

Weatherization Program Input Sessions Results

January 2008



**Department of Housing and
Community Development**

Purpose

The purpose of the input session process was:

- To gather information from the federal- and state-funded *Weatherization Program* grantees on their programs, and
- To gather feedback on proposed programmatic changes to the overall state-administered Weatherization program

Participants

Input session participants were Weatherization grantees receiving 2007-08 allocations through the Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD).

Twenty-six participants representing 20 of the 22 grantees (or 91 percent) attended the input session. Another seven individuals provided their input through the online survey for a total of 33 participants.

Methods

Data was gathered through an in-person meeting (input session) held in:

- Richmond on January 16, 2008

and through an on-line survey that mirrored questions asked during the session.

Participants that attended the in-person session were invited to provide additional information through the on-line survey and to forward the on-line survey and meeting presentation to other program staff that were unable to attend.

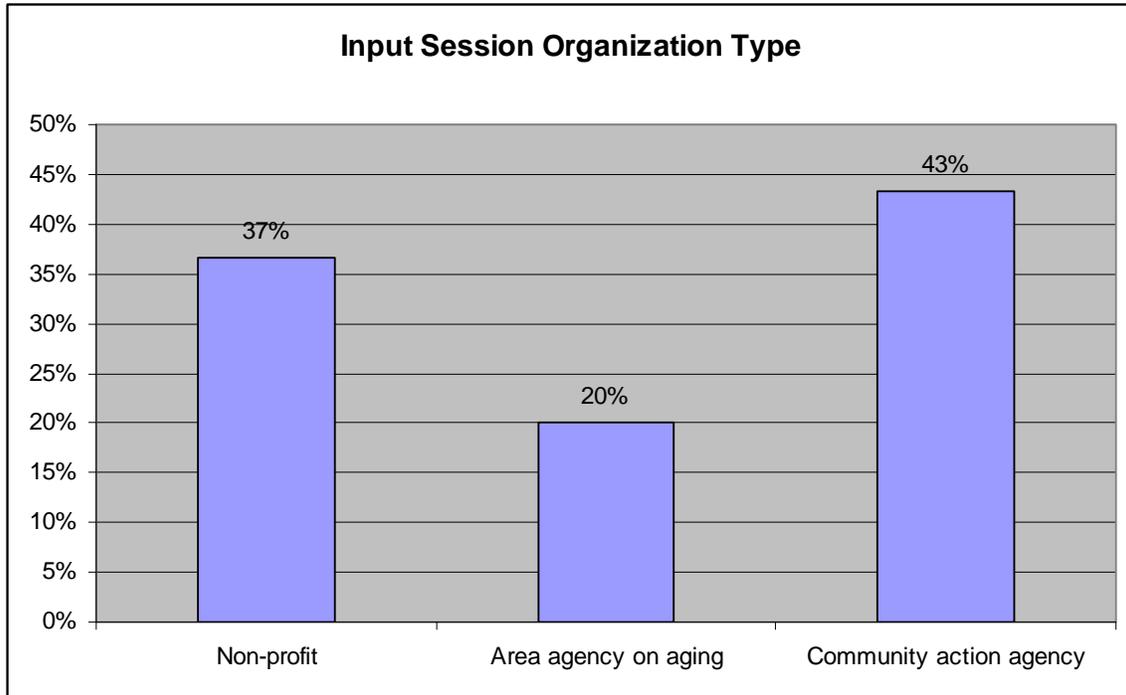
The in-person session utilized OptionTechnology, a real-time survey tool that allowed DHCD to collect input through specific questions during the meeting. Session participants were able to review and discuss the question results during the session. In addition, open-ended responses and other comments were recorded in writing.

Grantees had until close of business on February 1, 2008 to submit input through the online survey version.

