

The Honorable Josh Shapiro
Governor of Pennsylvania
225 Main Capitol
Harrisburg, PA 17120

February 2, 2024

Re: The Critical Need to Continue Pennsylvania’s Whole-Home Repairs Program

Dear Governor Shapiro,

We, the undersigned nonprofit organizations, businesses, community groups, faith groups, and coalitions, urge you to prioritize funding for Pennsylvania’s nation-leading Whole-Home Repairs program in your 2024-2025 budget and budget address. We greatly appreciate your past support for the program, and we hope you will do all you can to ensure it is funded in the next fiscal year.

Why Whole-Home Repairs?

The Whole-Home Repairs Program provides funding to establish a one-stop shop in each county in our Commonwealth for essential home repairs, weatherization, and adaptive modifications, while simultaneously building up our local workforce and adding new family-sustaining jobs in a growing field. Whole-Home Repairs helps Pennsylvanians stay warm, safe, and dry in homes they can afford. This is vital in a state with an old housing stock. Almost 300,000 homes across PA need critical repairs.¹

The Whole-Home Repairs Program is critical to ensuring energy affordability and access to efficiency for the households that need it most. While there are various state, federal, and utility-led programs that aim to help low-income residents access energy efficiency, significant gaps and a lack of clear coordination between programs mean that many Pennsylvanians go unserved. For example, analysis of Weatherization Assistance Program (WAP) services in PA indicated that more than a third of customers are deferred annually from participation due to structural or health issues in the home that aren’t covered, such as moisture issues, roof repair, and knob-and-tube wiring.² All of these issues can be addressed by Whole-Home Repairs.

Whole-Home Repairs’ workforce development component is also vital to the success of the program. Home repair contractors are in short supply across the state. Whole-Home Repairs’

¹ American Housing Survey. (2021) *2021 Pennsylvania — Housing Quality — All Occupied Units*. https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/ahs/data/interactive/ahstablecreator.html?s_areas=00042&s_year=2021&s_tablename=TABLE5&s_bygroup1=1&s_bygroup2=1&s_filtergroup1=1&s_filtergroup2=1 (Click on “Get Table” on the bottom left to generate the data. Of PA’s occupied housing units, over 69,000 are rated as “severely inadequate” and over 234,000 as “moderately inadequate.”)

²Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development. *Pennsylvania Weatherization Assistance Program LIHEAP Deferral Program 2019-2020*. <https://nascsp.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/PA-2019-2020-LIHEAP-Deferral-Program-Guidelines.pdf>, pg. 2

workforce training components let counties invest in growing their local workforces, creating family-sustaining jobs that support this crucial program. These jobs are also vital to the success of Pennsylvania's weatherization and energy efficiency programs, including to take advantage of coming federal money from the Inflation Reduction Act. Counties need consistent funding in order to effectively invest in training programs, apprenticeships, and other ways to grow their local workforces.

The First Year

In 2022, the General Assembly and Governor Wolf made a historic investment of \$125 million to set up Whole-Home Repairs. In the program's first year, the massive need for this funding became ever more apparent. The first indication came when the Department of Community and Economic Development opened applications to counties in December 2022: 95% of counties applied for formula funding to provide Whole-Home Repairs for their residents. Once counties opened applications to residents, the overwhelming need for home repair funding became even more obvious. Every county – from Allegheny to Elk, Bradford to Lehigh – was oversubscribed. Some received eligible applications from 20 times the number of residents they could serve with present funding.³ Others closed applications within days because they could not handle the enormous demand.⁴

Whole-Home Repairs has made an incredible impact on the homeowners who have been served with this initial funding. For example:

- In Somerset County, a senior citizen who lives alone and has bad arthritis was having trouble getting up and down the stairs. She only had a bathroom on the second floor, which meant it would not have been feasible for her to stay in her home much longer. With Whole-Home Repairs funding, she was able to get a new, handicap accessible bathroom on the first floor. In addition, her 30-year-old furnace was replaced with a newer, efficient model, reducing her energy costs. These accessibility and affordability improvements will allow this customer to age in place, in her own home.
- In Allentown, a family whose home flooded during Hurricane Ida spent days cleaning out water but lacked the funds to repair black mold that sprouted throughout their basement. They ran dehumidifiers constantly, but the problem persisted. The mother, who has asthma, was unable to enter the basement without feeling physically ill. Their application

