



Organization: National Association for State Community Services Programs (NASCS)
House Appropriations Subcommittee: Energy and Water Development

Testimony of Cheryl Williams, Executive Director, National Association for State Community Services Programs (NASCS)

As Executive Director for the National Association for State Community Services Programs (NASCS), I am pleased to submit testimony on the FY 2027 Energy and Water Appropriations bill. Specifically, I am writing in support of the Department of Energy’s (DOE) Weatherization Assistance Program (WAP) and State Energy Program (SEP). NASCS requests Congress explicitly include in bill text “*\$375 million for the Weatherization Assistance Program (plus \$15 million for Training & Technical Assistance and \$52 million for the Weatherization Readiness Fund); and \$90 million for the U.S. State Energy Program specifying 95 percent of these funds for formula grants to the State Energy Offices in accordance with the formula that was in place as of January 2026.*” NASCS believes these funding levels are essential to maintain current program operations and will allow WAP and SEP to seize on numerous opportunities for continued innovation.

NASCS is the member organization representing the weatherization Grantees in all 50 States, the District of Columbia, Native American Tribes, and U.S. Territories. The state offices represented by our organization would like to thank this Committee for its support of WAP and SEP funding over the years. WAP is a comprehensive whole-house retrofit program that supports state work to weatherize homes and the use of advanced tools and technologies to diagnose home performance, and SEP provides grants and technical assistance to states to reduce the growth of energy demand. WAP workers and contractors are highly skilled and certified building analysts, trained by a national network of accredited nonprofit organizations, small businesses, and educational institutions. WAP is a proven investment in our communities, not only reducing families’ energy costs, but also making homes healthier and safer while supporting job creation, workforce development, and small businesses. As we head into FY 2027, we see numerous opportunities for continued innovation and to build on the program’s 50-year record of success.

WAP Base Office - The Core of the Program

DOE funding appropriated by Congress has helped improve the energy efficiency of homes for over 7.2 million low-income and rural Americans since the program’s inception in 1976. Each home receives a site-specific suite of energy efficiency measures to be installed, such as

insulation, air sealing, and high-efficiency HVAC systems. DOE requires that the suite of measures installed in each home has a Savings to Investment Ratio of 1.0 or greater to ensure the program delivers cost-effective services to eligible households. By improving the energy efficiency of the home, these long-term investments save families money, month after month, year after year. With lower energy bills, families can increase their usable income and buy other essentials like food, clothing, medicine, and health care. This energy savings impact is the core of the Weatherization Assistance Program’s mission.

Maintaining a robust appropriation is key to ensuring equitable distribution of funding under the WAP formula and sustained WAP impact on a nationwide scale. WAP work completed with DOE funds is subject to at least three layers of quality assurance: quality control is performed on each job by a local certified inspector; at least five percent of all completed jobs receive a second inspection by a state quality assurance monitor; and DOE monitors the quality assurance practices of the state WAP offices. This multi-layered approach to monitoring is designed to safeguard public funds and ensure the purpose of the program is achieved.

Another critical benefit of WAP is its positive effect on the health and safety of families. In homes that are cold and drafty, or affected by mold and excess moisture, there is an increased risk of recurring illnesses. An evaluation by the Oak Ridge National Laboratory¹ found that residents of weatherized homes experienced fewer asthma, allergy, and cold symptoms, as well as fewer missed days of work and school. Weatherization mitigates factors that can trigger an asthma attack, resulting in fewer emergency room visits and hospitalizations. These outcomes pay off — every weatherization dollar spent returns \$2.78 in non-energy benefits, and families report decreased out-of-pocket medical expenses by an average of \$514.² Additionally, the Oak Ridge National Laboratory found that the total health and household-related benefits for each unit are estimated to be \$14,148.³

Incredible need for residential energy efficiency remains. Our nation’s housing stock is aging and inefficient, with roughly 60 percent of homes built before 1980 and a median home age of 40

¹ Oak Ridge National Lab, “Health and Household-Related Benefits Attributable to the Weatherization Assistance Program”, 2014. https://weatherization.ornl.gov/wp-content/uploads/pdf/WAPRetroEvalFinalReports/ORNL_TM-2014_345.pdf

² Department of Energy, “Weatherization Assistance Program Fact Sheet”, 2021. https://www.energy.gov/sites/prod/files/2021/01/f82/WAP-fact-sheet_2021_0.pdf

³ Oak Ridge National Lab, “Weatherization Works - Summary of Findings from the Retrospective Evaluation of the U.S. Department of Energy’s Weatherization Assistance Program”, 2014. https://weatherization.ornl.gov/wp-content/uploads/pdf/WAPRetroEvalFinalReports/ORNL_TM-2014_338.pdf

years.⁴ According to the Energy Information Administration,⁵ 43.56 million American homes are energy insecure. Over 30 million homes reported reducing or forgoing food or medicine to pay energy costs, and 17.55 million homes reported setting thermostats at an unhealthy temperature. Almost seven million homes reported being unable to use heating equipment, while 8.16 million reported being unable to use cooling equipment.

The Role of DOE: Training, Technical Assistance, and Workforce Development

WAP is currently housed in the Office of Critical Minerals and Energy Innovation (CMEI), funded by Congress in FY26 within the Office of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy (EERE). WAP's home within DOE brings the program significant benefits, including technical expertise, access to the latest building science, and opportunities for collaboration with other critical energy efficiency initiatives. DOE's technical standards ensure that clients receive the latest weatherization measures, maximizing the savings to low-income families. DOE's Standard Work Specifications⁶ and Home Energy Professionals⁷ certifications have become the "gold standard" for residential energy efficiency.