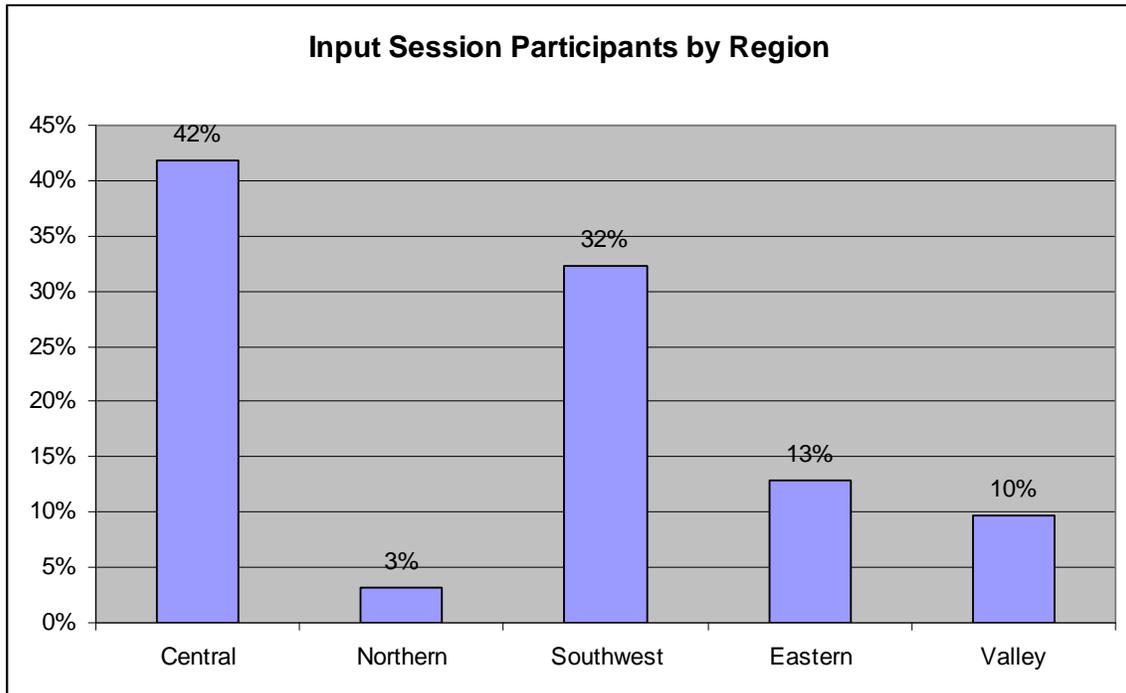
All input was analyzed. Summary results and trends are provided in this report for internal uses, as well as made available to the grantees.

Summary of Findings

Forty-three percent of participants who provided input reported working for a community action agency.

