

May 5, 2025

The Honorable Chris Wright
Secretary
US Department of Energy
1000 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20585

Dear Secretary Wright:

On behalf of the National Consumer Law Center (NCLC), ACEEE, the National Energy Assistance Directors Association (NEADA) and National Association of State Utility Consumer Advocates (NASUCA), we write to urge you to ensure the continued effectiveness of the Department's Weatherization Assistance Program (WAP) by maintaining sufficient staffing to administer WAP, a program that has a history of strong bi-partisan support. Over the years, a modest team of 32 staff has ensured that vital weatherization services reached millions of households, grown a skilled workforce in our communities which in turn has strengthened local economies by supporting small contractor businesses and the building materials industries and merchants.

WAP helps keep energy bills affordable. Established in 1976, the Weatherization Assistance Program helps vulnerable families to afford essential home energy services. For nearly 50 years, WAP has helped American families save an average of 20 percent¹ annually on their energy bills, and reduced the energy burden for 7.2 million eligible low-income households.² By enabling families to afford their energy bills, WAP also reduces delinquencies and nonpayment, thus reducing costs for all ratepayers. Each weatherization dollar produces \$4.50 in energy savings and health and safety benefits.³

WAP protects public health and safety. For example, WAP can provide emergency repair and replacement of home energy delivery systems during the winter when a working heating system can mean the difference between life and death. Weatherization also protects households during extreme heat events, which have become more frequent and are expected to worsen. Senior citizens are especially vulnerable to extreme weather events.⁴ Nearly 69,000 housing units were

¹ *Weatherization Assistance Program: Driving Energy Efficiency and Security*, NASCSP, <https://nascsp.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/02/250212-Energy-Awareness-Flyer.pdf>.

² Department of Energy Weatherization Assistance Program: <https://www.energy.gov/scep/wap/weatherization-assistance-program>.

³ *Weatherization Assistance Program Sets Gold Standard for Home Performance Industry*: <https://www.energy.gov/eere/articles/weatherization-assistance-program-sets-gold-standard-home-performance-industry>.

⁴ Deaths from extreme weather events mount each year. In Maricopa County, Arizona experienced 645 heat-related deaths in 2023 alone, a 52 percent increase over 2022. These deaths and others around the country demonstrate that it is more important than ever that the Department and its 56 Grantees work closely together to provide essential, life-saving services that mitigate extreme heat and cold. *2023 Heat Related Deaths Report*, Maricopa County Department of Public Health,

weatherized during Program Year 2022, with priority given to seniors with high energy burdens.⁵ A deep reduction in WAP staff will leave the department insufficiently staffed to deliver the necessary support to efficiently operate the WAP, leaving seniors and low-income families at risk.

WAP also supports good paying jobs in every state. Weatherization services are delivered by local contractors, with about 8,500 workers employed each year in highly skilled weatherization jobs. And WAP reduces peak demand on the grid by reducing waste of electric cooling and heating.

Reported departures of three-quarters of WAP staff threaten to weaken or eliminate these vital programs, calling into question the ability of DOE to meet its statutory obligations to operate and monitor this essential program. We respectfully request that the Department make all efforts to retain WAP staff, and hire to replace those departing to the fullest extent possible. Staff retention or replacement at this critical time is vital to ensuring the program operates within statute and protects the integrity of the taxpayer dollars for this program. We have already heard reports that contractors in local communities have been forced to pause or cease weatherization work altogether, delaying the important benefits of weatherization to vulnerable households and putting jobs at risk. Communities across the country depend on these programs.

We strongly urge you to make all efforts to retain WAP staff willing to continue or return to the department and administer this program, and to hire for any positions which are absolutely essential to the continuation of WAP.

Thank you for your consideration of this important request. Please contact Olivia Wein (owein@nclc.org) with any questions.

Sincerely,

National Consumer Law Center, on behalf of its low-income clients
ACEEE
National Energy Assistance Directors Association
National Association of State Utility Consumer Advocates

Cc: The Honorable Mike Lee (R-UT)
The Honorable Martin Heinrich (D-NM)
The Honorable Brett Guthrie (R-KY)
The Honorable Frank Pallone (D-NJ)

<https://www.maricopa.gov/ArchiveCenter/ViewFile/Item/5820#:~:text=Maricopa%20County%20identified%20a%20total,related%20deaths%20were%20heat%20caused.>

⁵ *Weatherization Assistance Program Funding Report Program Year 2022*, NASCSP, <https://nascsp.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/12/PY22-WAP-Annual-Funding-Report-1.pdf>.