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Report: Federal Stimulus Shines but Drastic Cuts Threaten Program *ARRA Weatherization Assistance Program Results: 775,000 Homes and 14,400 Green Jobs*

Executive summary, full report, charts, and videos at:
<http://www.nclc.org/issues/low-income-weatherization.html>

BOSTON—The numbers are in and they document that the \$5 billion that the federal government authorized for the Weatherization Assistance Program (WAP) in 2009 as part of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) has exceeded its goal in weatherizing low-income homes in 50 states, yet the program is now threatened by a huge budget cut for fiscal year 2013. *Low-Income Weatherization: Stimulus-Funded Program Shines but Storm Clouds Are on the Horizon*, a new report from the National Consumer Law Center (NCLC), found that ARRA-funding spent over the past three years resulted in WAP weatherizing 775,000 low-income homes nationwide, exceeding the government’s initial goal of 593,000 homes. Meanwhile, the federal program, now in its thirty-fifth year, is slated for a 95% cut from ARRA funding (and 66% cut from pre-ARRA funding) for the fiscal year beginning April 1, 2013.

“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, 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,” said National Consumer Law Center Attorney Charlie Harak, author of the report. “It’s unbelievable that on the heels of such a tremendous success, this cost-effective program is now in imminent danger as it faces a 66% cut from pre-Stimulus funding. The need is great as only 20% of eligible homes have been weatherized.”

Key Findings and Recommendations

The report documents that the program got off to a slow start as states wrestled with the Davis-Bacon prevailing wage requirement and finding enough skilled energy auditors and weatherization contractors. However, these initial challenges were overcome, and after the three-year time period for spending ARRA funds concluded on September 30, 2012, the program exceeded its goals. Providing an in-depth look at how Massachusetts and other states overcame initial obstacles and ran a high-quality program, the report finds that key to the program’s continued success is *consistent* and *sustainable* annual federal funding of at least \$300 million. Additionally, state weatherization offices must provide adequate training, support, and oversight.

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Since 1969, the nonprofit National Consumer Law Center[®] (NCLC[®]) has used its expertise in consumer law and energy policy to work for consumer justice and economic security for low-income and other disadvantaged people, including older adults, in the United States. NCLC’s expertise includes policy analysis and advocacy; consumer law and energy publications; litigation; expert witness services, and training and advice for advocates. NCLC works with nonprofit and legal services organizations, private attorneys, policymakers, and federal and state government and courts across the nation to stop exploitive practices, help financially stressed families build and retain wealth, and advance economic fairness.