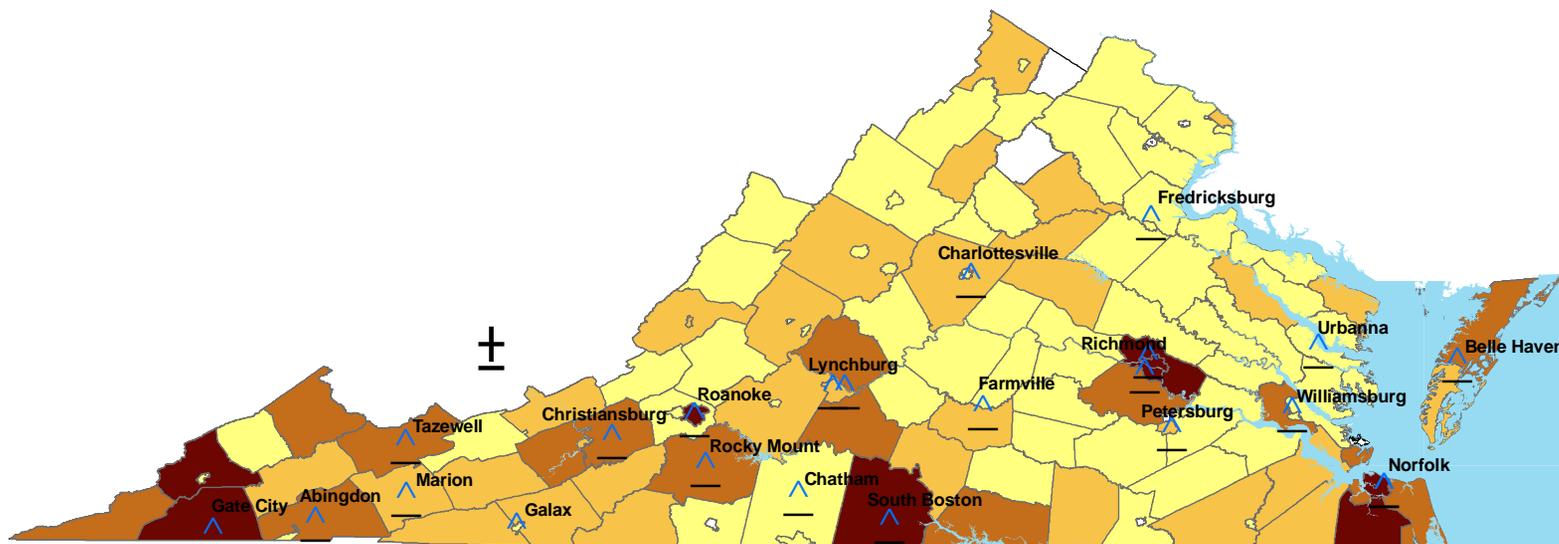


Most (74 percent) participants reported being from Central or Southwest Virginia.



Weatherization Program

Assistance by county from July 1, 2006 to June 30, 2007



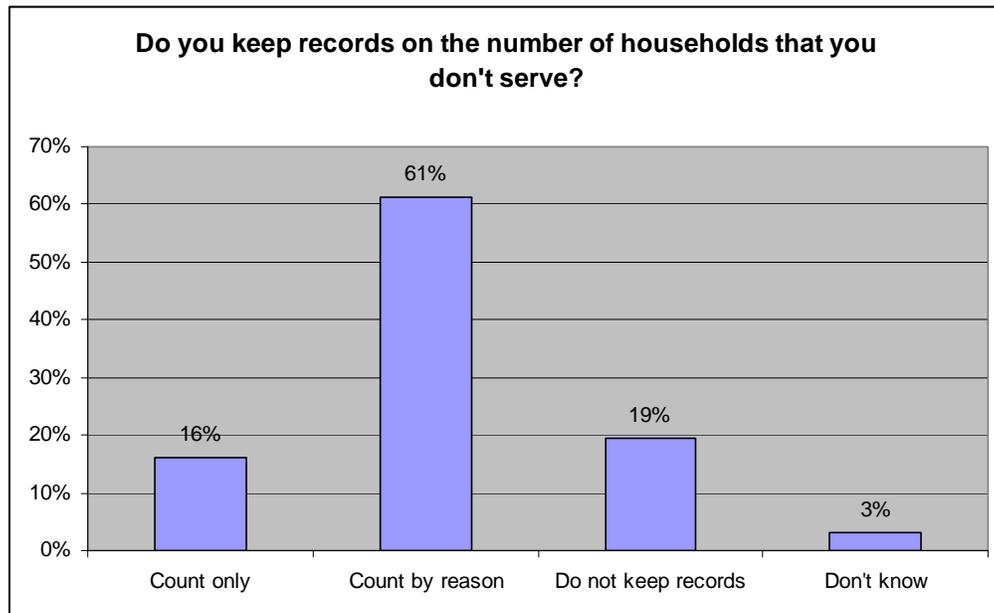
 Weatherization Program Administrator Locations
Number of Households Assisted
 1 - 13
 14 - 33
 34 - 64
 65 - 113
 None

