

# Memorandum

DATE: August 14, 2020

WAP Memorandum 067

REPLY TO

ATTN OF:  Erica Burrin, Weatherization Assistance Program, Program Manager  
Weatherization and Intergovernmental Program Office

SUBJECT: Weatherization Assistance Program's Response to Guidelines for Opening Up America Again – Phases Two and Three, plus Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

TO: Weatherization Assistance Program Grantees, Weatherization Assistance Program

PURPOSE: To assist Grantees and Subgrantees with Phases Two and Three activities as they pertain to the Weatherization Assistance Program and consistent with the Guidelines for Opening Up America Again.

The Department of Energy's (DOE) Weatherization Assistance Program (WAP) continues to uniformly address current issues the WAP network faces as a result of COVID-19, including examples of best work practices and clarification on allowable versus unallowable procedures. As Weatherization Grantees and Subgrantees return to work, the following recommendations as outlined in the Guidelines for Opening Up America Again<sup>1</sup> (Guidelines) issued by President Donald J. Trump, as well as recommendations from other Federal, state, local, tribal, and/or territorial health agencies, should be considered.

In anticipation that Grantees will move into Phases Two and Three at different times, and to ensure the continued health and safety of our WAP workers and clients, the DOE recommends Grantees and Subgrantees refer to the following organization websites for updated recommendations.

**Center for Disease Control and Prevention<sup>2</sup> (CDC)**

**Environmental Protection Agency<sup>3</sup> (EPA)**

**Occupational Safety and Health Administration<sup>4</sup> (OSHA)**

*NOTE: Specific instructions from Federal, state, local, tribal, and/or territorial health agencies, should be followed and incorporated into workplace-specific plans.*

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.whitehouse.gov/openingamerica/>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.cdc.gov/>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.epa.gov/>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.osha.gov/>

In addition to referring to the organizations listed previously, DOE reminds Grantees and Subgrantees of previously issued COVID-19-related Weatherization Memoranda and information posted on the [DOE WAP website](#):

- [WAP Memorandum 060: Weatherization Assistance Program Frequently Asked Questions Related to COVID-19](#)
- [Weatherization Memorandum 062: Weatherization Assistance Program's Response to Guidelines for Opening Up America Again - Phase One & Frequently Asked Questions \(FAQs\)](#)

### *Phase Two*<sup>5</sup>

For States and regions with no evidence of a rebound and that satisfy the gating criteria a second time, Grantees and Subgrantees are making decisions about transitioning into Phase Two. Efforts should focus on the development and implementation of appropriate policies, in accordance with Federal, State, and local regulations and guidance, and informed by industry best practices, regarding:

- Social distancing and protective equipment;
- Temperature checks;
- Sanitation;
- Use and disinfection of common and high-traffic areas;
- Business travel; and
- Monitor workforce for indicative symptoms. Do not allow symptomatic people to physically return to work until cleared by a medical provider.

In addition, WAP Grantees and Subgrantees should continue to practice good hygiene throughout each Phase, including:

- Wash your hands with soap and water or use hand sanitizer, especially after touching frequently used items or surfaces;
- Avoid touching your face;
- Sneeze or cough into a tissue, or the inside of your elbow;
- Disinfect frequently used items and surfaces as much as possible;
- Strongly consider using face coverings while in public; and
- People who feel sick should stay home.

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<sup>5</sup> <https://www.whitehouse.gov/openingamerica/>

Finally, Grantees and Subgrantees should review the safety measures employers can implement to encourage social distancing in the workplace and to help protect workers from exposure to the coronavirus, as outlined by OSHA<sup>6</sup>:

- Isolate any worker who begins to exhibit symptoms until they can either go home or leave to seek medical care;
- Establish flexible worksites (e.g., telecommuting) and flexible work hours (e.g., staggered shifts), if feasible;
- Stagger breaks and re-arrange seating in common break areas to maintain physical distance between workers;
- In workplaces where customers are present, mark six-foot distances with floor tape in areas where lines form, use drive-through windows or curbside pickup, and limit the number of customers allowed at one time;
- Move or reposition workstations to create more distance, and install plexiglass partitions; and
- Encourage workers to bring any safety and health concerns to the employer's attention.

