



# NEWS

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TEXAS DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND COMMUNITY AFFAIRS

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## State housing agency calls on Texans to check home energy efficiency, conservation

*Governor, TDHCA encourage state's citizens to apply weatherization measures to keep homes affordable*

(AUSTIN) — The Texas Department of Housing and Community Affairs (TDHCA) today joined Governor Rick Perry in recognizing October 30, 2007, as “Weatherization Day” in Texas in support of the national “Weatherization Day” designation by the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE). The recognition serves as a reminder for Texans to check their homes for energy efficiency and take steps to increase energy conservation to keep homes affordable.

“Whether or not Texans own or rent their homes, everyone can take energy cost-saving measures to maintain their home’s affordability,” explained TDHCA Executive Director Michael Gerber. “The savings resulting from home weatherization mean more dollars are put back in Texans’ pockets to visit a doctor, buy medicine, buy groceries or otherwise improve their standard of living.”

According to the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE), people who have weatherized their home have saved an average of as much as \$300 in annual utility costs while adding an estimated \$1,000 to the value of their home. The dollar savings alone can make a big difference for low-income families.

TDHCA encourages low income Texans in need of weatherization assistance to learn about the state’s Weatherization Assistance Program, which is administered by TDHCA through funding received from the DOE, Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) and Utility Program funds.

Weatherization activities supported by the program include energy education as well as home energy audits (a review of a home’s energy efficiency, which identifies where air leaks may be occurring, inefficient appliances, etc.), and the installation of weatherization measures to increase energy efficiency of a home.

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The weatherization work consists of caulking; weather-stripping; adding ceiling, wall, and floor insulation; patching holes in the building envelopes; and tune-up, repair or replacement of energy inefficient heating and cooling systems.

TDHCA's Weatherization Assistance Program supports professional weatherization teams across the state who review home energy efficiency and install weatherization measures that meet specific energy-savings goals. Since 2000, 34 local WAP contractors have weatherized more than 5,225 Texas homes throughout the state.

The Department encourages all Texans to apply the following weatherization measures to make their homes as energy efficient and affordable as possible:

- Install storm windows, or add caulking or sealant to existing windows to reduce the infiltration of cold air in the winter and warm air in the summer;
- Close drapes or blinds and lock windows to ensure a tight seal;
- Weatherstrip the perimeter of exterior doors;
- Install insulation in your attic, walls (where accessible), and floors;
- Set water heater to 120 degrees and add an insulation blanket to the unit (check the manufacturer's label for important information);
- Add insulation to water pipes;
- Install low flow shower heads and faucet aerators;
- Use conservation showerheads to eliminate hot water waste;
- Install dampers in chimneys;
- Replace filters in heating and cooling systems on a monthly basis;
- Check the direction of ceiling fans: in the winter, set fans to move air downward; (counterclockwise); in the summer, set fans to move air upward (clockwise);
- Close the damper on fireplaces (when not in use) or add glass doors;
- Remove furniture and carpeting from heater vents to ensure proper circulation;
- Adjust the thermostat to slightly lower temperatures in the winter and slightly higher; temperatures in the summer when your family is sleeping or away from the home;
- Replace old appliances with new energy efficient models (look for the EnergyStar label); and,
- Install Compact Florescent Light (CFL) bulbs.

For a complete listing of local Texas Weatherization Assistance Program contractors, visit <http://www.tdhca.state.tx.us/ea/docs/07-WAPSubgrants.pdf>. For additional information about TDHCA's Weatherization Assistance Program, visit TDHCA's Energy Assistance page online at <http://www.tdhca.state.tx.us/ea/index.htm> or call TDHCA's Weatherization Assistance program staff toll free 888-606-8889.

### **About the Texas Department of Housing and Community Affairs**

*The Texas Department of Housing and Community Affairs is Texas' lead agency responsible for affordable housing, community services, energy assistance, and colonia housing programs. The Department annually administers more than \$400 million through for-profit, non-profit, and local government partnerships to deliver local housing and community-based opportunities and assistance to Texans in need.*