Highest Numbers of Households Assisted

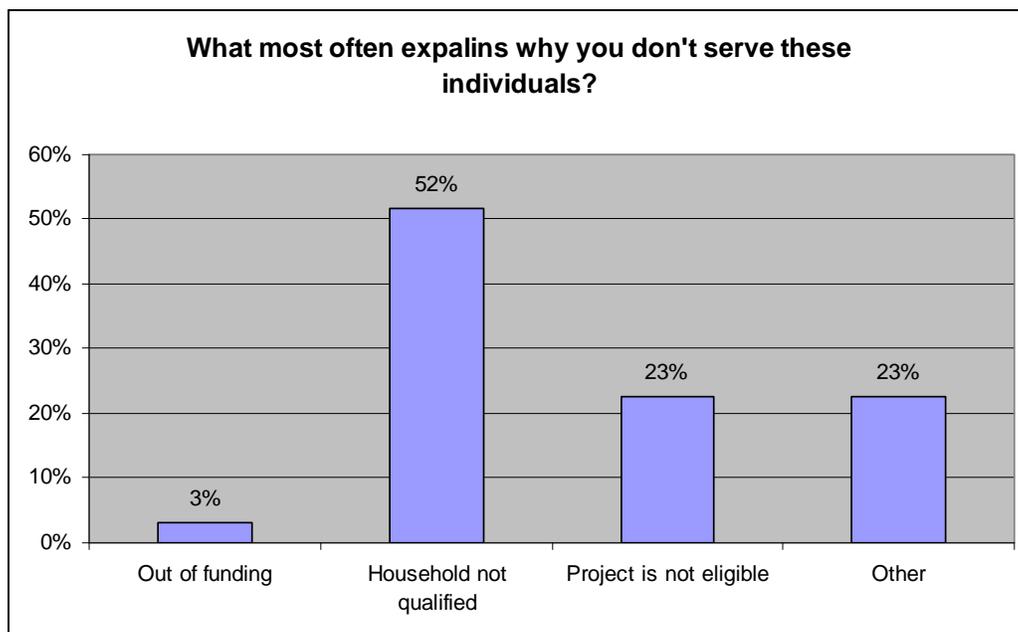
<u>Locality</u>	<u>Number Assisted</u>
1. Norfolk city	113
2. Richmond city	109
3. Halifax county	93
4. Henrico county	76
5. Roanoke city	76
6. Scott county	70
7. Wise county	70
8. Chesapeake city	70
9. Virginia Beach city	64
10. Mecklenburg county	63



Most (61 percent) participants reported that their program keeps records of clients that they turned away by reason.



When asked what most often explained why a household was turned away, most (52 percent) participants indicated that the household was not qualified. Another 23 percent indicated that ineligible projects primarily caused individuals to be turned away, and an additional 23 percent indicated that other situations were the primary reason.



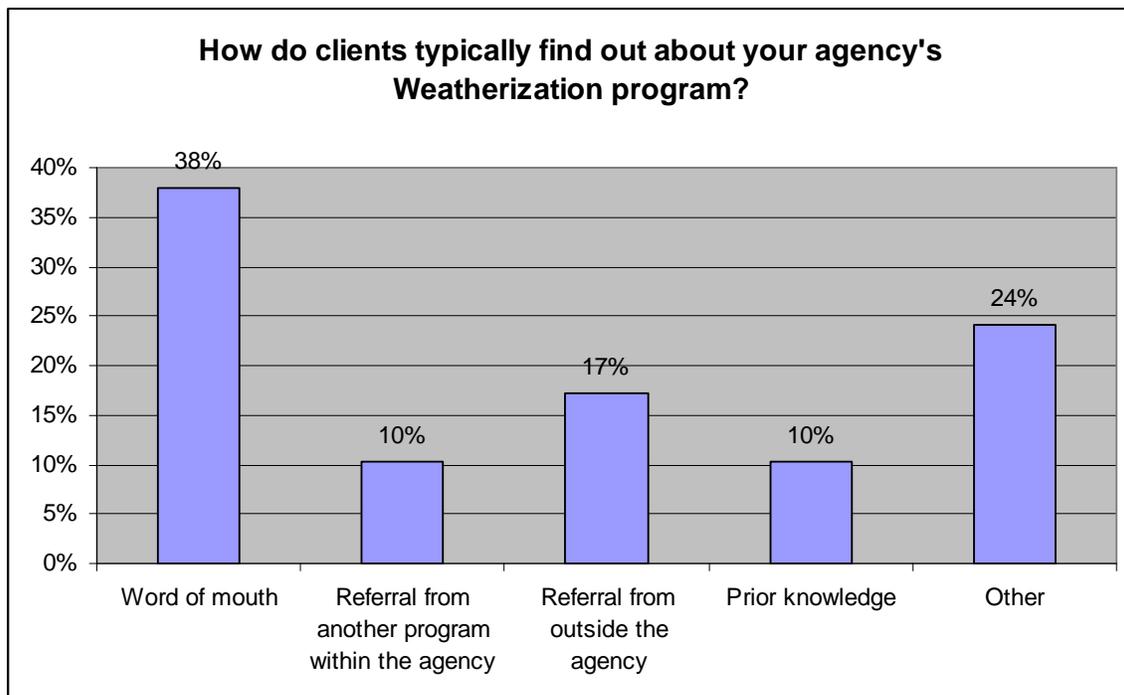
One participant that administers the Weatherization program indicated *“households [are] not income eligible”* as the primary reason why the program turned away potential clients.

