

Practitioner's Guide

Oak Ridge National Laboratory National Weatherization Assistance Program Impact Evaluation- Baseline Occupant Survey: Assessment of Client Status and Needs

September 2014
ORNL/TM-2015/22

This report compares participant data and behavior of one group of clients pre-weatherization to another group of clients post-weatherization. The purpose of comparing the characteristics and experiences of the households is to understand the difference that weatherizing a home can make.

The guide that follows is not an executive summary. Each volume of the Weatherization evaluation by ORNL has its own excellent summary. It is meant to be a tool that guides Weatherization Assistance Program practitioners seeking to locate and apply the results of sophisticated outcome evaluations included within this evaluation report volume. It highlights findings that can be important for those who design and deliver WAP services similar to those found in this volume of the retrospective evaluation of the 2008 Program and offers page references that help readers locate specific topics, statistics, and tables.

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ORNL Report National Weatherization Assistance Program Impact Evaluation- Baseline Occupant Survey: Assessment of Client Status and Need

Why is assessing participant status and energy behavior important?

The descriptive data in this report profile the characteristics and experiences of eligible households before and after they receive WAP services; it provides the information on their housing, financial stability and well-being needed to understand the impact weatherizing their home might make. Not included: their energy bills and usage. The data are also used in the evaluation reports that provide statistical analysis of the difference the WAP makes with respect to different housing types, different participant characteristics, and different program approaches.

What can you find in the report?

- Participant and eligible household demographics (p. 9-15)
- Energy-using equipment (p. 22-27)
- Participant perceptions and behaviors (p. 31-38)
- Energy efficiency opportunities through behavior change (p. 39-43)
- Changes in indoor air quality and health risk (p. 45-49)
 - For more on Air Quality Risk, see also the evaluation, “Weatherization and Indoor Air Quality: Measured Impacts in Single-Family Homes under the Weatherization Assistance Program” (ORNL/TM-2014/170).
- Energy affordability and payment behavior (p. 52-59)
- Health status outcomes for households (p. 62-71)
 - For more on health outcomes and asthma, see the evaluation, “Health and Household-Related Benefits Attributable to the Weatherization Assistance Program” (ORNL/TM-2014/345).

Terminology warning: throughout the report the phrase “comparison group” refers to already-weatherized homes and “treatment group” refers to those scheduled to receive WAP service in the coming months.

What are the key findings?

- The report found significant gains associated with WAP with respect to:
 - Less use of supplemental sources of fuel
 - Decreased exposure to contaminants



Additional data:

Table 4.19 Summary of WAP Household Heating System Findings

Tables 7.11 Summary of WAP Household Health and Safety Findings

- Energy affordability and non-energy benefits:
 - Affordability outcomes:
 - The post-weatherization respondents were more likely to have sufficient income to pay their primary energy bill without sacrificing other necessities, such as food purchases. Concerns about having nutritious food also fell.
 - Post-weatherization participants were less likely to receive shut-off notices and rely on short-term high interest loans for their energy bills.
 - Health outcomes:
 - Post-weatherization participants reported better physical health, particularly respondents with asthma, in missing fewer days of work, sleeping more restfully, and rating their physical health better overall.



Additional data:

Table 8.1 WAP Clients by Level of Difficulty Faced Paying Energy Bills

Table 8.10 Percent of WAP Clients Who Faced Food Concerns in Past 4 Weeks

Table 8.11 WAP Clients by How Frequently Household Did Not Purchase Food in Past 12 Months to Pay Energy Bill

Table 8.12 WAP Clients by How Frequently Household Did Not Fill Prescriptions in Past 12 Months

Table 9.9 Number of Days WAP Survey Respondent Got Enough Sleep in the Past 30 Days

Table 9.22 Summary of Select Findings on Health Status and Outcomes

- The report found that occupants of Weatherized homes did not take all opportunities to manage usage, although their consumption did decline:
 - These tables show opportunities to reduce energy use through behavior change could be found by changing the way some participants used lighting, hot water equipment and thermostat programming:



Additional data:

Table 4.5 WAP Clients by Whether Household Practices Setback in the Winter

Table 5.4 WAP Clients by Whether Household Practices Setback in the Summer

Table 6.2 WAP Clients by Whether Household Purchases CFLs

Table 6.5 WAP Clients by Temperature of Wash Cycle for Home Washing Machine

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