³ For one example, see Action Housing's *Whole Home Repairs Dashboard*. Action Housing, the Allegheny County administrator for Whole-Home Repairs, offers a dashboard that details application numbers, demographics and locations of applicants, and numbers of homes where work has been completed or pending.

https://tableau.alleghenycounty.us/t/PublicSite/views/WholeHomeRepairs-PublicDashboard/WholeHomeRepairsDashboard?%3Adisplay_count=n&%3Aembed=y&%3Aorigin=viz_share_link&%3AshowAppBanner=false&%3AshowVizHome=n

⁴ Spotlight PA. *Demand for Pennsylvania's Whole-Home Repairs Program has been overwhelming, but more funding is on hold.*

<https://www.spotlightpa.org/news/2023/12/pennsylvania-whole-home-repairs-program-shortage-budget-im-passe-legislature/>

for Whole-Home Repairs has been accepted – the program will address the mold, as well as other issues that contributed to the flooding in the first place, making their home healthier and more resilient.

- In Elk County, an older couple who both walk with canes depended on their side porch to enter their home without steps – but the porch was crumbling and dangerous. With Whole-Home Repairs, they were able to repair the porch and have easier access to their home. They also got a weakened roof repaired and replaced their furnace with a more efficient model, all improvements that will help them age in place.
- In several counties, Whole-Home Repairs has funded numerous repairs to heavily damaged roofs – a common reason for deferral from the Weatherization Assistance Program – and then referred customers to their WAP provider. Deferred WAP applicants are waiting on services that they know will help them save energy, lowering both their monthly bills and their homes' carbon emissions. Whole-Home Repairs is enabling more Pennsylvanians to access these vital services.

Support Whole-Home Repairs

Whole-Home Repairs benefits Pennsylvanians in rural and urban areas, in Democratic and Republican districts. It remediates poor housing conditions that cause health problems, high energy bills, and blight in our communities.

We respect your dedication to helping all Pennsylvanians access quality housing, so that our communities can thrive. Whole-Home Repairs is a crucial step towards that goal. Please prioritize Whole-Home Repairs in this year's budget.

Sincerely,

412 Justice
5th Square PAC
ACTION Housing
Affordable Housing Centers of Pennsylvania
AIA Pennsylvania
Asian Pacific Islander Political Alliance
Capital Access, Inc.
CASA
CASA in Action
Celentano Energy Services
Center for Coalfield Justice
Ceres
Clean Air Action
Clean Air Action Fund
Clean Air Council

Clean Water Action
Community Legal Services
Conservation Voters of PA
Curranhvac
Dieck
DMI Companies
ECA
Energy Efficiency Empowerment (E3)
evolve LLC
Frankford Friends Meeting
Franklin Energy
Green & Healthy Homes Initiative, Inc
Green Building Alliance
Green Building United
Green Energy Economics Group, Inc.
GreenBeams
Habitat for Humanity of Bucks County
Habitat for Humanity of the Lehigh Valley
Habitat for Humanity Philadelphia, Inc.
HELP: MLP
Hill District Consensus Group
Housing Alliance of PA
Hunting Park Neighborhood Advisory Committee/Community Revitalization Corp.
Impact Missions
Keller Williams Realty
Key Medium
Keystone Energy Efficiency Alliance
M&E Engineers, Inc.
MaGrann Associates
Make the Road PA
Mayfair Fuel Oil Co.
Moms Clean Air Force, Pennsylvania Chapter
Moshier Studio
North Hills Community Outreach
Northumberland County Weatherization
NRDC (Natural Resources Defense Council)
One PA
PA Climate Equity Table
PA Jewish Earth Alliance
Pennsylvania Solar Center
Pennsylvania Stands Up
Pennsylvania United
Pennsylvania Utility Law Project
Performance Systems Development

Philadelphia Energy Authority
Philly Neighborhood Networks
Philly Thrive
Physicians for Social Responsibility Pennsylvania
Pittsburgh United
Pittsburghers for Public Transit
POWER Interfaith
PPL WRAP
RB Ellis Corp
Rebuilding Together Philadelphia
Reclaim Philadelphia
Regional Housing Legal Services
Sealed
Sierra Club Pennsylvania Chapter
Solar United Neighbors
Solstice Home Performance
Sunrise Movement Pennsylvania
Sustainable Pittsburgh
Tenny Group
The JPI Group
The Nature Conservancy in Pennsylvania
Third Act
Vote Solar
Working for Justice Ministry, St. Paul's United Methodist Church (Allison Park, PA)