

## **Responses to Questions Under the DECD RFP for Weatherization**

The following are responses to all questions asked by potential applicants under the DECD RFP for the ARRA Weatherization Assistance Program.

- **I represent CRT Weatherization which is a sub-grantee for the State of CT ARRA Weatherization DSS/DOE program and want to know if that role would exclude us from this RFP?**

No, you are not excluded from applying under the DECD RFP. At the bottom of page 1 in the RFP, it states: "Community Action Agencies that are in good standing with DSS are eligible to compete for the provision of weatherization services as an individual organization or as multiple organizations."

- **In examining the RFP document, we have formulated a question concerning the number of units and buildings that are to be weatherized in each region. There are discrepancies between the numbers of Elderly Units Where Tenants Pay Their Own Utilities by CAA Regions and the number of units assigned to each CAA Region in the table on Page 6. For instance, in the ABCD Area, page 6 announces 456 units, whereas the Elderly Units Where Tenants Pay Their Own Utilities by CAA Regions announce 548 units. Since we are to submit a schedule of work as specified on page 2, II. Award Criteria, point 3 of the RFP, we would like to know which of the buildings will not be weatherized. If possible, could we have a table of Elderly buildings that corresponds to the number of units that will be financed through the ARRA program?**

The simple answer is that DECD has more elderly units than can be weatherized under the ARRA WAP Program. On the chart entitled "Elderly Units Where Tenants Pay Their Own utilities by CAA Regions" the figure of 548 units includes the entire number of elderly units in the ABCD Area that meet the criteria for weatherization under the RFP. However, it may be that we will not be able to weatherize every eligible elderly unit either in the ABCD Area or any other. The figure of 456 units shown on page 6 is the potential number of units determined by DSS for the ABCD Area. You should use the 456 unit-count as the correct figure under this RFP. DECD will be working with the contractors and the housing authorities involved to see which housing authorities are interested in having their units weatherized. If every housing authority in your area expresses an interest, the weatherization of units will be based on which authorities express that interest first.

- **When the proposals are opened, can the applicants attend?**

No, the process is that the Official Agency Contact will open all applications, make sure that each application meets the minimum submission requirements under the RFP and then distribute all review materials, including applications, to members of the review team.

- **What does the \$6,500 - \$10,000 budget per unit cover? Is this the same as the WAP/ARRA budget inclusions: materials, program support, liability insurance, pollution insurance, administration, financial audit, training and technical assistance?**

Yes, the same rules apply under the DECD weatherization program, with the exception of training and technical assistance. As stated in the RFP on page 2, #2, DSS has developed agreements with DSS, DOL, the Community Colleges, Workforce Investment Boards and the Office for Workforce Competitiveness in terms of training and all training for both current and new workers will be at no charge to the selected contractor(s) under the DECD RFP.

- **Who does the initial audit in the home? Is this included in the budget?**

The contractor or contractors that DECD chooses under this RFP are responsible for all services described in the RFP, that is: identification of eligible clients including income verification and application process; evaluation/audit of dwelling units to be weatherized; installation of energy saving measures; identification and mitigation of related health and safety concerns as related to weatherization work to be completed; and inspection/supervision

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of weatherization work performed by subcontractors. So, the contractor(s) will do the initial audit in the home or use a subcontractor who is trained and certified to do the DOE-approved WRAP Home Check Energy Audit. The cost of the audit is included in the budget.

- **What is a separate service? Does this include the final audit/inspection? Should we cost this out for the proposal? Are there cost guidelines for these audits/inspections?**

In the RFP, on page 5, it states: “The fifth (5<sup>th</sup>) service category, the supervision or inspection of completed weatherization work, is considered by DECD to be a separate service. DECD is looking for the selected contractor(s) to find a totally separate contractor to provide inspection services or, at a minimum, to provide a written guarantee that the inspection of completed weatherization work can and will be provided by an individual or entity within the contractor’s overall organization who is completely separate from the persons performing weatherization services for the entire state or for inclusive single or multiple regions vs. selected towns or properties within a region.”

DECD expects that whoever inspects completed weatherization work done to a property will NOT be the same person that did the weatherization work. That is why we refer to it as a separate service. The cost for the inspection of weatherization work is included in the \$6,500 average/\$10,000 maximum per unit quoted in the RFP. There is no specific cost assigned to performing an audit. This will be negotiated at contract execution.

