



NYS Joint Housing Budget Hearing

Testimony in Support of the NYS Weatherization Assistance Program:

Restore and Protect the 10% HEAP Allocation to the NYS Weatherization Assistance Program (WAP) as originally mandated through the Social Services Law § 97(5)(a) for the FY 26-27 State Budget.

Esteemed Chair Krueger, Chair Pretlow and Members of the NYS Legislature,

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Fiscal Year 26-27 Housing Budget.

I am the Weatherization Assistance Program Director for the Northwest Bronx Community and Clergy Coalition (NWBCCC), a community-based organization in its 50th year of service to our Bronx Community. As you know, the Bronx is the poorest county in New York State and must consistently rely on state and federal assistance to improve and empower our community members to rise up and out of poverty.

Since 1983 our organization has had the privilege of serving as a Weatherization Subgrantee under the administration of Homes and Community Renewal (HCR). In that time, well over 15,000 households in our distressed communities have benefited from WAP— maintaining energy efficient, safe, and affordable housing for our low-income households. WAP reduces the Bronx’s carbon footprint while relieving the onerous energy burden of our most vulnerable tenants and homeowners through conservation measures.

In times when federal funding to the states has been challenged, the local WAP Subgrantees, who serve all 62 counties in New York State have come to rely on the provisions set forth in the **NYS Social Services Law, § 97(5)(a)** [attached] as a guaranteed baseline commitment for the Weatherization Assistance Program: *“No less than ten percent of the funds available to New York State under the federal Low-income Home Energy Assistance Program shall be allocated to...[HCR]...for the Weatherization Assistance Program...for low-income households. All such programs and expenditures shall be provided in the annual New York State Weatherization Assistance Program state plan or by agreement with the Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance [OTDA].*

This allocation is not discretionary; it has been acknowledged to be critical to NY State’s ability to deliver permanent, energy-related cost savings (and health & safety) measures to the homes of the local low-income families in our community. For our agency, the elimination of these funds in the Governor’s budget represents a 60% reduction for WAP – fundamentally undermining our ability to sustain operations and deliver essential weatherization services for our area.



Weatherization is a federally authorized program that reduces energy costs for low-income households by improving home energy efficiency, ensuring safe heating systems, and addressing health and safety hazards in the home or apartment.

Last year, NWBCCC/WAP

- Served 240 households.
- Employed 13 full-time and 2 part-time staff, hired from the local community.
- Engaged over 20 local sub-contractors, vendors, and services firms, many of which are Minority or Women-Owned Business Enterprises.
- Served residents in NYS Senate Districts 29,31,32,33 & 36.
- Served residents in NYS Assembly Districts 77,78,79,80,81,83,86 & 87.
- Created documentable and lasting affordability and health and safety improvements, primarily in households with young children, the elderly, and people with disabilities, who have limited resources to begin with.

The loss of HEAP funding to WAP will make our local operations unsustainable at our current level of operation. HEAP funding represents the majority of our WAP annual operating capacity. Cuts would not be temporary — they would dismantle an infrastructure that has taken decades to create.

This has a profound ripple effect on affordable housing and our local and state economy:

- Layoffs of our highly trained and certified Building Science Professionals, and support staff.
- Decimation of our local contractor and vendor networks and their WAP-related incomes, which may create more local layoffs.
- Increased energy burden for our low-income residents and struggling low-income housing portfolios in our distressed communities.
- 60% reduction in the number of households we serve annually.
- Threat of the dissolution of an essential federally mandated Weatherization Assistance Program services that affect every county in New York State.

Please consider the economic, environmental, and flesh-and-blood realities that cessation of HEAP dollars to Weatherization will yield.



Your positive response to restoring 10% of New York’s federal HEAP dollars to Weatherization will:

- Enable the neediest New Yorkers to thrive and prosper in a home or apartment that is safe, efficient, and affordable.
- Sustain a growing local economy.
- Contribute to NY State’s ambitious climate goals.

Respectfully submitted by,

Frances M Fuselli

NWBCCC WAP Program Director



Attachment 1

New York Consolidated Laws, Social Services Law - SOS § 97.

Low-income Home Energy Assistance Program (Li-HEAP)

Current as of January 01, 2024, | Updated by FindLaw

1. The department is authorized to develop and submit to the governor the application and plan required by title twenty-six of the federal omnibus budget reconciliation act of nineteen hundred eighty-one, 1 and to amend and to take whatever other action may be necessary with respect to such plan, including, but not limited to, acting for the state in any negotiations relative to the submission of such plan, and making such arrangements and taking such action, not inconsistent with law, as may be required to submit, implement, administer and operate such plan, and to secure for the state the benefits available under such act.

2. Each social services district shall be required, in accordance with the state plan and federal regulations, to participate in the federal low-income home energy assistance program and to assist eligible households found in such districts to obtain low-income home energy assistance. However, only those persons who qualify for low-income home energy assistance in accordance with federal and state requirements, and standards promulgated by the department, shall be certified as eligible for and entitled to receive said home energy assistance. No person, however, shall be certified as eligible for and entitled to receive said home energy assistance if no federal funds are available for such purpose.

3. Any inconsistent provision of law notwithstanding, the amount of any home energy assistance payments or allowances provided to an eligible household under said plan shall not be considered income or resources of such households, or of any member thereof, for any purpose under any federal or state law, including any law relating to taxation, food stamps, public assistance or other benefits available pursuant to this chapter.

4. Expenditures made by a social services district pursuant to the federal low-income home energy assistance program, including the costs of administration, shall be subject to one hundred percent reimbursement by the state, if and for so long as federal funds are available for the full amount of such expenditures.

5. No less than fifteen percent of the funds available to New York state under the federal low-income home energy assistance program shall be used for low-cost residential weatherization or other energy-related home repair for low-income households, as follows:

a. No less than ten percent of the funds available to New York State under the federal Low-income Home Energy Assistance Program shall be allocated to the Division of Housing and Community Renewal (HCR), the Housing Trust Fund Corporation, or the Housing Finance Agency as designated by the Division of Housing and Community Renewal for the Weatherization Assistance Program and other low-cost residential weatherization or other energy-related home repair for low-income households. All such programs and expenditures shall be provided in the annual New York state weatherization assistance program state plan or by agreement with the Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance.

b. Administrative funds to implement the program described in this subdivision at the state and local levels shall be set at ten percent of the total amount allocated to the division of housing and community renewal. Administrative monies shall be derived from funds identified by the division of the budget as that portion of the home energy assistance program grant reported to the federal department of health and human services for state administration of such program.

Over the years, NYS Weatherization



Attachment 2 - Support letter



Sycamore Birch Management

869 Morris Park Avenue, 2nd FL., Bronx, NY 10462 Tel: (917) 993-9900
Fax: (917) 993-9910

February 24th, 2026

To Whom It May Concern,

I wanted to express my appreciation and support of the Northwest Bronx Community and Clergy Coalition. Recently, due to their guidance and diligent work, our organization was able to replace windows at two of our properties, resulting in significant savings in this winter's heating bills. At Sycamore Birch, we manage many affordable housing units and operating costs in general are significantly increasing. These projects face significant financial challenges, including limited operating budgets, aging infrastructure, rising maintenance costs, and increased utility expenses. Owners often operate on very tight margins and are not in a position to independently finance major capital improvements.

The weatherization resources provided by the NWBCCC are critical to preserving safe and affordable housing. These improvements help reduce maintenance costs, improve building performance, and decrease energy expenses. These resources allow owners to keep units affordable and support long-term sustainability of affordable housing in our local communities, which is greatly needed in New York.

Sincerely,

Ray Alter
Sycamore Birch Management