

CT WAP State Plan Public Hearing Transcript

Original Date: April 15th, 2026, from 10:30AM to 12PM.

Location: Hosted virtually on Zoom.

Olivia Colon (DEEP):

All right. Good morning, everybody! It looks like we've mostly admitted everyone from the waiting room, so I'm going to go ahead and get started on the presentation.

My name is Olivia Colon, I'm a Research Analyst who works on the Weatherization Assistance Program. Today, I'm joined by Seema Malani, the Office Director for the Office of Affordable Housing Energy Retrofits, and Brian Biernat, who's another Research Analyst on the team.

Thank you so much for joining us today. This morning, the team and I are here to talk to you all about the Program Year 2026 State Plan for the 1–4-unit weatherization assistance program.

So, before we get into the real content of today's meeting, I just want to go over some quick engagement guidelines. Please just make sure that your microphone is muted upon joining the meeting. Throughout the meeting, if you have any questions or comments that come up as we're going over the content, please use the Q&A option for those questions and comments, and then we'll be sure to get to those during the latter half of this meeting. Just for your awareness, this meeting is being recorded and will be made available afterwards. And then when we get to that public input period, please raise your hand and wait to be acknowledged by one of us. State your name and affiliation slash organization. Once you begin commenting, you'll have 3 minutes to deliver that comment or question, and if you have any sources, facts, statistics, please just state the source that you got those from.

All right, so as I mentioned, the State Plan that we're discussing today is for the 1–4-unit Weatherization Assistance Program, or WAP for short. This is also referred to as our single-family program, which is funded with formula funds that come from the Department of Energy.

The purpose of WAP is to increase the energy efficiency of dwellings that are owned or occupied by income-eligible persons to improve their health and safety, especially for those individuals and households identified by DOE as vulnerable. DOE considers a household with members who are elderly, disabled, or young children to be vulnerable, and additionally, households with high energy use or high energy burden are also considered vulnerable.

Our WAP State Plan for Program Year 2026 is developed in accordance with all federal regulations that apply. So those are 10 CFR 440, which are the programmatic regulations, and 2 CFR 200, which are the financial regulations.

One very important note, before I continue through the rest of this presentation. So, as of today, April 15th, DOE has not issued application instructions or budget allocations for Program Year 2026. On January 23rd of this year, President Trump did sign the Commerce, Justice, Science; Energy and Water Development; and Interior and Environment Appropriations Act for 2026. This Act provided funding to DOE and a few other federal agencies. This Act allocated \$369 million to WAP, which is an increase of \$3 million from the Fiscal Year 2025 levels.

The Connecticut WAP team has started working on the key components of our Program Year 2026 State Plan. However, please note that Program Year 2026 for WAP will not be officially confirmed until DOE releases guidance on how to apply and the official funding amounts that we will have for the next Program Year.

So, with that being said, this is our estimated budget for Program Year 2026, which is based off of our Program Year 2025 numbers.

In total, we're estimating to receive \$4,065,724 in total. The Grantee, which is Connecticut DEEP, will be retaining \$667,992, with \$567,284 of those dollars going towards training and technical assistance. So, this includes paying our technical consultants who aid us with our desk and field monitoring.

The remaining \$3,397,732 will be split amongst our Subgrantees. The largest chunk of this funding is going to go towards Program Support, which is the actual energy conservation measures themselves that are installed in homes. This makes up \$1,824,864 of the budget.

And then the second largest budget category is Health and Safety, which, like that name implies, is used to remediate health and safety issues related to weatherization measures in the home. So that is \$545,090 of the total budget.

Back on the left-hand side of the screen here, you can see the Weatherization Readiness Funds. This pool of funding can be used to address barriers to weatherization. So, all \$383,625 of those dollars are going to get sent to the subgrantees so they can better serve homes.

And then you have the remaining budget categories for Admin, Training and Technical Assistance, Financial Audits, and Insurance.

And again, these are all estimates, so these figures are subject to change based on DOE's guidance and official budget categories that will be released.

These are our two service regions in the state. Each region has about the same number of income-eligible households, so those are households that meet that 60% State Median Income definition of low-income.

Region 1, which is in blue, is served by Community Renewal Team, or CRT for short. CRT is a community action agency that's based out of Hartford, Connecticut, and serves Hartford, Litchfield, Middlesex, New London, Tolland, and Windham counties.

And then Region 2, which is in red, is served by the Center for EcoTechnology. CET is a nonprofit that's based out of Northampton, Massachusetts, but all their contractors, inspectors, and really any folks that are doing that sort of boots-on-the-ground labor are based here in Connecticut. And CET serves Fairfield and New Haven counties.

