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More On ... Weatherization: A Crucial Part of Evanston's Climate Action Plan by Ellen Galland and Celia Michener, CGE Steering Committee

In the last issue of the *RoundTable*, a short article on **weatherization** grants appeared on this page. **Weatherization** of Evanston homes, condos and apartments is an important part of Evanston's Climate Action Plan and of financial importance to homeowners who are struggling to pay their utility bills. Upcoming Green Page articles will continue to feature **weatherization** programs and financing.

Community and Economic Development Association of Cook County, Inc. (CEDA, known in Evanston as CEDA/Neighbors At Work) administers the Illinois Home **Weatherization** Assistance Program (IHWAP) in Evanston. This federally funded program, recently expanded with Stimulus funds, is intended to reach a broader group of owners or renters whose incomes meet the requirements.

What follows is Ms. Michener's account of the process of applying for a **weatherization** grant through CEDA/Neighbors at Work, 1229 Emerson St., 847-328-5166.

Celia Michener's Experience with the CEDA Process - Part 1

I purchased my Evanston residence in the spring of 2009. It is a small Cape Cod built about 1960. Based on the inspection that was done when I bought my house, I knew that my house might not have adequate insulation and that I might need to upgrade the furnace and the hot water heater.

Soon after I bought the house I replaced the old furnace with a new 95 percent-efficient furnace that will qualify for a federal tax rebate of about \$1,400. I also replaced the 30-year-old hot water heater with one rated as Energy Star. I expect these two changes alone will reduce my gas bill by at least 30 percent. I also installed an attic fan to ventilate and cool the attic.

At this point I had no money left to do insulation, which I knew would reduce my heating and cooling costs even more, as well as make the house more comfortable.

This is where the CEDA weatherization program came in.

I called CEDA on Sept. 1 to ask for an appointment so that I could find out if I qualified for the weatherization program. I was given an appointment for two days later, Sept. 3, and went to the CEDA office at 1229 Emerson St. The office appeared very crowded and inadequate for the number of people being served. Even so, my visit was handled very efficiently and professionally.

My financial documents were reviewed, and I was told it was likely I would be accepted into the program. On Sept. 16 I received notice from the Illinois Home Weatherization Assistance Program that I had been approved for the program.

On Oct. 16, two CEDA employees came to my home and spent four hours doing a very thorough energy audit. They used a blower door test, an infrared, thermal imaging camera, a heat detecting gun and a wand to detect CO2. During the test, a blower door is placed over an exterior door. A powerful fan in the blower door pulls air from the inside and pushes it outdoors. This change in pressure causes all the air leaks in the home to be exaggerated. Air will flow in from leaky windows, doors, holes around plumbing etc. Air coming in from unexpected places was discovered during my energy audit.

The thermal-imaging infrared camera is used to take photos or video of heat variations in your walls. It also pinpoints air leakage into the home. It helps determine where additional insulation and sealing are needed.

I discovered that there is no insulation in my walls. My attic insulation is inadequate. There are major air leaks coming from my back door, my plumbing, and from an opening going from my attic all the way into the basement. Fortunately, I already have good double-pane windows.

My audit also included testing for combustion safety, to determine whether major appliances could spill carbon monoxide and other gases into my living area. My smoke and carbon monoxide detectors were checked. My furnace, water heater, range and oven were checked for safe operation.

The energy auditor then entered the information from the audit into a computer to generate a list of what needs to be done. The items on the list were prioritized. CEDA does not give the list to clients. Some of the items lower on the list may not be included in my weatherization project.

It has been more than a month since I had the energy audit. When I phoned the IHWAP office last week, I was told that my project was waiting for "contractor assignment." They could not tell me how long that would take. They also could not tell me what work the contractor would be doing in my house.

Part 2 of the weatherization process will follow in a subsequent issue of the *RoundTable*.

CEDA's website is <http://www.cedaorg.net/www2/EnergyConservation.html>

For information on other weatherization programs as well as much of the information in this article see also the City of Evanston website, www.cityofevanston.org/global/green/resid_energy/tax.shtml (Services and Resources).

Other excellent websites on weatherization are:

greendreamgroup.com

chicagoenergyconsultants.com

natresnet.org

energy.gov (U.S. Department of Energy)

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