



Written Testimony for the Joint Legislative Budget Hearing on Housing

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Submitted by: Joe Maggiore, Executive Director for The New York State Weatherization Directors Association (NYSWDA), Peter S. Hoyle, Executive Director for the Association of Energy Affordability (AEA) and Tim Nichols, Chief Executive Officer of the New York State Community Action Association (NYSCAA)

Thank you for the opportunity to submit written testimony to the New York State Senate and Assembly Joint Budget Hearing on Housing. We represent **49 nonprofit Weatherization Assistance Program (WAP) providers** performing life-changing work in **all 62 counties** across New York State. Every day, these community-based organizations deliver critical energy-saving, health-protecting, and climate-forward upgrades to low-income households who need them most.

We deeply appreciate Governor Hochul's continued recognition of **weatherization as a cornerstone of New York's climate, housing, and affordability strategy**, and her administration's ongoing commitment to helping low- and moderate-income families reduce energy costs, improve home safety, and transition to cleaner, more resilient homes.

For nearly 50 years, the Weatherization Assistance Program has been one of New York's most effective anti-poverty, climate, and public-health programs. As WAP marks its 50th anniversary this year, it continues to demonstrate—with measurable outcomes—that weatherization not only **reduces household energy burdens but prevents illness, preserves housing stability, and saves lives** for tens of thousands of vulnerable New Yorkers.

However, the program now faces an existential threat.

For decades, New York has relied on a longstanding federal commitment: **10% of Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP) funding is allocated to WAP**. This partnership is not symbolic; it is the backbone of New York's ability to deliver cost-saving, energy-efficiency improvements to low-income homes. A proposal to divert this funding away from WAP would slash the program's resources by 60%, devastating service capacity statewide.

Such a cut would:

- Force the layoffs of **hundreds of specialized workers**, many in rural and disadvantaged communities.
- Eliminate weatherization services for **thousands of vulnerable families** who rely on this support to stay safe, warm, and housed.
- Undermine New York's climate-justice goals by stripping resources from the very households most burdened by energy costs.
- Reduce federal leverage and weaken the infrastructure needed to scale clean-energy upgrades statewide.

A cut of this magnitude would dismantle a program that has taken five decades to build –and could not be rebuilt quickly or cheaply.

For these reasons, we urgently request that the Legislature protect WAP by taking the following action:

✓ **Include clear statutory language in the one-house budget requiring that 10% of HEAP funding continue to be allocated to the Weatherization Assistance Program.**

This directive is essential to prevent destabilizing cuts, maintain the program's workforce, safeguard services for low-income households, and preserve New York's standing as a national leader in energy-efficiency and climate justice.

Weatherization is not optional. It is essential infrastructure for:

- Climate action
- Housing stability
- Public health
- Energy affordability
- Job creation in every region of the state

We respectfully urge you to make the continued 10% allocation **explicit** in the State Operations Bill and to ensure WAP remains a protected, fully funded component of New York's housing and climate strategy.

Thank you for your leadership and for prioritizing programs that protect the most vulnerable New Yorkers. We stand ready to work with you to ensure that weatherization remains strong, effective, and fully funded for the next 50 years and beyond.

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