



# Policy Suggestions for Home Weatherization Programs

## What is weatherization and why is it important?

Weatherization refers to the process of upgrading homes to improve their energy efficiency and resilience against climate events. Weatherization programs in the U.S. help low income households reduce the amount of energy their homes use, which lowers energy bills and can improve overall health. Such programs are important to reduce the huge energy burdens faced by about one in three Americans.

## How can decision makers support weatherization assistance programs (WAPs)?

The Inflation Reduction Act provides new funding to reduce energy and move towards cleaner power sources for existing homes. State-level decision makers can take advantage of this opportunity to improve state WAP efforts.

### 1 Increase WAP outreach and simplify the WAP application process.

WAP utilization reports estimate that only about 2 out of every 1000 eligible homes complete weatherization. Ensuring WAPs are promoted in eligible communities and creating a transparent and straightforward application process can increase program enrollment.



### 2 Diversify eligibility criteria for WAP Programs.

To ensure the most vulnerable populations are identified, WAP programs could consider including criteria such as higher levels of financial hardship, lack of essential resources, or health. Programs could collaborate with public health entities to identify households most in need.

### 3 Create weatherization solutions for renters.

WAPs typically target homeowners, yet about 33% of Americans are renters. Policymakers should also promote solutions that ensure weatherization options are available to renters.



The M-LEEd Center's Community Engagement Core (CEC) increases awareness and understanding of environmental health research.

Stakeholder Advocacy Board members include:

- Community Health and Social Services
- Detroit Health Department
- Detroit Hispanic Development Corporation
- Detroiters Working for Environmental Justice
- Eastside Community Network
- Ecology Center
- Green Door Initiative
- Henry Ford Health System
- MDHHS
- Michigan Environmental Justice Coalition
- Sierra Club
- We the People of Detroit

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## How can weatherization help with climate change?

In Michigan, climate change is causing changes in seasonal patterns, and extreme weather events are expected to increase in the coming years. Weatherized homes are one solution to help individuals protect themselves from the increasing temperature extremes due to climate change. Weatherized homes are better equipped to withstand temperature changes that come with more extreme weather patterns. Additionally, weatherized homes reduce burdens on energy grids, which is especially important during periods of high energy usage, such as high heat events.

## Benefits of weatherization

### Health benefits

- Reduced asthma and Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disorder (COPD) symptoms.
- Reduced heat stress
- Fewer arthritis symptoms.
- Improvements in general health.
- Reduced psychological distress.

### Non-health benefits

- Utility companies save money by reducing energy shutoff frequency and emergency services use.
- Households save money on energy costs.
- Societal and environmental benefits from the reduced emissions of weatherized homes.



Please see [http://mleead.umich.edu/Coec\\_Fact\\_Sheets.php](http://mleead.umich.edu/Coec_Fact_Sheets.php) for the citations included in this factsheet.

The University of Michigan Lifestage Environmental Exposures and Disease Center (M-LEEd) Community Engagement Core (CEC) promotes collaboration among UM environmental health researchers and communities to advance knowledge of environmental health issues that affect community members in Detroit and Southeast Michigan.

Support for this research was provided by grant P30ES017885 from the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences, National Institutes of Health.

