

## **WAP Public Hearing Transcript**

Original Date: April 4<sup>th</sup>, 2025, from 4:30 – 6PM

Location: Virtually and in-person at 10 Franklin Square, New Britain, 06051. Hearing Room 2.

### **Seema Malani (DEEP):**

Good afternoon, everyone. I am Seema Malani, Director of for the Office of Affordable Housing Energy Retrofits at DEEP.

Thank you for joining us today.

This public hearing is for the one-to-four unit Weatherization Assistance Program, WAP, for low-income persons.

This program plays a vital role in helping low-income households reduce energy costs, improve custom, comfort, and enhance health and safety.

We are here to review and gather feedback on the draft of the proposed 2025 WAP State Plan which we intend to submit to US Department of Energy by April 25<sup>th</sup>.

Your voices matter because the decisions we make in this plan don't just live on paper. They affect real people in real homes, in every part of our state.

Whether you've experienced weatherization services yourself or you work with families in need or simply care about energy justice, your input helps us shape the plan that's responsive to community needs and rooted in lived experience.

Before we dive in, I'd like to introduce a few members of our team who will be guiding us today.

Brian will be presenting the program overview and walking us through the slide deck.

Yessenia and Olivia are managing logistics on site, if you need anything while you're here, including parking validation, please see them.

Ana might join us remotely. Olivia will be monitoring the chat. Here is a quick overview of the agenda.

We'll begin with a short public comment period. Then Brian will walk through the slide deck covering the overview of the web program. Then we will open the floor for discussion around key questions.

And finally, we'll conclude with a second round of public comment period and adjourn for the day.

Before we get started. Let's review a few housekeeping items. If you're joining remotely, please mute your mic unless speaking. If you're having difficulty hearing, please let us know in the chat, and we will do our best to address the issue.

Feel free to post questions and comments in the meeting chat. Olivia will be monitoring that. These will become part of the public record.

Oh, if you would like to speak, use the raise hand function. Please note that this meeting is recorded.

If you are here in person, please ensure you are parked in the garage, and see Olivia for parking validation before you leave.

If you'd like to leave written comments after the hearing, we'll be accepting them through April 11<sup>th</sup> before midnight. Email them to [deep.energybureau@ct.gov](mailto:deep.energybureau@ct.gov). Or send them via US mail to DEEP's Bureau of Energy and Technology Policy. 10 Franklin Square, New Britain, Connecticut.

Thank you again for being here and sharing your voice. Let's get started.

Do we have any public comments?

I don't see anyone Brian. Take away the floor.

Brian. The DEEP hearing room is mute muted.

Yeah, let's begin again.

**Brian Biernat (DEEP):**

Test. Testing is this working? Now.

**Seema Malani (DEEP):**

Yeah, it's working. It's working now.

**Brian Biernat (DEEP):** Great. Thank you very much.

Not a problem. So what we're going to do here is we're going to go. This is the beginning of the State Plan public hearing for PY25. And this is for the WAP One-to-four unit Weatherization Assistance Program.

The purpose of the State Plan that we're discussing today is to go over the one-to-four unit Weatherization Assistance Program, also known as formula funds.

And the purpose of the Weatherization Assistance Program is to increase the energy efficiency, efficiency of dwelling units owned or occupied by income-eligible persons, and to improve their health and safety, especially for individuals and households identified by DOE as vulnerable.

Vulnerable households include elderly, disabled, young children, and high energy users, and high and high energy, people with high energy burden.

In compliance with Federal regulations, 10 CFR 440 and 2 CFR 200.

The budget for the budget for PY25 will be \$4,065,724. That is distributed amongst both the Grantee and the Subgrantee. The Grantee portion of the grant is \$667,992 and the Subgrantee distribution is \$3,397,732.

On the next slide here we have the Connecticut weatherization regions, which are broken into both blue and red region.

Region One in blue is operated by CRT, is served by CRT, Community Renewal Team. And the region in red is served by CET, also known as the Center for EcoTechnology.

Next slide, please.

The proposed program changes this year include an element of the health and safety budget, the heating and domestic hot water systems, Weatherization Readiness Funding, also known as WRF, and we will also be having a software transition.

As far as the health and safety budget is concerned, we have previously allocated 15% of the program operations budget for health and safety issues. Based on the number of health and safety issues found, CT WAP is currently proposing to DOE to allocate 23% of the program operations budget to address health and safety issues for heating systems and domestic hot water systems.

Heating systems will only be replaced in WAP if they can be counted as an ECM. Heating systems and replacements under health and safety are only considered under special conditions.

WAP can only replace inoperable or red-tagged heating systems in households that agree to receive comprehensive weatherization services.

We have requested DOE approval to replace domestic hot water systems, utilizing the same review criteria as heating systems.

For Weatherization Readiness Funding, the entire WRF funding allocation will be given to weatherization Subgrantees this year. And this funding can be used to address the issues listed in the WRF State Plan.

For software transition, in PY25 DEEP will seek approval to continue utilizing the DOE Weatherization Waweb suite of software, including NEAT and MHEA.

CT WAP will also pursue the use of the Hancock energy audit tool MINT in future program years to allow smoother connection between the database and energy auditing software.