When asked to describe barriers to serving eligible clients/projects through this program, one participant stated, *“Not enough money available per job to make the repairs needed on the home, or because the home is in need of much more work than Weatherization can provide.”* Another participant indicated that *“Cost of materials / contractor prices”* was the greatest barrier.

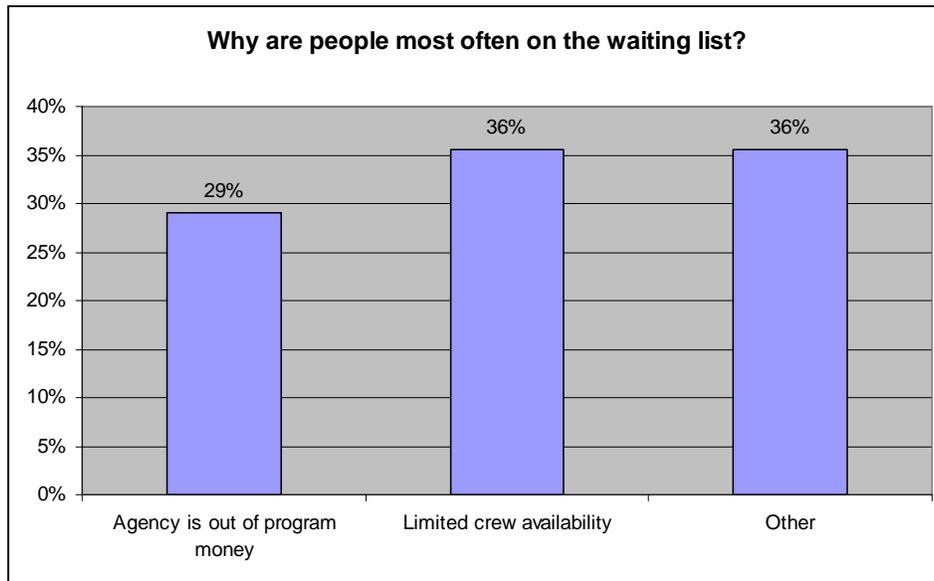
When asked to describe an eligible household, participants indicated that households must be income-eligible, elderly, or disabled. Additional responses included that a household with at least one person of a *“vulnerable”* population, a household with children under 18, or a household *“that hasn’t been previously weatherized under both funding sources”* are factors of household eligibility.

Participants described eligible projects as having poor property conditions but without major structural damage. Participants suggested that the project must have electricity and septic/sewer and that the project would be ineligible if it poses a threat to the health of the crew members.