- **Who does the client qualification? Is there a cost related to this? Is it covered in the \$6,500-\$10,000 budget per residence?**

The selected contractor(s) is responsible for all services described in the RFP including identification of eligible clients (income verification and application process). The contractor can subcontract for this service if the organization does not have people who have managed this process before. In fact, on page 6 of the RFP in the top full paragraph, the RFP states that “in addition, any contractor(s) selected under this RFP is encouraged to coordinate efforts around client/household eligibility with the local community action agency in the region where the contractor is going to do the work. The local community action agency may have identified clients who are eligible for the DSS Energy Assistance Program and, as this is a dual application process, those clients may already have been deemed eligible for the weatherization program. This coordination will help to ensure a correct process around determining eligibility and will avoid duplication of effort.” The cost falls under the \$6,500-\$10,000 limit per residence.

- **RFP page number 14, Section 3.4 “Capacity” states each application must include three (3) references from recent “clients.” Does this mean homeowners that recently received weatherization services, or does this mean subcontractors, housing authorities or property housing managers?**

On page 14, Section 3.3 asks each applicant to provide a list of properties, organizations, or businesses where the applicant has provided similar services over the last five (5) years. On the same page, Section 3.4 asks each applicant to include three (3) letters of reference from recent clients and to provide the name, title, company address and phone number for each reference. DECD would like references from larger properties, for example, an apartment complex, a housing authority property or a business in the community where you have provided weatherization services.

- **No specific page number available – are there specific financial forms to be used when filling out the budget?**

No. The applicant should choose a clear format in which the proposed budget will be addressed.

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- **Is the purchase of audit equipment such as door blowers an allowable expense? How is it categorized: Admin, Program Support?**  
Testing equipment such as door blowers, hand held scoping equipment, etc. are eligible expenses under program administration costs. Purchases over \$500 must be reviewed and approved in advance.
- **Are landlords required to contribute towards the expense of weatherization of units they own/are responsible for?**  
Yes, there is a requirement under the ARRA Weatherization Assistance Program that a landlord must contribute 20% of material costs up to a maximum of \$500 per unit to receive weatherization services. Recognizing that this might be an impediment for landlords of state-financed multifamily housing units, DECD is implementing a “waiver request process” for this requirement. However, a waiver is not a given and the landlord (housing authority) must write a letter to the Commissioner of DECD, request a waiver and state a clear case as to why a waiver is necessary in order to receive that waiver.
- **What is the policy for dwellings with multiple units and energy audits; is it necessary to perform an energy audit for every unit, or just a representative sample?**  
The selected contractor(s) under the DECD RFP will be required to perform the DOE-approved CL&P WRAP Home Check Energy Audit. The energy audit drives the process around what weatherization measures can be installed in a residence and it is clearly possible that units of state-financed multifamily housing may differ in what weatherization measures are required from unit to unit. If necessary, the contractor may have to do an audit of each unit to see what weatherization measures are needed in each unit depending on whether or not the unit has received any weatherization improvements in the past.
- **Upon award of the contract, we will pay for and have our insurance requirements fulfilled? Is this OK?**  
DECD will include a certificate of insurance for the contractor(s) and a copy (ies) of license(s) in our contract with any client. We will verify that the contractor’s name does not appear on the Excluded Parties List System (EPLS). The website for EPLS is <https://www.epls.gov>. The contractor(s) chosen by DECD must do the same for any subcontractors hired to complete weatherization work under this RFP.
- **Section 20.1, page 6: Does the hourly rate of \$105.00 mentioned include the actual pay to each of the two man crew?**  
This question is in reference to Exhibit 20.1 and the subject of Blower Door Directed Air-Sealing Guidance. Yes. The hourly rate of \$105.00 includes both material and program support for a two man air sealing crew. Unlike other measures that are reimbursed on actual cost, air sealing is based on an hourly rate of \$105.00.
- **Section 20.1, pages 6 and 7: Does the \$105.00 mentioned include the required fringe benefits (insurance, FICA tax, etc.)?**  
Yes, it does.
- **Section 20.1, page 7: What exactly is included regarding the \$75.00 allocated to the “support cost” of the job?**  
DSS and the agencies it contracts with use the \$75 program support earned to pay for the labor costs for air sealing. In addition, the program support earned can also be used to cover other expenses under the program support category. Exhibit 19.1 shows you what the program support category includes. DECD will follow the same guidance in paying its contractor(s).