The production goal for this year is to serve 107 households in Region One, and, in Region Two, to serve 107 households as well for a total of 214 households, statewide

Technical consultants and training providers that we'll be using this year or continue using this year will be the Association for Energy Affordability, The True View Consultants, as well as Green Jobs Academy.

The Association for Energy Affordability will be conducting desk reviews, waiver reviews as well as doing some technical writing for the program.

We will contract with the True View consultants to do in-progress monitoring, final inspections, as well as annual technical monitoring.

And we'll be contracting with Green Jobs Academy this year to do comprehensive and specific trainings. And our contract with Green Jobs Academy is good through the summer of 2025, and we will then be conducting an RFP for an IREC certified training provider that will provide the comprehensive and specific trainings for this program year.

Next slide, please. So now we are looking for opportunities for public input opportunities for public input include the three topics that we have listed here and we have which include DEEP seeking public input on the amount of funds allocated to health and safety, Ct WAP seeking public input on the weatherization measures provided through WAP, as well as CT WAP seeking public input on the use of the Weatherization Readiness Funding.

Our requests for written public comments on the draft state plan. Written public comments can be submitted until April 11<sup>th</sup> 2025, 11:59PM or midnight.

We can also send written comments to the Deep Energy Bureau email listed here. Full notice for public comment is also on the DEEP weatherization webpage.

So for the first topic, which will be the weatherization health and safety funding level. The DOE requires that all grantees who allocate funding indicate the amount of federal funds to be used to mitigate energy-related health and safety hazards which are necessary to the installation of weatherization measures in accordance with 10 CFR 440.16(h) and 440.18(d)(15).

Grantees, including DEEP, must set health safety expenditure limits for their subgrantees, providing justification by explaining the basis for setting these limits and providing related historical experience, including the frequency and costs of health and safety measures.

These limits will vary, depending on conditions found in different geographical areas.

Across the country, 15 to 25% of the program operations budget is allocated to health and safety issues found in the client's home.

CT WAP has historically kept the health and safety funding at 15% of the program operations budget. CT WAP, this year, is seeking DOE approval to increase health and safety funding to 23% based on high deferral rates reported by the WAP Subgrantees.

This year, we are seeking input on whether 23% is a reasonable amount to allocate to health and safety measures. We also seeking input on whether this amount should be increased or decreased. And we're also looking for data that is available to support an increase or decrease in health and safety funding.

The next topic we have here is the weatherization energy conservation measures. CT WAP is currently in the process of reapplying to be able to utilize the DOE Weatherization Assistant web-based energy modeling software.

As part of this application process, DOE allows the Grantee to revisit the types of materials and equipment installed as part of weatherizing a home. DOE allows standard weatherization measures found in 10 CFR 440 Appendix A, but CT WAP is also exploring additional items such as LED lighting; air conditioning repair or replacement; refrigerator repair or replacement; heating and ventilation system tune, repair, or replacement; domestic hot water system repair or replacement; water conservation measures; heat pump technologies; and solar technology.

We are seeking public input on whether we should prioritize any or all these measures listed above for inclusion in our program and additional support of why or why not and any additional technologies that should be considered, if so.

If additional technology should be considered, please provide studies or data to support the energy conservation and energy cost savings of recommended technologies.

And the next slide. Here we have the Weatherization Readiness Funding. And the purpose of Weatherization Readiness Funding is to allow WAP to address necessary repairs, including health and safety, structural repairs, and dwelling units that have been deferred from receiving weatherization services. Specifically, this funding is targeted to reduce the frequency of deferred homes that require services outside the scope of weatherization before the weatherization services can commence.

All units receiving Weatherization Readiness Funds must result in a DOE completion as defined as a dwelling on which a DOE approved energy audit or priority list has been applied and weatherization work has been completed.

CT WAP is currently allocated a portion of Weatherization Readiness Funding for weatherization readiness activities. These activities are limited to activities listed in this Connecticut Readiness State Plan, including roof repair, wall repair, interior or exterior ceiling repair, floor repair, foundation or subspace repair, exterior drainage repairs, plumbing repairs, electrical repairs, and remediation or cleanup or lead, mold, and asbestos.

CT is also looking for input on whether there are additional and health and safety barriers to weatherization that are regularly encountered. If so, what are other barriers common in Connecticut, and what research or data can be provided to support the presence of these other barriers?

And here we have information about our public hearings and opportunities for public input.

Today we held a hearing in the morning from 10AM to 11:30AM. And today we'll be holding, this afternoon, a hearing from 4:30 until at which point we are not receiving any more public comments.

And written comments on the State Plan are due by April 11<sup>th</sup>, 2025, at midnight. Comments may be addressed to [deep.energybureau@ct.gov](mailto:deep.energybureau@ct.gov).

The Zoom links were provided on March 19<sup>th</sup>, 2025, in the public hearing notice, which was also posted on the DEEP weatherization page.

And the WAP State Plan was also posted on April 1<sup>st</sup>, 2025, on the DEEP weatherization website.

And this concludes the presentation portion of this public hearing.

**Seema Malani (DEEP):**

Do we have any public comments?

All right. We'll wait for a little bit to see if we get any comments.

**Seema Malani (DEEP):**

Hearing no public comments we will conclude this meeting.

Thank you.