The following actions are WAP-specific in nature for Grantee and Subgrantee consideration.

#### ***Responsible Workplace Communication***

- Grantees and Subgrantees are encouraged to communicate expectations related to resuming weatherization work.
  - ACTION: Designating a temporary COVID coordinator or leader.
  - ACTION: Updating websites, literature, and intake scripts on temporary basis allowing flexibility as guidelines from Federal, State, and local jurisdictions evolve.
  - ACTION: Developing temporary guidelines specifically for weatherization, including in home contracting and repair services in an occupied dwelling.
- Grantees and Subgrantees are encouraged to provide education and training around safe health practices as it relates to hygiene, sanitation (cleaning and disinfection policies), and illness policies.
  - ACTION: Generating and/or sharing existing communication materials (e.g. presentations, webinars, and signage) outlining expectations for safe health practices.

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<sup>6</sup> <https://www.dol.gov/newsroom/releases/osha/osha20200528-0>

- Grantees and Subgrantees should provide proper training on Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and provide necessary supply to workforce.
  - ACTION: Generating and/or sharing existing communication materials (e.g. presentations, webinars, and signage) on proper use of PPE.
  - ACTION: Ensuring offices and vehicle inventories are maintained with appropriate PPE.
- Encourage workers to bring any safety and health concerns to the employer’s attention.
  - ACTION: Offering a process in which employees can raise concerns related, but not limited to, knowledge of and/or symptoms of COVID-19 in the workplace or client homes, improper use of PPE equipment, or other practices in contrast to Federal, state, or local jurisdictions.

***Responsible Weatherization Intake***

- Revisit communication procedures with clients.
  - ACTION: Identifying safe ways to communicate with clients (e.g. telephone, email, plexiglass, or 6 ft spacing) and accept applications with appropriate encryption safeguards (e.g. mail, online, Dropbox).
  - ACTION: Reviewing and updating client education and other communication materials shared with clients to include safety precautions for COVID-19 and other related illnesses.

***Responsible Weatherization Scheduling and Installation Protocols***

- Begin work on lowest risk projects.
  - ACTION: Prioritizing units that can be vacated during work, include simple scopes of work (e.g., all cost-effective measures can be installed from the exterior and/or require a minimal number of workers on site), and/or have non-vulnerable clients as defined in the [Appendix](#) of the Guidelines.
- Modify workspaces and work vehicles to include cleansing stations.
  - ACTION: Implementing handwashing stations and supply sanitizer with alcohol.

- Implement policies on appropriate use of face coverings.
  - ACTION: Requiring face coverings for workers and clients where social distancing of 6ft is not possible in accordance with Federal, state, and local jurisdictions.

### ***Responsible Grantee Monitoring Visits and Subgrantee Final Inspections***

- Schedule visits separately to minimize the number of people in a client home at one time.
  - ACTION: Spacing out visits throughout the day or over the course of several days.

### ***Phase Three<sup>7</sup>***

For States and Regions with no evidence of a rebound and that satisfy the gating criteria a third time, Grantees and Subgrantees are making decisions about transitioning into Phase Three. Efforts as Phase 3 re-opening of operations proceed include:

- Moving to and/or resuming unrestricted staffing of worksites.
  - ACTION: Maintaining caution by continuing to encourage use of proper PPE, social distancing (when possible), and proper handwashing and sanitizing.
  - ACTION: Encouraging Grantees and Subgrantees to monitor the health status of onsite personnel to ensure the safety of individuals, local agency personnel, and clients. As a reference, Grantees and Subgrantees should refer to the [U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission \(EEOC\)](#) guidance on screening employees for COVID-19.

