

Practitioner's Guide

Oak Ridge National Laboratory National Weatherization Assistance Program Impact Evaluation- Client Satisfaction Survey: WAP Service Delivery from the Client's Perspective

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This report evaluates participant satisfaction after receiving WAP services, including the application and intake process, the audit, education, service delivery, and final inspection. This report builds on the Baseline Occupant Survey Report.

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 National Weatherization Assistance Program Impact Evaluation- Client Satisfaction Survey: WAP Service Delivery from the Client's Perspective

Why is participant satisfaction important?

The Satisfaction Survey asked Weatherization participants to report their satisfaction with program process, education on energy and health & safety, as well as the Program overall. The variation in scores can help program leaders identify areas where improvements are possible. The survey found high participant satisfaction with the outcome of Program's work to reduce energy bills and increase home comfort. The energy education provided at the time of service delivery satisfied the respondents, but was very specific and limited to measures installed. Education was one of the few general program design weaknesses identified in the evaluation.

What can you find in the report?

- Participant satisfaction with the four typical steps in the service delivery process
 - Application and Intake (p. 7-11)
 - Audit (p. 11-12)
 - Weatherization Service Delivery (p. 12-15)
 - Final Inspection (p. 15-17)
- Participant satisfaction with the two elements of educational services post installation
 - Energy education (p. 20-25)
 - Health and safety education (p. 25-32)
- Overall Program delivery and results satisfaction (p. 33-42)

What are the key findings?

Overall Program Satisfaction

- After receiving weatherization services, participants believed their homes were more comfortable and saved energy, with 80% reporting that the improvements meant it was less likely that they might move. The top reasons for applying were a desire to reduce energy bills and increase home comfort. By comparison, the top reported benefits of the Program were similar, with 47% selecting improved comfort and 43% selecting lower energy bills as some of the greatest benefits.
- The Program fulfilled their expectations and participants reported high overall satisfaction and more certainty they would stay in their homes.
- Nevertheless, some weatherization participants indicated that they wished some additional measures had been installed, including window replacement. Weatherization crews did not install these measures because they either were not cost-effective or exceeded program spending limits.

- Additional data:
 - Table 3.6 Reasons for Weatherization Application, p. 10
 - Table 5.10 Overall Satisfaction with the Weatherization Program, p. 38
 - Table 5.14 Benefits of Program Participation, p. 40

“The overall picture presented by the Satisfaction Survey is that the WAP program is very successful in meeting client needs” (Carroll et al., p. 33).

Process Satisfaction

- Participants were highly satisfied with Program delivery. Of the four common steps in service delivery, three scored high and consistent marks. For auditing, installation, and inspection, more than 90% of respondents consistently gave high marks and indicated that weatherization crews were timely, courteous, and careful in their work.
- Marks for the first step of application and intake were just satisfactory. The length of time between first filing the application and having weatherization services begin was satisfactory for many, but not all participants. The most common wait time between applying and receiving services was less than six months, with the overall majority receiving services in less than a year’s time. This indicates the dissatisfaction created by long waiting lists for service.

- Additional data:
 - Table 2 Ease of Dealing with Different Aspects of the Program, p. xvi
 - Table 3.3 Time Since First Request for Weatherization, p. 9
 - Table 3.13 Courteousness of Weatherization Crew p. 14

Program Recruitment and Outreach

- Agencies providing utility assistance through the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) as well as senior service agencies and other community social service agencies were common sources of referral, but no category of agency, not even LIHEAP programs, were as significant a source of applicants as were referrals from neighbors or family.
- Many participants learned about WAP through a relative or referral from a friend. After receiving services, participants, in turn, frequently referred or told other people about the Program. The authors suggested that the high prevalence of word of mouth referrals was indicative of Program success.

- Additional data:
 - Table 3.2 How Learned about Local Weatherization Program, p. 8
 - Table 5.15 Word of Mouth Referral, p. 41
- Research on how social networks worked to spread the Weatherization program’s reputation became the subject of a separate study. It identifies the motivation of those who were recruited and how the social networks of the eligible families function. The study also suggests ways local programs could provide useful information to satisfied customers in order to recruit new participants and ways the outreach can be framed to be most effective.
- See Erin Rose et. al., Assessing the Potential of Social Networks as a Means for Information Diffusion – the Weatherization Experiences (WE) Project
http://weatherization.ornl.gov/RecoveryActpdfs/ORNL_TM-2014_405.pdf

Participant Energy Education

A potential opportunity for expansion lies in client education for both energy and health & safety.

- Weatherization staff were more likely to discuss or give materials about energy savings compared to health and safety information. In both instances, the information was related to the conditions in the homes they were currently working on and was not a standard component of the program for all homes. The report notes that “client education in the program is treated as client service that supports the weatherization process, rather than being a major focus of program delivery staff.” (ibid. p. 19). Changing this would require altering program guidance.
- 69% of participants received energy savings information, and they rated the information highly. Weatherization crews shared information about ways to save energy verbally, through print, or through a combination of the two. The participants understood the material, found the information useful, and identified the features of the materials that were particularly useful for the survey.
- 40% of participants said the weatherization staff provided information on potential health and safety improvements and 95% of them were satisfied with the way the information was provided.

“While most clients seem satisfied with those services, it is not clear that they see this [client education] as a major benefit of the Program”
(Carroll et al., p. 19)



Additional data:

Table 4.14 Staff Provided Information on Ways to Improve Health and Safety in the Home, p. 27

Table 4.7 Usefulness of Materials about Saving Energy, p. 23

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