Next up, I want to spend some time talking about the program changes that we have made recently. First, we have the establishment of advanced accounts. So, with the amendments that we issued for Program Year 2025, DEEP added this advanced account option for our two Subgrantees. This is a segregated account that the Subgrantees can use to pay their

subcontractors before they receive reimbursement from DEEP. The initial amount in these accounts is \$200,000, and that will be replenished by DEEP once we receive proof that subcontractors have been paid each month.

Next, we have the development of monitoring processes. So, during Program Year 2025, DEEP worked with our Subgrantees and our technical assistance team to update the WAP monitoring processes. This streamlined and coordinated the process between the Subgrantees and our technical team. And we also developed a project review process that will be added to our Hancock software, which is our data management software.

Speaking of software, I also want to talk a little bit about the software transition that we had in Program Year 2025. DEEP did receive DOE's approval to continue using the Weatherization Assistance, or WAweb, suite of software, which includes NEAT and MHEA.

NEAT stands for the National Energy Audit Tool and is used to create energy models for 1-4-unit homes. And MHEA is short for the Manufactured Home Energy Audit and is used to create energy models in manufactured homes.

Last but not least, we also have updated program guidelines. In Program Year 2025, DEEP developed new Health and Safety and Weatherization Readiness Funds guidelines. The purpose of these new guidelines is to provide clarity about the processes when utilizing these two funding sources. And additionally, we worked with the company Saturn to get our field guide updated for this Program Year.

So, next up, I want to talk a little bit about some proposed upcoming changes that the WAP team has developed and may implement into the program.

So first up, we have the addition of leveraged funding sources. Moving forward, WAP is going to have more cost sharing, with the Home Energy Solutions Income Eligible Program now that we have a scope of work developed for cost sharing between WAP and the utility program. Additionally, in the future, DEEP may utilize other funding sources to help improve WAP services and offer additional energy savings measures to customers.

Moving on, we currently are also working on a request for proposal, or RFP, for a WAP IIJA service provider. WAP IIJA is our multifamily program, which is funded by the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act. This RFP will be made available on our website once it is completed.

We also have the WAP self-intake application. So, this past year, DEEP has been working with the Hancock developers to launch a self-intake application. Again, Hancock is WAP's data management software. This self-intake application will allow interested people to apply to WAP directly, rather than going through the CEAP application, and this is really helpful because it will allow folks to apply, outside of heating season when that CEAP application is closed.

And finally, we continue to work on updating our program guidelines. So, the team is currently working on an updated version of our WAP Program Operations Manual. And again, this will be made available on our website once we have completed those updates.

So, here are our estimated production goals for Program Year 2026. Again, this number is just an estimate and will be finalized once DOE announces Connecticut's budget for Program Year 2026, but this is what we're expecting to complete next Program Year.

So, across the total State, we're looking for a grand total of 214 units, so that's going to be 107 units in Region 1 and Region 2.

Currently, Connecticut DEEP works with two technical consultants to help us with our technical tasks and monitoring. Throughout Program Year 2026, the Connecticut WAP team will continue to contract with the Association for Energy Affordability, or AEA for short. AEA helps us with the desk review portion of state-level quality control inspections, waiver reviews, technical writing, and training of our subgrantees.

Additionally, we will continue to contract with True View Consultants, or TVC for short. TVC completes on-site reviews for state-level quality control inspections. They also complete observations of initial energy audits and any in-progress work.

On April 1st, DEEP issued a request for written comments on the draft Program Year 2026 State Plan. Written comments on our State Plan are due back to us by April 22nd, 2026, at 11:59 PM. We do welcome comments on all aspects of our program, but specifically, DEEP is seeking input on how we can serve more clients and how we can strengthen or improve the program.

Sorry, folks, I clicked ahead too fast.

You may send written comments to our email, which is DEEP. EnergyBureau@ct.gov, and the full notice is now available on our website, which is www.ct.gov/deep/weatherization.

We're holding two public hearings today, Wednesday, April 15th, 2026, to discuss these changes to our State Plan. Hearing One is this current hearing, which began at 10:30AM and will adjourn today at noon. And hearing two will be held from 4PM to 5:30PM. Both of these hearings are being held remotely via Zoom. Again, we're going to be accepting verbal comments during these public hearings, and those written comments can be submitted to us via email until April 22nd at 11:59 PM.

So, I will go ahead and leave it on this slide. And at this time, we will open up the floor for public input.

Yes, I see, John Mitchell has a hand raised.

John Mitchell (JLC Industries):

Alright, can you hear me?

Olivia Colon (DEEP):

Yes, we can hear.