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<sup>7</sup> <https://www.whitehouse.gov/openingamerica/>

## Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

The U.S. Department does not have a direct relationship (privity of contract) with Weatherization Subgrantees; therefore, while DOE was asked questions specific to Subgrantees, DOE advises Subgrantees to refer to the Grantee and the [Community Action Legal Services, Inc. \(CAPLAW\)](#) website for responses.

DOE will continue responding to Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs). Information contained in this Memorandum can also be found online at:

<https://www.energy.gov/eere/wap/downloads/message-grantees-about-wap-questions-related-covid-19>.

### *Weatherization Program Administration and Production*

- What is the best way to know our state and/or local area's current Phase? The federal 3 phases are different than the 6 phases issued by our Governor. Are we to compare the phases and make the best call if they don't align?
  - ACTION: Grantees and Subgrantees are encouraged to visit state and/or local websites to obtain and understand requirements in place within their service territory. The Federal Guidelines encourage state and local officials to tailor the application of the Federal criteria and 3 phases to fit local circumstances. Grantees and Subgrantees should utilize guidance issued by state and local jurisdictions when implementing a plan to get back to work, as well as, by Federal health agencies such as the CDC and OSHA. Alignment of state and local guidance to the federal guidance is not required.
- Does DOE have recommendations for disinfection methods?
  - ACTION: Grantees and Subgrantees should clean and disinfect the workplace consistent with CDC guidance on [Cleaning and Disinfecting Your Facility](#) and [Reopening Guidance for Cleaning and Disinfecting Public Spaces, Workplaces, Businesses, Schools, and Homes](#). While the CDC's guidance is not a requirement, following these recommendations will help reassure your employees that it is safe to come back to work, as well as help protect your CAA from liability for claims of exposure to COVID-19 in your facilities.
  - ACTION: Grantees and Subgrantees should continue to follow protocol as outlined in the Grantee's Health and Safety Plan approved by DOE, which per [WPN 17-7, Weatherization Health and Safety Guidance](#), require Grantees to outline a "Process for verifying safe work practices (e.g., EPA's Renovation, Repair and Paint [RRP] Program for lead-safe work, Occupational Safety and Health Administration [OSHA] standards, DOE's Standard Work Specifications [SWS], building codes). Grantees must develop a process that periodically

monitors in-progress work or describe another method used to ensure safe work practices are being followed. Results of the monitoring must be made available to DOE upon request.” Modifications need not be made to plans unless a budget amendment is required.

- Please clarify allowable funding for additional cleaning, disinfection, and PPE required as a result of COVID-19.
  - ACTION: As per [10 CFR 440.18\(d\)](#), Allowable Expenditures, costs related to materials needed to safely perform weatherization work can be charged to either Program Operations or Health & Safety. The current Health & Safety Guidance, [WPN 17-7](#), includes a section for worker safety. PPE can logically be charged to either Program Operations or Health & Safety budgets, but this determination should be made at the Grantee level and should be applied consistently across the service territory and across all jobs. In the event, during a grant period, it is determined that approved H&S budgets will be insufficient, the Grantee must submit a request for a higher limit to their Project Officer
- Aside from performing weatherization work where N95 masks are required for worker safety (e.g. installing insulation), what other face coverings can weatherization staff entering a home wear specific to reducing the risk of spreading COVID-19?
  - ACTION: As stated in [Weatherization Memorandum 062: Weatherization Assistance Program's Response to Guidelines for Opening Up America Again - Phase One & Frequently Asked Questions \(FAQs\)](#), DOE recommends organizations follow the guidance set forth by FEMA on use of PPE for non-healthcare workers. <https://www.fema.gov/fact-sheet/addressing-ppe-needs-non-healthcare-setting>. The following link provides detailed information on the efficacy of available masks <https://www.cdc.gov/niosh/npptl/respirators/testing/NonNIOSHresults.html>.
  - ACTION: DOE reminds Grantees and Subgrantees to continue following applicable OSHA standards, [WPN 17-7](#), and training for proper use of PPE during weatherization work.
- How do you enforce requirements with contractors, including adding new language to contracts, pricing new requirements, and ensuring requirements are met?
  - ACTION: Grantees are reminded that work should conform to the approved State Plan. In addition, Grantees and Subgrantees are responsible for ensuring the work completed conforms to Program rules and contractual agreements, including the purpose for the products and services and support for the estimated costs.

