New York Leads in Preservation of Multifamily Housing Using Weatherization Assistance Program

In March, EcoWise reported on the Department of Energy (DOE) rule that simplifies access to its Weatherization Assistance Program (WAP) for HUD multifamily buildings. One State that has taken the lead in using WAP to preserve affordable multifamily housing is New York.

New York State, through the Department of Housing and Community Redevelopment (DHCR), has used weatherization grants to repair and upgrade multifamily properties since WAP began in 1976. In 2010 and 2011, DHCR expects to see a tremendous growth in the number of multifamily units weatherized because of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA).

“With our ARRA funds, we are reaching people and properties we didn’t have the resources to meet in the past,” says Brian Lawlor, Commissioner of the DHCR.

An Energy Efficient HVAC system (DHCR)

Lawler adds, “It is great opportunity to expand to reach large projects.” DHCR expects multifamily housing units to comprise 70-80 percent of the units weatherized with ARRA funds. Large properties under renovation include Lindsay Park with 2,700 units and Spring Creek Towers with nearly 5,900 units. Based on the results of its energy audit, the Lindsay Park units will receive double-paned insulated windows, energy efficient light fixtures, and new smoke and carbon monoxide alarms. Basement pipes will also be insulated. The energy assessment determines the most needed and most effective retrofits; therefore, only units with inefficient refrigerators or those predating 1993 will receive energy efficient replacements.

DHCR allocates WAP funds to a dedicated network of 65 weatherization provider subgrantees statewide. To ensure the capacity to meet additional demand, this year in a special request for proposals, DHCR selected nine temporary subgrantees including Community Preservation Corporation, which has experience statewide. Dan Buyer of DHCR says, “These are all people with a deep technical understanding of energy efficiency and a passion for improving communities.”

Since the weatherization and the Low Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) programs are both administered by the same DHCR department, DHCR has developed a special expertise in helping LIHTC buildings get weatherization grants.

The weatherization process typically takes 12-15 months from the required energy audit to bid to completion. A DHCR field representative works with the subgrantees to identify LIHTC properties.

UPCOMING EVENTS

» DOE Midwest Regional Workshop R-5/Low-e Storm Windows Volume Purchase Program September 22, 2010 (two workshops) | Chicago, IL jbogovich@energetics.com

» West Coast Green September 30- October 2, 2010 | San Francisco, CA http://westcoastgreen.com/

» Energy and Environmental Building Alliance October 12-14, 2010 | Portland, OR http://www.eeba.org/

» Affordable Housing Summit (US Green Building Council) November 16-17, 2010 | Chicago, IL http://www.greenbuildexpo.org/education/Affordable-Housing.aspx

DOE Program Takes on Market for Highly Efficient Windows

DOE kicked off the Highly-Insulating R-5 Windows and Low-E Storm Windows Volume Purchase Program on May 27, 2010. Limited awareness of highly-efficient window products had made it difficult in the past for individual window manufacturers to invest in the production capacity necessary to produce cost-effective products.

R-5 and low-e storm windows have significant energy and cost savings potential. Highly-insulating R-5 (U-factor of 0.22 or less) can reduce heat loss through the window by over 30 percent compared to ENERGY STAR windows (U-factor ~0.3). In cold and mixed climates, low-e storm windows can be placed over existing windows (inside or outside) and are much more effective energy savers than traditional storm windows.

The program’s Web site (www.windowsvolumepurchase.org) lists qualified R-5 and low-e storm windows and R-5 patio doors. For each product type, price ranges and qualified manufacturers are listed according to product size. Defined shipping regions are also listed next to each manufacturer.

The DOE is committed to making this program a collaborative and transparent process and looks to continue the early success of the program. To learn more, visit DOE’s Web site, http://www1.eere.energy.gov/buildings/windowsvolumepurchase/ or contact Jason Bogovich at jbogovich@energetics.com.


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