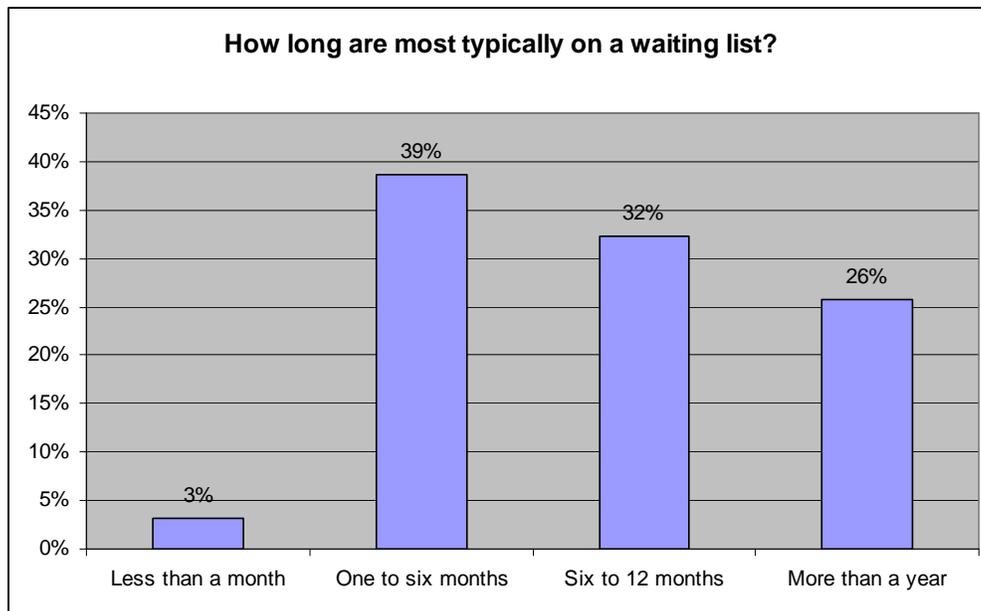
Thirty-eight percent said that clients learned about their program by word of mouth. Another 24 percent said “other,” which included DSS referral lists, marketing, and outreach (including door to door, newspapers, and churches).



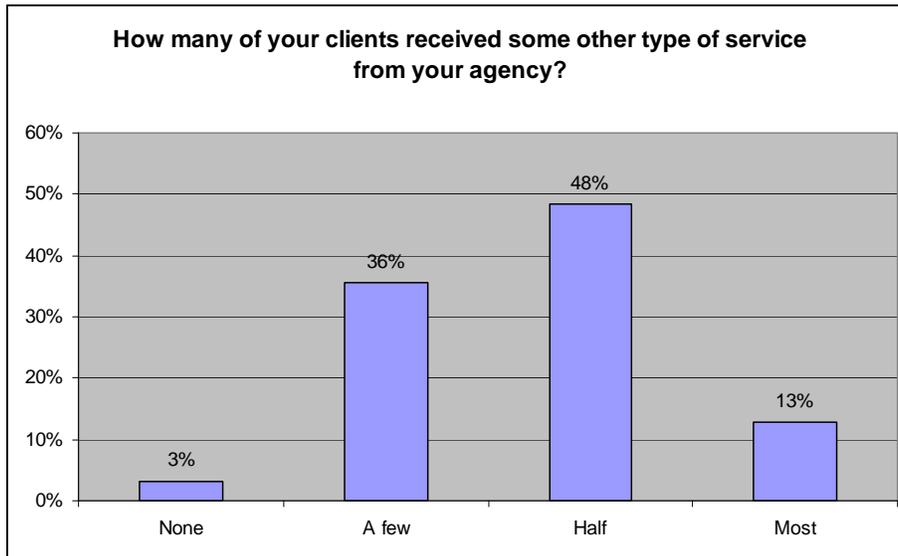
Ninety-four percent of participants said they currently manage a waiting list for potential Weatherization clients. Of those with waiting lists, nearly 36 percent said limited crew availability was the reason they could not immediately serve these households. Additionally, nearly 36 percent said “Other” as a reason for maintaining a waiting list. Some “Other” responses included: “*Managing / timing w/other resources (i.e. DSS crisis funds)*” and “*so many people applying for the services.*”