- Can Employers screen employees for COVID-19, and what are the related human resources protocols? Can we use DOE funds to pay for testing employees for COVID (any testing cost and their time)?
  - ACTION: Grantees and Subgrantees should refer to the [U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission \(EEOC\)](#) guidance on screening employees for COVID-19.

Additional information specific to Community Action Agencies and local agencies can be referenced through the [Community Action Program Legal Action, Inc. \(CAPLAW\)](#) website.

### ***Weatherization Measures/Installations***

- Does DOE have recommendations for conducting virtual audits during phase 2, and moving forward?
  - ACTION: While some tools such as GIS systems, satellite imagery (e.g., Google Earth) and 3D modeling tools (e.g., Google Sketchup) may allow for fairly detailed energy models to be constructed from the exterior of the building, they cannot replace the details collected using onsite diagnostic tools such as blower doors, combustion analyzers, and infrared cameras; nor replace the detailed health and safety inspections required to ensure the building is safely weatherized. If Grantees wish to use some form of “virtual” audit to temporarily supplement their energy audit practices, they must submit a detailed process to DOE for approval. The process must address how any “virtual” assumptions are to be made and how these assumptions will be field verified prior to work commencing on the home as well as how the appropriate safety inspections will be conducted in order to avoid unnecessary expenditures on homes that need to be deferred. DOE views “virtual” audits as another “tool in the box” that can reduce time spent in the field, but one that needs clear direction and adequate verification to be effective and safe.
- Has DOE changed the policy on blower doors related to the risk of spreading the virus?
  - ACTION: DOE’s policy on blower door testing has not changed. Any organizations ceasing to conduct blower door testing must have a well-formulated and written policy for determining how to enter and verify air sealing measures. Contact your DOE Project Officer for approval.
    - Examples of how Grantees and Subgrantees are handling blower door concerns at this time include:
      - Donning complete PPE according to Grantee guidelines and conducting blower door testing as usual, being careful to remain out of the direct path of airflow.
      - Distribute face coverings to everyone on site (residents and workers) and/or bring everyone out of the home for the duration of testing. Initially open all interior

doors and all or several windows in the dwelling and run the blower door (pressurization or depressurization) for a few minutes. Air can then flow from multiple directions and purge the air from the whole dwelling. After purging the air, put the dwelling into standard blower door testing mode and proceed with diagnostic testing, being careful to stay out of the direct path of air flow throughout the entire procedure.

- Use historical blower door test data from previous weatherization jobs to run an energy audit and determine the air leakage factors and air leakage reduction percentages. Using those data points, along with the actual square footage of the home, generate a CFM50 air leakage input number for the audit and a projected post-weatherization CFM50 number.
- The National Association for State Community Services Program (NASCSPP) is collecting safe work protocols developed by Grantees. <https://nascsp.org/coronavirus-resources/nascsp-resources-on-covid/>
- ACTION: Consider the following prior to conducting a blower door test:
  - Invite/ask clients step outside if able to do so.
  - Emphasize the importance of weatherization crew and clients to wear a mask.
  - Seek input from DOE Project Officer on best practices.
  - Consider implications for ASHRAE ventilation requirements, described below.
- If blower door test are not conducted, how will Subgrantees conform to ASHRAE 62.2 ventilation requirements?
  - ACTION: If a Grantee chooses to temporarily discontinue the use of the blower door, the calculation of the ASHRAE ventilation requirement will not include an infiltration credit (ASHRAE 62.2-2016; Section 4.1.2), similar to when calculating the ventilation requirement for new homes. The alternative compliance method can still be used, but without an infiltration credit, will likely result in higher ventilation rates.
  - ACTION: Subject to approval by the DOE Project Officer, if a Grantee is using historical data in a method approved by DOE to predict pre- and post-weatherization air leakage rates, the predicted post-weatherization air leakage rates can be used as a typical blower door test result would be used to calculate the infiltration credit.