John Mitchell (JLC Industries):

Beautiful, beautiful, beautiful. So, I do diversional stuff across the United States with many different states with quality control. And I work closely with TVC. So, there's a couple questions I

have. One is we're talking about the multifamily as we move forward. I'm being pressed to keep training people for the multifamily building analysts for this designation through DOE with Derek and everybody and, I'm wondering, is this the right course that we want? Or is this the course that is being provided? Because with reimbursements, when it comes to utility work, they're going to reimburse everyone, but for the program, the work that we're doing, I want to make sure that we're going to give them the exact training and testing that they need.

I know it's a very oblique question and I'm sorry.

Olivia Colon (DEEP):

No worries.

John Mitchell (JLC Industries):

But every state is different. As I go from South Carolina to Florida to Georgia to Texas, Washington or DC and Virginia, they all have different apprehensions on how we're going to do this. And I want to know what Connecticut needs, so that I can provide it for them because I'm already doing QCIs for independent agencies here in the state to make sure it's done right.

And I work with, you know, Joe and Pete and everybody at TVC, and I want to make sure that we're all on the same page about this.

It's a convoluted question, I'm sorry.

Brian Biernat (DEEP):

Oh, no! It's not a problem at all. It's actually not a problem at all, John, and we actually appreciate the input, and that actually brings to attention, you know, questions that people have, right? So we'll definitely, we'll take that question back, and we'll provide a written response too, so that there's clarity there.

John Mitchell (JLC Industries):

Well, I appreciate it, Brian, I really do, because...

Brian Biernat (DEEP):

Yeah, yeah.

John Mitchell (JLC Industries):

The amount of phone calls I get on this same topic is stupid.

Brian Biernat (DEEP):

No, absolutely.

John Mitchell (JLC Industries):

You know, and I'm like, I don't have an answer. It's not my answer to give.

Brian Biernat (DEEP):

Sure.

Seema Malani (DEEP):

If I can add a little bit of clarity, we are looking...

John Mitchell (JLC Industries):

Oh, Seema!

Seema Malani (DEEP):

Yeah, hi, I am Seema Malani...

John Mitchell (JLC Industries):

How you doing?

Seema Malani (DEEP):

I'm doing good! Thank you for your question, John. We are looking to release an RFP for the multifamily program. So, this particular program with our WAP formula funds is for single families, serving 1 to 4 units.

John Mitchell (JLC Industries):

Perfect.

Seema Malani (DEEP):

The multifamily program that we are looking to roll out. It would be for multifamily, 5+, and it would include the smaller, you know, the smaller multi...

John Mitchell (JLC Industries):

Two level, three level, exactly, yes.

Seema Malani (DEEP):

A smaller multi-unit property, so 2 to 4 there. So, yes, once that is underway, definitely we would need more, you know, support.

John Mitchell (JLC Industries):

Well, I appreciate you responding to that, because, you know, there's, there's many different people that look at multifamily as a high-rise, and I'm sitting there going, most of what we have are a 2- or 3-story home, multi-families. It's not the same benediction. It's not the same thing.

Brian Biernat (DEEP):

Correct, absolutely. And, that's actually something we've been working on, is better defining different categories of multifamily housing that we find, right?

John Mitchell (JLC Industries):

Right.

Brian Biernat (DEEP):

We are... we are making that clear. As Seema said, you know, in our RFP, and also within our State Plans as well, to better define what falls within, what energy modeling software, right? And I think that helps define what program will cover what, and I think so. You'll get a lot more clarity from that part.

John Mitchell (JLC Industries):

Yes. That'd be great because you need me on multifamily against, like, eQuest. There's two different softwares, but they're both capturing the same, capturing the same information. And I just want to make sure that what we train to is what is going to be, provocative or used by the program.

That really is the key here, is tying what we teach to what people use. So I want to make sure that's correct.

That's it. I'm very simple, man, that's the way it is, but I didn't mean to throw a cog in your wheel in your meeting.

Seema Malani (DEEP):

Thank you, John. I see Daniel?

Daniel Rabin (Branford Clean Energy Committee):

Yeah, hi, I'm Daniel Rabin. I'm with the Branford Clean Energy Committee. We've done a couple of community outreach efforts and we frequently find that mold and asbestos remediations stand in the way of further energy efficiency. Is there any WAP support for remediation for those environmental problems? Thank you.

Olivia Colon (DEEP):

Yeah, thank you, Daniel. I'm happy to talk about this one, and then, Seema, I saw you come off mute, so if you want to jump in at all. So Daniel, we, I will back up to our budget categories. So the Health and Safety that we give to the Subgrantees can be used to address any health and safety issues that are related to weatherization, so depending on how widespread the mold or asbestos or the health and safety issue that presents, again, a hazard to either the homeowner or the workers, that Health and Safety fund can be used to address those issues before the weatherization process begins.

