

Upcoming Events

February 25-March 1
NASCSP Mid-Winter Training
Conference (CSBG and WAP)
Arlington, VA

March 5-8
NCAF Legislative Conference
Washington, D.C.

March 19-21
DCEO Energy Conference (LIHEAP
and Weatherization) Peoria, IL

Weatherization Trainings

ROUND 1
January 28-Feb 1
Air Conditioning & Heat Pumps
February 19-21
Health and Safety
February 22
Proficiency Exam
March 12-14
Building Assessment

ROUND 2
January 28-Feb 1
Heat Transfer
February 4-8
Building Fundamentals
February 25-March 1
Diagnostics
March 18-19
Infra-red Thermography
March 20-22
Mid-Course Field Session
April 8-12
Basic Heating
April 22-26
Advanced Heating
May 13-17
Air Conditioning & Heat Pumps
June 3-5
Health and Safety
June 6
Proficiency Exam
June 18-20
Building Assessment

Weatherization Training Facility Opens at the University of Illinois



Lt. Governor Sheila Simon cuts the ribbon officially opening the Weatherization Training Facility.

The Indoor Climate Research and Training (ICRT) program, a part of the Illinois Sustainable Technology Center (ISTC), at the University of Illinois in Champaign held a ribbon cutting ceremony on October 16 to celebrate the opening of a new Weatherization training facility. Lt. Governor Sheila Simon attended the event and participated in the ribbon cutting. The training facility is unlike any in the state and will be invaluable in training and certifying Weatherization agency assessors, staff, and contractors through both classroom instruction and hands-on learning in the areas of insulation, air sealing, and HVAC work.

The 6,700 square foot training facility will enhance the work already done by the ICRT that has been involved in research and training for years, including setting national standards for energy efficiency in residential buildings.

In addition to hearing from the Lt. Governor at the ceremonial event, Larry Dawson from the Office of Energy Assistance (OEA) provided brief comments on what the facility's opening will mean for the Weatherization Assistance Program in Illinois. Following the ribbon cutting, there were presentations on the history of residential energy efficiency in Illinois, as well as a presentation by Randy Bennett (OEA) on the history of the Weatherization program in Illinois. Tours and demonstrations were also provided. The ICRT expects thousands of trainees to benefit from the facility.

Weatherization ARRA Program Proves to be a Big Success

Funding from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) for the Weatherization Assistance Program will end for the state of Illinois in a few short months, but the overwhelming success of the program continues to be evident as the final numbers come in. Since the infusion of ARRA funding in 2009, Weatherization agencies in all 50 states have weatherized over 775,000 homes thanks to the additional dollars, far exceeding the goal of 593,000 homes. In Illinois alone, over 43,000 additional homeowners have benefited from the ARRA dollars, which lower utility bills and improve the health and safety of the home, while helping local business through the purchasing of materials and adding jobs to the community.



Despite this success, the program has seen cuts of 66% from pre-ARRA funding levels. Charlie Harak, an attorney for the National Consumer Law Center, stated, "State and local weatherization agencies throughout the nation really came through in delivering the goods. Not only are over three-quarters of a million low-income families now living in healthier, more energy-efficient homes, saving an average \$437 annually per household, but the program created 14,400 skilled jobs at its peak, and enabled many small U.S. businesses to grow while laying the foundation for a more vibrant green economy."

In addition to the 43,000+ homes weatherized in Illinois from ARRA funding (16,000 more than estimated), the

State of Illinois estimates that 1,100 new weatherization workers were trained for the program. These newly trained workers, along with the creation of a 6,700 square foot training facility at the University of Illinois, will ensure that the program continues to use highly competent staff and the most current state-of-the-art equipment.



LIHEAP/Weatherization Numbers (as of December 12, 2012)

LIHEAP Applicants (DVP) receiving at least 1 benefit	139,281
Total LIHEAP benefits distributed (DVP)	\$65.1 million
PIPP Applicants receiving benefits	51,100
Total PIPP benefits obligated	\$35,107,688
Weatherization Units completed - PY2013	2,000
Weatherization Units completed and in progress	3,851
Total ARRA homes completed since program began	43,505

Success Stories/Testimonials

Every day the 35 local agencies that operate both the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program and the Weatherization Assistance Program produce inspiring success stories that benefit families with low incomes. Below is one such story and a testimonial.

