

## Making Weatherization Connections at NYC WAP Forum

Posted by Kay Stewart on Friday, November 3, 2017

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October 30, 2017 was Weatherization Day – a day to tell the story and acknowledge the widespread benefits of the federal Weatherization Assistance Program (“WAP”).

The day began with the remnants of a rainstorm with high winds from the previous day still pummeling commuters on their way to work, and bringing to mind the damage inflicted on New York City and communities along the Atlantic seaboard by SuperStorm Sandy five years ago on October 29th and 30th. The lashing was a reminder of the lasting impacts that extreme weather events linked to greenhouse gas emissions and rising global temperatures have on the homes where many low-income New Yorkers live.

As weather patterns and risks change, and new technologies are developed, Weatherization protocols, specifications, and practices also change to improve the performance and resilience of the housing stock.



At its Energy Management Training Center in the Bronx, AEA held a Forum with its member agencies to familiarize homeowners and property managers with the types of energy upgrades available to eligible properties under WAP, and to inform them about the application process, building eligibility, energy audits, how project work scopes are developed, how contractors are selected and managed, costs to owners, and more.

Executive Director David Hepinstall began the Forum with an overview of the WAP program, which is administered by New York State Homes and Community Renewal and delivered locally by nonprofit organizations. In 2016, nearly 3,500 multifamily units were weatherized in the downstate NY region alone. He described income-eligibility, how building conditions are evaluated and cost-effective worksopes developed, typical WAP measures, owner contributions, and synergies between Weatherization and other government and utility efficiency programs. Hepinstall made a strong case for training building operators to help to lock in the energy savings potential of newly installed building systems. AEA also recommends ongoing monitoring with an Energy Management System, and sharing energy and water usage data with on-site building staff to inform their actions.

AEA’s El Niang and Mark Yuschak demonstrated energy efficient heating and energy management systems, while Adam Romano showed how Weatherization makes buildings more airtight while ensuring adequate ventilation and healthy indoor air quality, and offered attendees a look at advanced energy recovery ventilation technology used in buildings aspiring to the highest performance standards such as Passive House and Net Zero Energy homes.



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Meanwhile, Joel Guzman of Sunset Park Redevelopment Committee presented on conditions leading to heat loss and energy waste in 1-4 family homes, and opportunities to address them with energy retrofits.

A stand-up networking lunch with exhibits staffed by AEA-member WAP subgrantees from across the City and Westchester helped owners with properties various neighborhoods or counties to meet with those responsible for WAP in each region.

Health and safety was the topic of a talk by Robert Gardella of AEA, who discussed three top hazardous conditions that Weatherization staff encounter in homes of all sizes – lead paint, high levels of carbon monoxide, and asthma triggers in the home. WAP workers already follow lead-safe work practices in older homes, and promptly alert management to hazardous conditions that fall outside the range of measures WAP can provide. WAP can provide smoke/CO alarms and other measures as well. Gardella reinforced current safety protocols and program rules under Weatherization. He also informed WAP staff among the attendees of training opportunities that can enable them to provide more comprehensive assessments and mitigation services to reduce certain hazards.



From the outset, the Weatherization program has emphasized training programs teaching workers building science, and best practices in the field. This process has been strengthened with new advanced certifications based on thorough analyses of the knowledge, skills, abilities Weatherization workers need to do their jobs.