And I know we didn't talk about them much, but the Weatherization Readiness Funds, or WRF for short, is an additional pot of funding that we get from DOE that's specifically meant to address barriers to weatherization. So again, if the auditors enter a home and they see there's asbestos and that's preventing them from running a blower door because, again, it would, you know, create a health and safety hazard for the workers and the occupants, then our subgrantees can use that pool of WRF funding to also address much larger health and safety issues, like molds, widespread asbestos in a home. So we do have those two sources of funding to sort of help address any barriers to weatherization.

Daniel Rabin (Branford Clean Energy Committee):

So the HES contractor would then apply for those funds, is that correct? Not the homeowner.

Olivia Colon (DEEP):

So they're not funds that they have to apply for, these are sort of the buckets that we give to our Subgrantees, so they receive Health and Safety funds that they can go ahead and use in those homes.

Daniel Rabin (Branford Clean Energy Committee):

Who are the Subgrantees, please?

Olivia Colon (DEEP):

CRT, so Community Renewal Team out of Hartford, Connecticut, and Center for EcoTechnology, or CET, which is based out of Northampton, Massachusetts.

Daniel Rabin (Branford Clean Energy Committee):

Okay, thank you.

Olivia Colon (DEEP):

Of course. And then, John, did you have another...?

John Mitchell (JLC Industries):

I have another question, I'm sorry.

Olivia Colon (DEEP):

Yeah, no worries, that's what this is for.

John Mitchell (JLC Industries):

Sorry about that, Olivia. Because I go across the United States, I put a program together with the state of South Carolina, with the OEO down there, where we actually did environmental impact and we got a healthy homes initiative put in place for barriers. And this would be subsequent funds, against WRF. So, whatever you ran out of money for, for lead, or mold, or asbestos, so forth like that, I would like to talk to you guys about, moving forward and trying to get the healthy homes also associated with you guys. It's not a case study or nothing. It's already been, already educated in a different state. And this would give you the availability to have more money.

And that's it. And then that's all I'm just saying, there's other ways we can actually add more money into the barrier programs because we know under weatherization, we don't see the best of homes. We see the homes that are aged and we see all the barriers that are in place. And the more money we have, the more we can take care of. And that's something I'd like to talk to you guys about because I think this would be really good for the program up here, as it's already proven itself down south. So, anytime you guys want to talk about it, I just want to put it out there. Let's talk and see what we can do. And I can bring the guys in from Healthy Homes to get the funds.

Seema Malani (DEEP):

That would be great, John. You know, email us and we can take it from there.

John Mitchell (JLC Industries):

Alright, sounds good, Seema. Thank you.

Seema Malani (DEEP):

Thank you.

Olivia Colon (DEEP):

Thank you, John.

Daniel, I see your hand back up.

Daniel Rabin (Branford Clean Energy Committee):

Yeah. Can you explain again the relationship between the, your program and the HES program from Energize CT?

Olivia Colon (DEEP):

Yeah, absolutely. So, I believe it was last year, we finalized a scope of work for cost sharing between WAP and, specifically, it's the HES-IE program, so the income-eligible portion of the program since we use the same income criteria to serve those customers. So, we published a scope of work, which is available on DEEP Energy Filings, that goes through, basically, which measures WAP would cover, which measures HES-IE would cover, and sort of the cost split between those two programs.

The nice thing about this is, one, it allows customers to sort of get a broader list of energy conservation measures. So HES-IE, you might be able to pay for things like heat pumps are just additional measures that WAP might not be able to pay for and WAP can pay for health and safety issues that might be found in a HES-IE customer's home.

Daniel Rabin (Branford Clean Energy Committee):

Thank you.

Olivia Colon (DEEP):

Of course.

Seema Malani (DEEP):

Any other questions? No pressure, but yes, we are here. Any questions you might have.

Daniel Rabin (Branford Clean Energy Committee):

Thank you, Olivia.

Olivia Colon (DEEP):

Oh, I was on mute but thank you for... for joining us today.

John Mitchell (JLC Industries):

What are we moving on to now? What are we at?

Olivia Colon (DEEP):

So, at this time, we're still just going to leave the floor open for public comments. So we will be here, but at this time, the presentation is over.

So again, just to make it clear for folks, that is the end of today's presentation on the WAP Single Family Program Year 2026 State Plan. If you have any questions or comments during the public comment period, the floor is still open, so you can raise your hand if you have a comment or a question, but that is the end of our content for today.

So, thank you for joining us, and again, if you have questions or comments, the team and I will be here, to answer anything you might have. Thank you.

All right, the time is now 12PM, so we are going to move to adjourn today's public hearing. Thank you, everyone who attended, listened to our presentation, and provided us with public comments or questions.

Again, if you have any questions or comments that you didn't have the opportunity to ask, or something came up after this meeting, please feel free to send that to our email, DEEP. EnergyBureau@ct.gov, or join us later today at our second hearing, which will begin at 4PM. Thank you.