

# Minnesota Success Stories: Jobs + Saving Energy = Success

## St. Paul Residence

**Weatherization Improvements:** Attic and sidewall insulation, air-sealing, weather stripping.

**Weatherization Agency:** Community Action Partnership of Ramsey and Washington Counties

## Working to weatherize homes

Daniel Orchard, an apprentice carpenter from South St. Paul, is one of many who can say the federal stimulus money for the low income weatherization program is hitting the mark: creating good jobs with benefits while improving energy efficiency in people's homes. Orchard has been working on homes that qualify for



*Daniel Orchard fills a blowing machine with cellulose insulation that is being dense-packed into the walls of a client's home in St. Paul.*

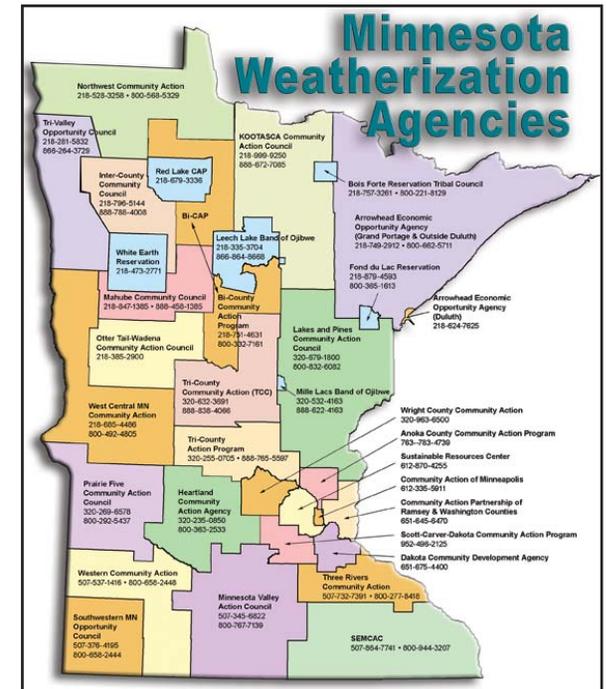
the state's Weatherization Assistance Program (WAP). WAP provides low-income homeowners and renters with services such as energy education, energy audits, exterior wall and attic insulation, and air leak sealing. The program also does specific safety testing as well as repairs and replacement of mechanical equipment.

"I probably would not be working today if not for the stimulus funding," said Orchard, who weatherizes homes for the Community Action Partnership of Ramsey and Washington Counties (CAPRW). "I was out of work for five months before the union called me in May about this job. I'm very grateful for the work."

ARRA has provided a much-needed hiring boost to the depressed building and trades fields, said Jeff Fjeld, a journeyman carpenter and WAP crew leader for CAPRW. "There are so many carpenters who are laid off. I wish there was even more stimulus money."

## More weatherized homes

The weatherization program has existed for more than 30 years, providing about 4,000 Minnesota households per year with services totaling about \$10 million. But in March 2009, the Office of Energy Security in Minnesota received \$131.9 million in federal funding for WAP from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA). The stimulus money (spread out over 18 months) represents a tenfold increase in weatherization program funding for Minnesota.



Marilou Cheple, Weatherization Supervisor in the Office of Energy Security for the state, explained that the program will be able to serve over 10,000 households this year. She stressed that the dramatically increased number is from combining both the regular Department of Energy funding that comes to Minnesota each year, along with this year's ARRA stimulus money—plus private sector resources from both gas and electric utilities.

## Jobs across the state

Cheple also said over 340 new green jobs have been created thus far in Minnesota from the ARRA funding.

“We weatherized 343 low income homes during the past fiscal year,” says CAPRW Director Cindy Webster. “We will serve over four times that many homes this year.” That translates into many new jobs, including carpenters, auditors, and office staff—more than double (38) from the previous year. What's more, the agency sub-contracts some work to private contractors, which keeps additional weatherization contractors and workers employed. Similarly, other weatherization service providers across the state have greatly increased their weatherization work force—and contracted workers—to ramp up weatherization services.

## Lower energy bills, more smiling faces

The ARRA funding has provided employment to those charged with overseeing and administering the program, as well. Weatherization energy auditors and agency



*Florenda Cox explains program benefits to clients and schedules visits with weatherization auditors and crews. She is one of the new hires at CAPRW as a result of ARRA funding.*

support staff count themselves among the benefactors of the stimulus funding.

Florenda Cox, energy conservation associate for CAPRW, was hired in August after working part-time. “My job is to help people understand how they can benefit from our program and to schedule their energy audits,” she said. “It’s a wonderful program for the community; it helps people who otherwise couldn’t afford energy upgrades. It’s gratifying to know I can put a smile on someone’s face, helping them lower their energy bills.”

Joy Graf is support services supervisor at CAPRW. She was laid off and did not work for five months before accepting her new job last May. “You hear on the news about all the people who have lost their jobs,” she said, “and some question the impact of the stimulus funding—they say it’s not helping. Well, we’ve hired 15 new people since I arrived, and most of those people had been out of work.”

The stimulus funding for the Weatherization Assistance Program is a “win-win” situation. It is doing what it set out to do: putting people to work, making lasting improvements and conserving energy in people’s homes—year after year.

## To learn more...

For information about Minnesota’s Weatherization Assistance Program, including agency contacts and qualification requirements, go to [www.energy.mn.gov](http://www.energy.mn.gov) or call 800-657-3710.



*Joy Graf was unemployed for five months before accepting the position of support services supervisor at CAPRW.*

## Minnesota Success Stories creating jobs • saving energy



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