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- **Section 20.1, pages 6 and 7: How did the department arrive at the \$105.00 amount? Please list the items in the calculation.**  
\$105.00 is the amount DSS uses to reimburse agencies (for every \$1 of material installed, the agency earns \$2.50 in the program support category). Therefore, \$30 in materials X \$2.50 = \$75 in program support earned. Again, DECD will use the same guidance in paying its contractor(s).
- **Section 19.1, page 14: Are the items listed under Program Support realistically expected to be paid for by the \$105.00 figure listed in Section 20.1, pages 6 and 7?**  
This question is in reference to Exhibit 19.1, Program Administration Information. The \$105.00 listed is used to pay for a two man air sealing crew and it can cover other expenditures under the program support category.
- **Section 20.1, pages 6 and 7: In addition, are we then reimbursed an amount of money per CFM reduced over and above the \$105.00 amount?**  
No, DSS does not reimburse an amount per CFM reduction. It is based on the hourly rate of \$105.00. Again, DECD will follow the same guidance in paying its contractor(s).
- **Section 20.1, pages 6 and 7: Are additional materials, such as light bulbs, that can then be reimbursed over and above the \$105.00?**  
Air sealing includes urethane foam, interior caulking, miscellaneous materials for covering large holes, such as sheetrock, plywood, flashing, insulation board, cardboard, nails, screws and other hardware and is included in the \$105.00. Other measures must have a SIR (Savings to Investment Ratio) of 1 or more, or be a health and safety measure.
- **Are building permit fees exempt?**  
No. You have to pay all standard fees applicable in the town or city in which you are working.
- **Is bonding required? If so, is it required for the entire program amount?**  
No bonding is required as related to the activity under the Weatherization Assistance Program.
- **Does the Section 3 clause apply?**  
Section 3 is a federal requirement for hiring related to hiring residents of neighborhoods in which the contractor does work. This provision for hiring does not apply to the contractor(s) receiving the award(s) under the Weatherization Assistance Program. Hiring and training of new employees is described on pages 2 and 7 of the RFP and is tied to the State of Connecticut Plan for the ARRA Weatherization Assistance Program (on the State of Connecticut Department of Social Service website).
- **Do state prevailing wages also apply? Or just Davis Bacon?**  
Any contractor(s) and subcontractors are obligated to pay Davis Bacon wages on all activity related to the Weatherization Assistance Program. There is no conflict between state prevailing wages and Davis Bacon wages.
- **Can the contractor propose a schedule that will expend the weatherization funds in a shorter period of time than scheduled in the RFP?**  
The contractor is expected to provide an anticipated, progressive schedule of work for the entire state or for the area(s) of the state in which the contractor is proposing to do work. If this schedule and all work required under it can be completed quicker than DECD might anticipate, there would be no problem with that.

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- **Does the “Buy American” clause apply to the ARRA weatherization funds?**  
We do not have a definitive answer to this question at this point in time. Any contractor selected under this RFP must abide by DOE guidelines on this issue which will be discussed at contract execution.
- **Are ERR Environmental reviews required for the individual housing developments?**  
No, ERR reviews will not be required for weatherization assistance.
- **Old chalk (caulk?), pipe wrap, window glazing, adhesives can contain asbestos. Does testing need to be performed? Will the contractor be required to abate the hazardous materials? What will happen if temporary relocation is required?**  
If a weatherization activity is being undertaken and there is a problem with lead or asbestos related to the weatherization work that is going to be done, the weatherization contractor can have a lead or asbestos special contractor called in to abate the substance specifically related to weatherization work. General asbestos or lead abatement, as related to the entire residence (that is, not only as it concerns weatherization work) is NOT an allowable health and safety measure. When it comes to state-financed housing under the DECD RFP, the contractor will have to work in conjunction with the housing authority director to ascertain if these substances may be present in a unit. This will have to be handled on a case-by-case basis.
- **Old windows, doors and trim can contain lead paint. Does testing need to be performed as part of this contract? Will the contractor be required to abate the lead paint? What will happen if temporary relocation is required?**  
See the answer directly above.
- **Old light fixtures/bulbs can contain PCBs. Does testing need to be performed as part of this contract? Will the contractor be required to abate the hazardous materials?**  
PCB testing is not required as part of this contract. If fixtures are being replaced, proper disposal of all materials must be accomplished.
- **Does tenant intake and qualification require backup beyond the signed application for program assistance, such as collecting tax returns and other backup? Can DECD provide guidance on the State of Connecticut requirements pertaining to handling and storing applicant’s personal data?**  
Yes, tenant identification (intake) and qualification (income verification) does require backup beyond the signed application for program assistance, such as tax returns, etc. Under the ARRA Weatherization Assistance Program DECD requires that all hard copy files containing a client’s personal financial information are kept locked. If the information is contained in computerized files, then only those who absolutely require access are allowed access to those files. The only exception would be to grant permission to DECD, DSS or the US Department of Energy (USDOE) for access to any files they may need to review for monitoring purposes.