Submitted by Embarras River Basin Agency (ERBA)

A married woman with two young daughters and a husband who has a disability came to ERBA seeking assistance through the LIHEAP program. Money was tight for the family while the mother attended school to become a nurse practitioner. The family was getting by on Social Security from her husband and from the wife working at a local school.

ERBA staff told the woman about the new Percentage of Income Payment Plan (PIPP). While the woman was grateful for the help with LIHEAP in past years, the PIPP program was potentially a good fit for her. As a result of signing up for the PIPP, the woman has reported to ERBA that it has helped her tremendously by freeing up funds that can be used to pay for gas traveling back and forth to her clinical studies.

Submitted by Tri-County Opportunities Council

Good Morning,

My husband and I are so grateful that you helped us a few years back. You gave us a new furnace and insulated our home in Sterling for us. I did not fully understand what a huge difference it would make until last night. The storm we had yesterday took out our power for a little over four hours last night. And I have to say you guys did a great job. In four hours we only lost two degrees. We were nice and toasty warm and that was due to the work you did on our house. So thank you again and god bless each and every one of you.

May your holiday season be happy and have a wonderful new year. Keep up the good work, you are helping this community more than you think.

God Bless,
Susan & William Wolff

The Percentage of Income Payment Plan Completes Year Two of Implementation

The application process for year two of the Percentage of Income Payment Plan (PIPP) came to an end on December 31, 2012, and for a second straight year the program has been a success. As of mid-December, 51,100 customers were enrolled and receiving benefits from the program. This is an increase of more than 40% over the year one total number of customers. LIHEAP remains available for the traditional program through May 2013.

PIPP customers receive their benefits on a monthly basis, based upon 6% of their total household income. The goals of the PIPP, which formally began in September 2011, were to improve the affordability of household utility bills, reduce arrearages, and assist customers in becoming timely bill payers, therefore reducing the disconnection/reconnection cycle that some experience. The success of the program will largely be judged by the number of PIPP customers enrolled and the number who successfully make on-time payments and therefore remain on the program. Local administering agencies also assist customers by making personal contact if a customer is in danger of being removed from the program.

In the first two years, the number of customers enrolled in the program has exceeded the expectations of the Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (DCEO). In addition, only 7-8% of customers have been removed from the program for non-payment, relocation, tampering, or other reasons. These early results imply that when customers are provided with an affordable bill, they are able to make their payments. In addition, the efforts of local agencies in the "intervention" process are improving the payment habits of LIHEAP customers.

In the next few months DCEO hopes to employ a third party evaluator who will examine the data and evaluate the program to this point. This information will provide more detailed and definitive results for the program.

In the meantime, DCEO will continue to work on improving the problems associated with the STARS intake system. As more parts of the program are automated, local agencies will be able to better serve their customers and provide more complete customer service.

National Community Action Foundation Legislative Conference

 This year's National Community Action Foundation Legislative Conference is scheduled for March 5-8

in Washington, D.C. Each year IACAA leads a delegation of community action Executive Directors to Washington, D.C. during this conference and visits each member of Congress to stress the importance of community action programs. IACAA organizes each congressional visit and provides program material unique to each Congressional District. While IACAA staff can provide basic information about the programs agencies operate, we have found that these visits are much more effective when agency Directors from within each district are there to give first-hand knowledge of the work that they do.

We encourage Directors to make plans to attend this conference and accompany IACAA staff on these visits. Last year, Community Action was represented by 5 agencies: Kris White from Will County Center for Community Concerns, Mary Lockhart White from Community Action Partnership of Lake County, Dwight Lucas from East Central Illinois Community Action Agency, Cameron Moore from Champaign County Regional Planning Commission, and Pat Doherty-Wildner and Marsh Belcher from CEDA. In addition, Board Members from East Central and CEDA also attended.

For more information please visit the NCAF website: <https://www.ncaf.org/2013-legislative-conference>.



Dwight Lucas (CEO East Central), Ron Bean (CEDA Board Member), Rep. Jan Schakowsky, Dalitso Sulamoyo (IACAA CEO)