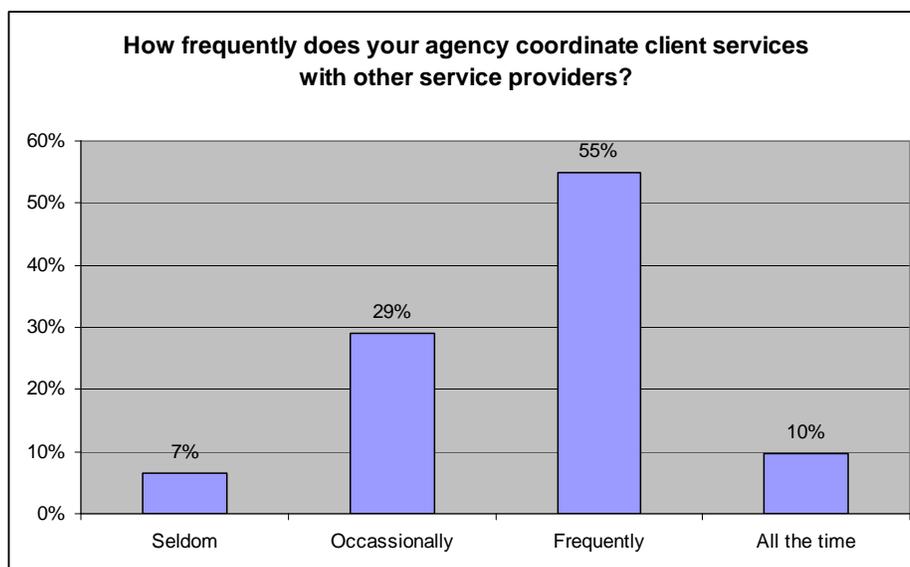
Fifty-eight percent of participants stated that their clients are typically on the waiting list for six months or more, while 26 percent say their clients wait on a list for more than a year.



Almost half of all participants (48 percent) reported that half of their clients received some other type of service from their agency. Participants listed a total of 24 different programs they administer in which their Weatherization clients partake.



Most (55 percent) of the participants indicated that their organization coordinates frequently with other service providers. Twenty-nine percent said they coordinated occasionally. Service providers that participants described coordinating with most include: DSS, churches, SURCAP, United Way, Crisis program, Independence Center for disabled clients, and Rural Development.



Forty-five percent indicated their agency uses an outcome logic model for the Weatherization program. Forty-two percent indicated they did not use one.

When asked about training needs, most respondents noted the need for consistent, on-demand, standardized training.

Participants were asked for feedback on possible changes:

- Staffing changes
- Possible RFP process
- Outcome logic model requirement
- Fund distribution changes / geographic / service areas
- From static service areas to roaming

Most notably, participants noted the need for a dedicated field monitor and/or trainer for the Weatherization program. Participants noted that waiting list issues may arise from switching to a roaming service area.

Participants noted general improvement in DHCD program management, including expressing appreciation for the opportunity to provide input.

On core performance measures, providers rated DHCD lowest on “understand how DHCD makes funding decisions,” “provides information needed to run program,” and “provides great customer services.” These areas represent opportunities for significant improvement.

DHCD Performance Measures <i>As of July 1, 2007</i>	
<i>How strongly do you agree or disagree with the following statements?</i>	<i>Favorable Ratings “4” or “5”</i>
The Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) provides great customer services.	42%
DHCD provides us the information we need to run our program.	58%
DHCD provides us the information we need in a timely manner.	39%
DHCD staff promptly returns emails and/or phone calls.	45%
The DHCD funding processes are fair.	55%
I understand how DHCD makes funding decisions.	38%
DHCD is focused on results	55%

Considerations

Based on the Weatherization program input session results, DHCD should consider the following items:

- Consider developing a strategy to improve overall performance measure indicators for the program
- Review project cost limits to assure that cost limits are in alignment with federal guidelines and meet local needs
- Review distribution of funds to assure that assistance is provided in areas of greatest need and modify the distribution methodology as needed
- Consider program modifications toward a more outcome-based focus
- Review crew availability and staff turn over as it relates to training needs
- Consider a competitive application process

Open-Ended Responses

This includes all open-ended responses from the Weatherization Program's input session and from each survey completed online.

