – 10:45 a.m.

Networking Break

10:45 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

CONCURRENT SESSIONS:

Programmatic: Beyond Barriers: Three States' Innovative Approaches to Reducing Weatherization Deferrals***

Deferrals caused by roofing issues, vermiculite, electrical hazards, and other health and safety concerns continue to limit access to weatherization services across the country. This session brings together Minnesota, Georgia, and North Dakota to share how coordinated strategies, innovative funding approaches, and strong partnerships are reducing these barriers. Through legislative wins, effective resource leveraging, and strong utility collaborations, these states offer practical and replicable models for expanding eligibility, improving workflow efficiency, and increasing successful completions for low-income households.

Join us to explore how policy design, cross-sector collaboration, and intentional planning can strengthen your program's approach to reducing deferrals.

Presenter(s): **Hanna Hoeger**, *Equity and Innovation Coordinator, Minnesota Department of Commerce*; **Alyssa Kroshus**, *Weatherization Program Manager, North Dakota Department of Commerce*; **Laura Whitfield**, *Weatherization Program Manager, Georgia Environmental Finance Authority*

Technical: Advancing the Weatherization Workforce – Data, Tools, and Best Practices***

This session highlights key findings from recent workforce development projects and initiatives, providing an inside look at current trends, challenges, and opportunities in building a resilient Weatherization Assistance Program workforce. Attendees will learn how to use new tools, including interactive workforce dashboards, updated career flyers, and Green Workforce Connect, to strengthen recruitment, training, and retention strategies. You will also gain insights and best practices from the NASCSP Workforce Development Working Group and IREC, with a focus on addressing workforce shortages and strengthening long-term capacity within the network.

Presenter(s): **Kye Garvin**, *WAP Workforce Senior Program Manager, NASCSP*; **Pagan Poggione**, *Vice President, Workforce Strategy and Innovation, Interstate Renewable Energy Council*

12:00 p.m. – 1:30 p.m.

Lunch (on your own)

1:30 p.m. – 2:45 p.m.

CONCURRENT SESSIONS:

Programmatic: Beyond Compliance – Driving Program Success Through Subgrantee-Led Contractor Engagement and Innovation***

This session offers practical strategies to help State agencies, grantees, and subgrantees move beyond basic compliance and strengthen

contractor performance across the Weatherization Assistance Program. Using real examples, we will walk through effective ways to engage contractors, boost participation, and support consistent, high-quality work. We will highlight contractor training incentive models, the key role of subgrantees in driving improvement, and how to use Green Workforce Connect to equip contractors with business development tools and resources for new WAP providers. Attendees will leave with clear, adaptable approaches for building a more responsive and high-performing contractor network.

Presenter(s): **Kye Garvin**, *WAP Workforce Senior Program Manager*, **Claudia Torries**, *WAP IIJA Senior Program Manager, NASCSP*

Technical: Building Performance Institute

Stay current with the latest developments from the Building Performance Institute. This essential update session outlines the most recent changes and improvements that impact weatherization professionals. Learn about the newly revised Healthy Housing Principles, explore the new ccASHP Assessor certification, revisit the foundational Building Science Principles, and hear what's new in the Energy Auditor and Quality Inspector exams. The session will also cover important updates to BPI standards, new benefits within the GoldStar contractor program, and additional announcements you will want to know.

Presenter(s): **Amanda Hatherly**, *Chief Executive Officer, Building Performance Institute*

2:45 p.m. – 3:15 p.m.

Networking Break

3:15 p.m. – 4:30 p.m.

CONCURRENT SESSIONS:

Programmatic: Leveraging Collaboration Models in WAP

Drawing on findings from the NASCSP Annual Funding Report, this session explores how Weatherization Grantees and Subgrantees are successfully leveraging other funding sources to strengthen WAP delivery. By braiding funding streams, programs can bring homes out of deferral, achieve greater health and safety outcomes, and support deeper energy retrofits for low-income families. Participants will explore federal and non-federal funding opportunities that align with and complement WAP. Indiana, Georgia, and Washington will share practical examples of how partnerships and state plan strategies are being used to leverage additional resources, expand health and safety work, and enable deeper retrofits in low-income communities.

Presenter(s): **Allen Carbert**, *Managing Director, Weatherization Unit, Washington State Department of Commerce*; **Andrea Schroer**, *WAP*

*Director, NASCSP; **Laura Whitfield**, Weatherization Program Manager, Georgia Environmental Finance Authority; **Chris Wilman**, Weatherization Training Team Leader, Indiana Community Action Association*

Technical: Strategies for On-the-Job Training Homes***

Weatherization often requires balancing day-to-day production demands with the need for consistent, effective training. This session introduces a practical framework for using “Training Homes,” real client homes intentionally structured to support skill development while maintaining production goals. Drawing on interviews with experienced Weatherization trainers, the session will outline strategies for mentoring staff, selecting appropriate training homes, and documenting competency progression. Participants will leave with actionable approaches for integrating hands-on training directly into their existing workflow.

Presenter(s): **Ryan Harry**, Owner, *Heron Energetics, LLC*

7:00 p.m. – 9:30 p.m.

Awards Gala and Reception

This year marks a special milestone for NASCSP as we host our first-ever Awards Gala and Reception. Each year, NASCSP’s Board of Directors honors extraordinary contributions to the Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) and Weatherization Assistance Program (WAP) networks through its Service Awards. We will honor individuals whose leadership, advocacy, innovation, and longstanding commitment have strengthened our network and created meaningful impact at the national, state, and local levels. Join us as we debut this special event and celebrate the people who move our mission forward.

Friday, February 6th

8:00 a.m. – 9:00 a.m.

Continental Breakfast

9:00 a.m. – 10:15 a.m.

From Priority List to Completion – A Roadmap for Scaling Weatherization in Multi-Family and Rental Housing***

Weatherization programs often struggle to balance day-to-day production demands with consistent, high-quality on-the-job training. This session offers practical strategies for weaving training directly into production so staff can build core competencies while meeting program goals. Drawing on insights from experienced Weatherization trainers, we will explore proven approaches to mentoring, structuring training moments, selecting jobs that support skill development, and documenting trainee progress. Participants will leave with clear, actionable strategies they can use right away to strengthen workforce skills within their existing production workflows.

Presenter(s): **Jason Foy**, *Housing and Weatherization Director, Tri-County Community Action Partnership, Inc.*; **Ryan Harry**, *Owner, Heron Energetics, LLC*; **Samantha Pearce**, *Vice President of Sustainability, New York State Homes and Community Renewal*

10:15 a.m. – 10:45 a.m.

Networking Break

10:45 a.m. – 11:45 a.m.

Rooted in Hope: Centering Community Voice to Strengthen Trust and Impact

Community Action has always drawn its strength from deep roots grounded in the lived experiences, resilience, and wisdom of the people we serve. In a moment marked by uncertainty and rapid change, staying rooted in hope requires us to listen more deeply, engage more intentionally, and elevate voices that too often go unheard. Drawing from principles of local journalism and nonprofit engagement, this session invites us to reimagine what it means to truly center community voice. Through intentional listening and authentic storytelling, we will explore how narrative can deepen trust, strengthen engagement, and amplify the impact of our network. Participants will be challenged to think differently about how stories are told and how elevating lived experiences can shape public understanding, influence policy, and strengthen program effectiveness – while honoring the dignity, resilience, and agency of those most impacted by poverty.

Presenter(s): **Eric Falquero**, *Co-Founder, The 51st*

12:00 p.m. – 12:45 p.m.

Closing Plenary