- Is measure skipping allowable in relation to COVID-19 safety concerns?
  - ACTION: Per [Weatherization Program Notice 19-4, Revised Energy Audit Approval Procedures, Related Audit and Material Approvals](#), issued by DOE on January 17, 2019, *“Energy audits are required to use interactive procedures to determine the most cost-effective measures and to prioritize these energy saving measures by SIR. Once approved, all prioritized weatherization measures modeled in the audit that meet the SIR requirement must be installed in the dwelling unit. Deviating from the audit prioritized list of modeled measures conflicts with the intent of the rules. A more detailed discussion of measure skipping is in [Attachment 8 of this Guidance](#).”*

### ***Weatherization Eligibility***

- What are DOE’s recommendations for resuming service to vulnerable households?
  - ACTION: Per [WAP Memorandum 060: Weatherization Assistance Program Frequently Asked Questions Related to COVID-19](#) clients may refuse services at this time due to COVID-19 concerns, however Grantees and Subgrantees should ensure that these clients can be given priority once the State or local jurisdiction is implementing Phase Three of the Guidelines.
- Please clarify whether or not the additional \$600 in Unemployment Benefit counts as income? Others programs, including LIHEAP do not consider it income.
  - ACTION: As stated in [WAP Memo 062: Weatherization Assistance Program's Response to Guidelines for Opening Up America Again - Phase One & Frequently Asked Questions \(FAQs\)](#), DOE recommends reviewing Weatherization Program Notice 20-3, Poverty Income Guidelines and Definition of Income. Unemployment benefits are included in the definition of income. Specifically, the Definition of Income states Cash Receipts include “Regular payments from social security, railroad retirement, unemployment compensation, strike benefits from union funds, worker's compensation, veteran's payments, training stipends, alimony, and military family allotments.” Further, DOE recommends Grantees and Subgrantees revisit the Categorical Exclusions stated in Section C of the Definition of Income.
- LIHEAP already has a new Declaration of Income (self-declaration that does not need to be notarized), will we be able to use this for Weatherization rather than having to get customers to present two separate self-declaration of income?
  - ACTION: As stated in [WAP Memorandum 062: Weatherization Assistance Program's Response to Guidelines for Opening Up America Again - Phase One & Frequently Asked Questions](#)

[\(FAQs\)](#). “During this time, WAP agencies could allow a client to self-certify that they have no other proof of income but specify that a notarized statement later will be required, once the jurisdiction is in Phase 3 of the Guidelines.”

### ***Applicant Selection and Preparation***

- Is there one standard client application for DOE WAP?
  - ACTION: DOE WAP has not developed one standard client application. Grantees and Subgrantees are responsible for developing client intake and applications for their program.

### ***Monitoring and Inspection Protocol***

- Does the Grantee technical monitoring staff need to conduct site visits in order to fulfill monitoring requirements?
  - ACTION: Per [WPN 20-4](#), DOE PO teams will have regular communications with Grantees and conduct desktop and ad hoc monitoring. As part of both desktop and ad hoc monitoring, the PO team will use reference materials (PAGE, production reports, conversations, correspondence, policies and procedures, fiscal reports, and Quality Assurance (QA) contractor data) to assist in this activity. Specifically,
    - Requires quarterly reviews driven by Grantee Financial and Production reports submitted on the 30th of the month following the end of the quarter.
    - Verifies the Grantee is in compliance with program requirements or identifies needed corrective actions to become compliant.
    - If deficiencies are identified, monitoring assessments can be issued and may require CAPs within 30 days of issuance.
  - ACTION: Grantee responsibility during technical monitoring continues to be ensuring that the right work is being done correctly in the homes served and that the Program is running as intended. DOE maintains that site visits are the simplest way to fulfill this responsibility, but understands that some areas may wish to minimize the number of visits to a client’s home. Grantees may propose a temporary alternative to technical site visits and conduct monitoring in that way upon approval from their DOE Project Officer.
  - ACTION: Grantees should modify existing monitoring protocols to ensure they can safely work in Subgrantee offices and client homes to evaluate the local agency’s safety protocols and client satisfaction. Consider scheduling all monitoring to occur once the State has entered Phase Three.

