

Project Title: Reducing Deferrals by Integrating Healthy Homes with Weatherization

Topic Area: Single-Family and Manufactured Housing (Topic Area 3)

Applicant: University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign.

Principal Investigator: Paul Francisco

Summary: Deferrals are a major problem in the Weatherization Assistance Program (WAP). Deferrals usually occur because of problems that are beyond the scope of WAP but which would compromise the implemented retrofits. The result is that clients are left with homes that are both inefficient and unhealthy, without resources to remedy the issue on their own.

This project aims to develop a systematic approach to reducing deferrals while enhancing the value of weatherization services in a way that can be incorporated into cost-effectiveness calculations. We will work with energy auditors certified as Healthy Home Evaluators (HHE) from subgrantees within the Illinois Home Weatherization Assistance Program (IHWAP) to evaluate homes that would otherwise be deferred for reasons that could impact occupant health, and as part of this project we will remedy these deficiencies such that weatherization services can be provided.

In order to demonstrate and quantify the benefits of this approach, we will monitor home energy use and key indoor environmental quality (IEQ) metrics both before and after weatherization. We will produce an analysis of the data to support the inclusion of IEQ improvements in the cost-effectiveness calculation, with recommendations of how to include these outcomes in standard WAP policy. Recognizing that realization of these benefits also requires a skilled workforce, we will develop and deliver training to support high-quality, cost-effective benefits. This project will allow more families to be served by WAP, resulting in homes that are both more efficient and healthier.