



A Guide for Contractors New to the Weatherization Assistance Program





CONTRIBUTORS

This guide is published by the Interstate Renewable Energy Council (IREC), a national nonprofit organization that builds the foundation for the rapid adoption of clean energy and energy efficiency to benefit people, the economy, and our planet. IREC leads the Green Workforce Connect initiative, which aims to hire a new generation of home energy professionals for a rapidly expanding energy industry sector.

We want to express our gratitude to the contributors who have made this “Contractor’s Guide to Success” possible. Thank you for enriching this guide and empowering weatherization contractors to excel in their profession.

- Mark Kravatz, Habitat for Humanity of Greater Providence and East Bay
- Larry Zarker, Building Performance Institute, Inc.
- Kelly Carey, Building Performance Institute, Inc.
- Nancy Kaplan, Building Performance Institute, Inc.
- Kye Garvin, National Association for State Community Services Programs
- Suzanne Harmelink, Slipstream Group, Inc.
- Destiny Murrell, Oklahoma Department of Commerce

CONTACT US



[Get in touch about weatherization contracting opportunities.](#)



INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the Green Workforce Connect “Contractor’s Guide to Success” for the Weatherization Assistance Program. This guide aims to equip you with the knowledge and tools you need to succeed as a weatherization contractor—whether you’re a seasoned professional or just starting in the field.

Weatherization is a vital service for millions of households nationwide, helping low-income families make their homes more energy efficient, comfortable, and affordable. It also helps the environment. As a contractor, you are at the forefront of this important work and can make a positive impact on the communities you serve.

This guide covers essential topics, from business management and technical skills to customer service and compliance. Let’s get started on the path to weatherization contractor success!

EXPLORE THE GUIDE

Select the section applicable to your current situation, depending on whether you have an existing contracting business ready for growth or are just getting started.



Chapter 1. Getting Started.....4



Chapter 2. Preparation.....16



Chapter 3. Application.....23



Chapter 4. Starting Work & Quality Control....25



Chapter 5. Growing Your Business.....30



Chapter 1. Getting Started

- 1.1 What Is a Weatherization Assistance Program Contractor?
- 1.2 The Role of the Weatherization Assistance Program Contractor
- 1.3 What Are the Benefits of Being a Weatherization Assistance Program Contractor?
- 1.4 Examples of Weatherization Measures
- 1.5 The Weatherization Contractor Career Path
- 1.6 Necessary Equipment & Tools
- 1.7 General Business Costs
- 1.8 Training & Certifications
- 1.9 Tips of the Trade

1.1 What Is a Weatherization Assistance Program Contractor?

A Weatherization Assistance Program contractor is a professional or company that specializes in helping households become more energy efficient with support from the Weatherization Assistance Program. This multibillion-dollar program is part of the U.S. Department of Energy. Weatherization helps low-income households make their homes more energy efficient, healthier, and safer.

Here's how the Weatherization Assistance Program works. Energy experts from the program visit eligible homes to see how they use energy. They create a work order for energy efficiency measures and health and safety improvements. This is where Weatherization Assistance Program contractors come in.

Finding Opportunities for Contracting Jobs

Different local Weatherization Assistance Programs have different rules for contractors. It's important to know how the program works where you live. In some areas, the people who run the Weatherization Assistance Program hire their own workers. In other places, they hire contractors like you. And in some areas, they hire a mix of both.

The way program providers find contractors also varies. Some use a bidding process where they ask for proposals or bids on their website. Others keep a list of preferred contractors. If you want to work with the Weatherization Assistance Program, you should get in touch with the people who run it in your area.



[Visit Green Workforce Connect to find more information about program providers in your community.](#)



1.2 The Role of the Weatherization Assistance Program Contractor

Installing Weatherization Measures

As a weatherization installer, you help make homes more energy efficient and comfortable. You do things such as adding insulation, sealing any gaps or holes, installing efficient lighting, and making sure heating and cooling systems are safe to operate.

You use many different tools, know a lot about how buildings work, and make sure everything is safe.

Your skills help families use less energy, spend less on utility bills, and have healthier and more eco-friendly homes.

Construction & Other Skills

Weatherization contractors must have a variety of construction skills. You need to know how to install insulation, do carpentry work, air seal spaces, and understand heating and cooling systems.

You also must follow safety rules, know a bit about electrical and plumbing work, be good at figuring out problems, and be friendly with customers. Plus, you have to pay attention to small details and manage your time well.

Weatherization Career Spotlight

Alejandro Cueto Crew Lead at Moore Renovations

After emigrating to the United States for a better future for himself and his family, Alejandro Cueto found a new home and career in Pennsylvania.

"Weatherization reduces the operating costs of a house, so when a person saves money on fuel, it's the best benefit for the people, it's a savings!"



Scan to watch the
video!



Professional Training & Certifications

As a weatherization contractor, you get training and certifications for two important reasons: to be good at your job and to stay safe. You earn certifications such as the Building Performance Institute's Air Leakage Control Installer certification, OSHA's 10-hour certification, EPA's Renovator Remodeler Professional certification, and more.

These certifications help to make sure you know how to do your work well, follow safety rules, and adhere to building codes. You also keep learning to stay up-to-date with new technology and find better ways of doing things.

Safety & Quality

Weatherization contractors make safety and quality a top priority in everything they do. You carefully follow safety rules, use tools correctly, and meet industry standards to keep your team and client households safe.