Additionally, each state must create and implement a training and technical assistance plan to build capacity in its state network and maintain a skilled workforce. WAP provides robust workforce development in the very same communities in which it delivers energy efficiency services. The energy efficiency work of WAP supports at least 8,500 jobs in weatherization and thousands more across the supply chain of material suppliers, vendors, and manufacturers. These are well-paying jobs that provide rewarding, sustainable careers. Additionally, because of the advanced diagnostics and technology developed in WAP, the program stands as the foundation for the home performance industry, which employs thousands of contractors who complete energy efficiency retrofits across the entire residential sector, contributing to the nearly 2.4 million energy efficiency jobs nationwide.⁸

Through DOE, WAP Grantees also have access to our nation's state-of-the-art labs, such as Oak Ridge National Laboratory in Tennessee and the National Renewable Energy Laboratory in Colorado. Strategic partnerships with these labs provide research, data, and tools that strengthen

⁴ National Association of Home Builders, "Eye on Housing", 2024. https://eyeonhousing.org/2024/02/the-age-of-the-u-s-housing-stock/#_ftn1

⁵ US Energy Information Administration, "Residential Energy Consumption Survey", 2024. https://www.eia.gov/consumption/residential/data/2024/hc/pdf/HC11.1_2024.pdf

⁶ Standard Work Specifications for Home Energy Upgrades <https://sws.nrel.gov/>

⁷ Home Energy Professionals Certifications <https://www.energy.gov/scep/guidelines-home-energy-professionals>

⁸ Department of Energy, "2025 U.S. Energy & Employment Jobs Report", 2025. <https://www.energy.gov/documents/2025-useer-national-report>

the program. WAP also interfaces with other programs and offices housed within CMEI, including the State Energy Program, Building Technologies Office, DOE Better Buildings Initiative, and more. These relationships have provided vital opportunities for collaboration, elevating the latest research and taking taxpayer dollars further.

Of these complementary programs, SEP provides funding and technical assistance to states – including WAP Grantees – to advance state-led energy initiatives. The Oak Ridge National Laboratory found that every dollar invested in SEP by the federal government yields over \$10 leveraged for energy-related economic development and realizes \$7.22 in energy cost savings for U.S. citizens and businesses.⁹ SEP dollars are incredibly flexible and can be leveraged to support a wide variety of state-led initiatives – including synergies with state WAP programs.

WAP Training & Technical Assistance

Since at least FY 2014, DOE has received \$10 million or less each year for WAP training and technical assistance. This funding has failed to keep pace with WAP's growth and the critical need for capacity building provided by DOE. This has impacted DOE's ability to evaluate the effectiveness of the program and has resulted in fewer training opportunities, less effective technical assistance, and delays in technology developments and improvements, such as the National Energy Audit Tool. Supporting the training and technical assistance role of the Office of Weatherization, in coordination with other DOE initiatives, is vital to ensure WAP fulfills its mission and continues to innovate.

Reducing Deferrals Through the Weatherization Readiness Fund

Occasionally, severe conditions in a home can cause a home to be deferred from receiving WAP services because the conditions would render the weatherization measures unsafe or ineffective. For example, standing water in a basement can affect the performance of appliances, old electrical wiring may cause a fire hazard if covered with insulation, and major structural or roofing deficiencies may impede the effective installation of insulation. Since FY22, Congress has provided states with Weatherization Readiness Funding (WRF) to help otherwise-eligible homeowners access barrier remediation, making their homes “weatherization-ready” and therefore able to qualify for WAP. State programs can use Weatherization Readiness Funding to address structural deficiencies, neglected repairs, outdated wiring, or health issues, such as mold and asbestos. Over the past five fiscal years, this funding has provided a lifeline for deferred

⁹ Department of Energy, “Weatherization and Intergovernmental Program”, 2009. https://www1.eere.energy.gov/wip/pdfs/sep_factsheet.pdf

households, helping states serve the homes that need WAP upgrades the most. Increasing WRF in FY27 to \$52 million will allow state programs to defer fewer homes and reach more households.

Opportunities for Innovation

State WAP Grantees are also key drivers of innovation and enhancement of WAP. There are numerous examples of states across the country building on the success of WAP and maximizing the impact of weatherization. For example, Washington and Vermont are leaders in the adoption of a “Weatherization Plus Health” model¹⁰. This means that in addition to the inherent health benefits of WAP, these states are using the weatherization delivery network to incorporate additional healthy homes measures, such as hard surface flooring, duct cleaning, advanced ventilation, mold abatement, accessibility improvements, and more. Local WAP agencies have partnered with community health workers to provide enhanced client education on energy and health. Combined with basic weatherization measures, Weatherization Plus Health can target those with chronic health conditions that result from in-home factors. This model has garnered support from the private sector.

Closing

This year marks the 50th anniversary of the Weatherization Assistance Program. Since 1976, this targeted, one-of-a-kind program has helped reduce the energy burden for senior citizens, those living with disabilities, and low-income families with children. It is for this reason that I am writing to underscore the need for continued Department of Energy funding for WAP and SEP. NASCSP strongly supports innovation in WAP while also maintaining a robust formula allocation that is promptly distributed to all states so they have the capacity and resources needed to continue WAP’s record of success.

We look forward to working with Committee members to ensure WAP, in concert with SEP, continues to deliver cost-effective results that support our economy and make a difference in the lives of the most vulnerable in our communities. Thank you.

Respectfully submitted,

Cheryl Williams, Executive Director

National Association for State Community Services Programs

¹⁰ Vermont Department of Health, “Weatherization + Health: Health and Climate Change Co-Benefits of Home Weatherization in Vermont”, 2018. http://www.healthvermont.gov/sites/default/files/documents/pdf/ENV_CH_WxHealthReport.pdf