

Community Weatherization Coalition



Presentation to Utility Advisory Board,
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Mission

The CWC is a grassroots community coalition whose mission is to improve home weatherization and energy efficiency for low-income households through education, volunteer work projects, and community-building.

CWC volunteer “energy detectives” are trained to perform comprehensive energy/water audits on homes. Volunteers educate residents on behavioral changes to conserve resources and are able to complete some of the recommended energy-saving measures during the audit.





Goals of Energy Conservation

- Reduce “leakage” of \$\$ from local economy resulting from reliance upon non-local energy sources
- Lower utility bills and shield residents from fluctuating energy costs
- Improve comfort and livability of our homes and workplaces
- Least-cost investment for utilities facing growing energy consumption and aging infrastructure
- Increase property values
- Lessen our environmental impacts

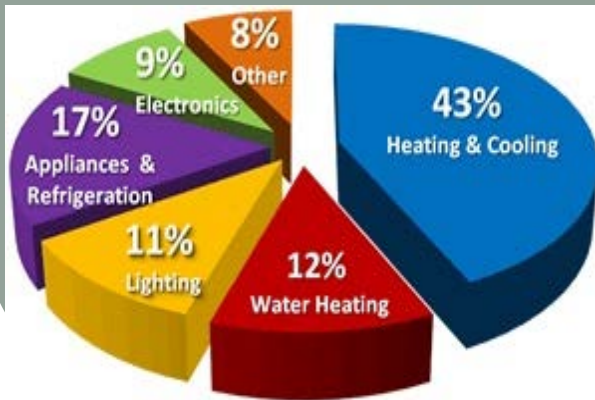




What does CWC do?

CWC Volunteer energy detectives spend 2-4 hours inspecting the whole home, including an assessment of the building envelope, major appliances, lighting, and water consumption.

- Review client's utility history and discuss how usage relates to charges.
- Install energy/water saving measures during the audit, including efficient showerheads and faucet aerators, efficient lighting, pipe insulation, and more.
- Offer conservation & efficiency tips to reduce utility expenses, and advise how to improve safety & comfort in the home.



- Provide the client a detailed report and recommendations.
- Partner with other agencies that can assist with home repair, upgrading appliances, and fill gaps by carrying out needed next-level retrofits (caulking, weatherstripping, minor repairs, insulation, etc.).



History and Impact

- **2005:** community members report to Action Network leaders that they are paying \$300-500/month for utilities, sometimes as much as 25% of their income
- **Six agencies** that provide help with utility costs report an average of 250 calls/month for assistance (18,000 people/year)
- **2007-08:** Gainesville Regional Utilities facilitates conversations between local faith communities, public agencies, and nonprofits to help address high utility bills in low-income homes
- **2008-09:** The CWC hires its first Volunteer Coordinator & hosts its first volunteer energy auditor training under the auspices of local nonprofit Rebuilding Together
- **2016:** The CWC has completed >750 energy audits in Alachua County to-date, including 295 rental properties, and has trained 145 volunteer energy auditors
- **Two independent studies** reveal average savings of 19-24% for recipients of our energy audits





Why Focus on Low-Income Homes?

- Low-income residents are more likely to live in rental housing or older, less efficient housing stock.
- Research has documented that while the average U.S. household spends 4-5% of income on home energy costs, low-income families often spend >15% of their annual income on energy expenditures.
- Alachua County Housing Summit report found that thousands of Alachua County residents may be “cost-burdened” lower income households who pay over 30% of income for rent/mortgage
- High utility bills (\$300-500/month) can amount to 70-80% of estimated minimum housing costs (\$600-700) for lowest income Alachua County homes
- Many of our community's existing conservation programs (e.g., utility-funded rebates) have been geared toward middle-income homeowners with upfront capital to invest in their homes



CWC Initiatives 2016-2017

Two-year DEED grant from American Public Power Association/GRU (\$85,193)

- Improve our outcomes via use of Community-Based Social Marketing with a neighborhood focus
- Quantify and monitor the impact of CWC audits and retrofits

New initiatives proposed for 2016-2017:

- Digitize the audit process and shift to use of tablets linked to database
- Continue to increase the number of audits we perform but also implement “next stage” follow-up retrofits with individual clients, with greater emphasis on safety in the home (mobility, presence of smoke/CO detectors, electrical safety)
- Community Liaison intern to be recruited from low-income neighborhoods to serve as a liaison and to learn employment skills



Current Partners



Thank You for Your Support!



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