What most often explains why you don't serve these households (other-response)?

Unsanitary

Beyond scope of Weatherization

Structural damage

Insufficient info to determine eligibility

Household not income eligible

Lack of client cooperation (Won't submit verifications)

Please tell us about your barriers to serving eligible clients/projects through this program.

Not enough grant money

Cost of materials / contractor prices

Standards / LBP

Costs above and beyond program limits

SSI w/Veterans benefits (over income)

Not enough money available per job to make the repairs needed on the home, or because the home is in need of much more work than weatherization can provide.

Not enough funds from DOE. Other problems such as roof, electrical, and plumbing.

Not enough funding for EHR, Some homes are in too bad shape to fix with available funds

Some clients cannot be served due to lack of funds

Please describe an eligible household.

Income less than \$10,000

Poor property conditions w/no major structural damage

At least one household member in vulnerable population

One that meets income requirements, that has either elderly, disabled, or children under 18 in the home, and one that hasn't been previously weatherized under both funding sources

Income-eligible, elderly, disabled or low income

Household with low income or SSI

An eligible household has to meet the income guidelines, handicapped, elderly, with children

Please describe an eligible project.

An eligible project is one that would not be beyond the scope of weatherization. One that has no major structural problems, that has electricity and septic/sewer, and that would benefit from weatherization. It would be ineligible if it poses a threat to the health of the crew members

A home that after estimation it is determined that this home would save energy with the Weatherization measured that would be installed

Low income home in need of weatherization

The project that we do will have to be in a adequate condition so that it can be weatherized

How do clients typically find out about your agency's weatherization program (other-response)?

DSS referrals list

Marketing & outreach – (door to door, newspapers, churches)

Why are people most often on the waiting list (other-response)?

Managing eligible clients

Budgeting (for the year)

Managing / timing w/other resources (i.e. DSS crisis funds)

So many people applying for the services

What other types of services do your clients typically receive from your agency?

Crisis Fuel Assistance

Emergency

Head Start

Transportation

Section 8

Senior Citizens

TANF

Rehab (Housing)

Tax Preparation

Some volunteer

IPR

Job training

EHR

RD

Community Corrections (Department of Corrections)

Crisis & Cooling

GED services

Domestic Violence shelters / Transitional housing

Communicable disease prevention

Head Start, Tax Program

Indoor plumbing, Warm & Safe program, Headstart, CHIP

Meals, Homemakers, Transportation, nutrition sites

Fuel Assistance, Food Pantry, Emergency Services Assistance

Rural Development, Crisis

What types of service providers do you coordinate with the most frequently?

DSS

RD

Churches

SURCAP

United Way

Crisis program, Independence center for disabled clients

Crisis, Rural Development

Please discuss any training needs that your program has that would help improve overall management of the Weatherization / LIHEAP program.

One centralized training center

Consistent training

Consistent lack of planning due to funding commitment

LBP

On-demand training – needs consistency

Standardized training

Crew needs furnace training and training on home diagnostics/testing. Would like to have hands-on training for new crew members.

Additional Suggestions or Comments

Insufficient value given to Weatherization staffing at DHCD evidenced

DOE money available under a leveraging grant

SCC collecting additional revenues

REACH grant (rejuvenate)

A better coordination between the monitoring findings and training needs that could be done by NCERT and AECF Funds that go unused need to get out to the programs that are able to produce more completions

Need hands-on training for new crew members, especially on diagnostics/testing such as blower door, furnace testing, pressure testing, estimating, etc

Proposed Program Changes (feedback)

We need a full time monitor / trainer. Virginia is the only State that only has one part-time monitor which says that Virginia does not believe in the monitoring process.

Roaming service areas may cause issues with waiting list

I have no feedback at this time