- Do Subgrantee Quality Control Inspectors (QCI) still need to conduct final inspections of completed units?
  - ACTION: As stated in [WAP Memorandum 060: Weatherization Assistance Program Frequently Asked Questions Related to COVID-19](#), DOE is unable to waive the requirement for final inspection for reporting completed units to DOE ([10 CFR 440.16\(g\)](#)). However, Grantees can provide partial payment for allowable activities under the award. For example, a contractor may be paid for in-progress work completed on a home that has not yet had a final inspection.
  
- If we are performing final inspections while clients are not home, what are acceptable ways to obtain customer signature for completion of work?
  - ACTION: In units where final inspections are complete, Grantees are advised to work with Subgrantees to develop a safe signature collection process – collecting signatures by mail and/or electronically (clients unable to sign documents electronically online may send photo signatures via USPS mail, text or email), when physical signatures cannot be obtained.
  
- Does DOE have recommendations for how Grantees should modify their monitoring protocols to ensure they can safely work in local agency offices and client homes?
  - ACTION: Grantees should follow the guidelines issued by Federal, State, and local jurisdictions as they related to worker safety in offices and homes.

**Subgrantees should to refer to the Grantee and the Community Action Legal Services, Inc. (CAPLAW) website for responses to the following questions:**

- How do we require/enforce clients to disclose household health statuses?
- How would programs determine the severity of an underlying health concern to decide whether it was a health hazard that should be deferred or not?
  - ACTION: Grantees and Subgrantees should refer to the CDC’s “[People Who Are at Higher Risk for Severe Illness](#)” list.
  - ACTION: Please refer to [Building Readiness: Reopening Our Doors](#).

- How can we ask screening questions to determine if the client/household has "at risk" or "high risk" people while maintaining client privacy?
  - ACTION: Per [WPN 17-7, Weatherization Health and Safety Guidance, Table of Issues, Occupant Pre-existing or Potential Health Conditions](#), Subgrantees are required to screen occupants to review known or suspected health concerns. Subgrantees should create a screening tool to use with ALL clients (to ensure there is no discrimination) prior to entering a client's home to perform weatherization or other activities. Per [Weatherization Memorandum 062: Weatherization Assistance Program's Response to Guidelines for Opening Up America Again - Phase One & Frequently Asked Questions \(FAQs\)](#), the screening tool could include questions like:
    1. Has anyone in the household tested positive or are presumed positive for COVID-19? If so, have they met the CDC criteria to be around others per the section "[When it's safe to be around others: ending home isolation?](#)"
    2. Has anyone in your household experienced fever, cough or shortness of breath in the last two weeks?
    3. Has anyone in your household been in contact with someone who has had a fever, cough or shortness of breath in the last two weeks?
    4. Does anyone in the household have underlying medical conditions or are they in frequent contact with someone who has underlying medical conditions?

ACTION: Please refer to the CAPLAW document, [Building Readiness: Reopening Our Doors](#).

- Can we ask clients to leave their homes while work crews are in their homes alone?
  - ACTION: Clients may be asked to leave their homes; however, they cannot be required to leave. Consider alternatives to asking a client to leave (e.g. provide PPE to client, contain client to one room/space, relocate client to the home of a friend/family member, waitlist unit until conditions are safe to resume weatherization work.) Regarding related questions received about liability of workers being in homes without residents present, service providers should already have policies governing appropriate actions if problems arise after workers are alone or unsupervised in the client homes. These same policies can be applied in the current situation.