You're trained to spot and fix hazards to make sure everyone stays safe. This helps homes use energy more efficiently and become more comfortable and healthy places to live.

Documenting & Reporting

As a weatherization contractor, you document the job from start to finish. You take photos before and after the installation and give Weatherization Assistance Program administrators a detailed report.

This report shows how the home has been improved, how much energy will be saved, and what needs to be done later. This report provides useful documentation for households and helps keep track of how well the weatherization program is working.

Customer Service

Weatherization Assistance Program contractors need to provide excellent customer service. You'll be working with families who may need extra help, so it's especially important to be friendly and professional.

You'll need to explain the work clearly, respond quickly, and treat everyone with respect. This helps build trust and make sure that households get the most out of the energy-saving changes in the home.



Ensuring Compliance

Following the Weatherization Assistance Program guidelines is a very important part of your job. It makes sure that the Program works well and helps families save energy and money as it's supposed to. It ensures that energy-saving changes in homes are done properly and people get the intended benefits.

The guidelines also prevent any cheating or wasting money, which keeps the program honest and trusted by the public. Following the rules helps the program do its best to help families save energy, protect the environment, and use public funds wisely.

1.3 What Are the Benefits of Being a Weatherization Assistance Program Contractor?

Working in the Weatherization Assistance Program comes with many benefits. It not only helps your business but allows you to improve the quality of life for low-income families, while also doing something good for the environment.

The Weatherization Assistance Program provides a steady stream of work opportunities, ensuring a reliable source of income for your business.

The program offers valuable training, certifications, and resources that keep you updated on the latest energy efficiency technologies and techniques. This helps improve your knowledge and skills in the field.

You'll make a positive impact on your community by reducing energy consumption and greenhouse gas emissions, contributing to a more sustainable future.

You'll help low-income households make their homes more energy efficient, reduce their energy bills, and create a more comfortable living environment.



1.4 Examples of Weatherization Measures



Installing Insulation

You'll use special materials like fiberglass, cellulose, and foam to slow down the heat moving in and out of the walls, ceiling, and floor.



Air-Sealing/Caulking

Caulking means sealing gaps with a gooey material to stop air from getting in or out of the home. To do this, you need to find gaps, clean them, apply the caulk, smooth it, and then let it dry.



Duct Sealing

Duct sealing means fixing holes and gaps in a heating or cooling system's pipes or ducts. It stops air from escaping, saving energy and money. Your job is to locate leaks and seal them, making the home more comfortable and efficient.



Installing Basic Water-Saving Controls

Adding water-saving controls in weatherization means making simple changes to the plumbing system to use less water. This includes installing low-flow faucets and showerheads, efficient toilets, and fixing leaks.



Installing Smoke & Carbon Monoxide Detectors

When weatherizing a home, installing safety measures is crucial. This includes smoke detectors that warn occupants about fires and CO alarms that detect harmful carbon monoxide.



Light Bulb Replacement

As part of weatherization, it's important to replace old light bulbs with energy efficient ones. These bulbs use less electricity, last longer, and help households save money on energy bills. It's a simple way to make a home more efficient and environmentally friendly.



Installing Exhaust Fans

Installing an exhaust fan means adding a fan in places like kitchens and bathrooms to remove old air, moisture, and smells. It involves making a hole, attaching the fan, connecting it to a pipe that goes outside, and sealing it properly. This improves the indoor air, reduces humidity, and saves energy.



Installing Programmable Smart Thermostats

Smart thermostats are devices that can adjust the home's temperature automatically, making it more comfortable while saving energy. They can learn the occupant's preferences and schedule, helping to reduce energy bills.



Window & Door Upgrades

Upgrading windows and doors can make a home more comfortable by preventing drafts and keeping outside weather from getting inside.



Replacing Dryer Vents

Replacing dryer vents can help the dryer work better and save energy. This also reduces the risk of lint buildup, which can be a fire hazard.



Clean/Tune-Up Heating & Cooling Systems

Home heating and cooling systems must be cleaned and serviced regularly, just like a car. A regular checkup will make sure the system is working efficiently and well.



Client Education

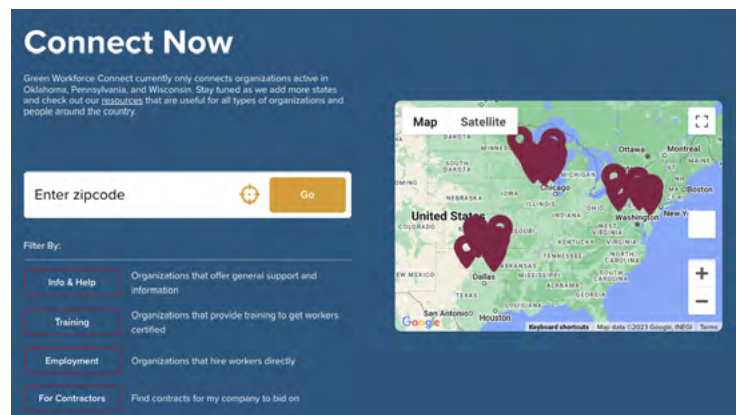
During weatherization, the contractor provides client education as part of the weatherization process. It helps the client understand how to take advantage of the improvements made in the home.

1.5 The Weatherization Contractor Career Path

There are many options for you to begin a career as a weatherization contractor.



Visit the [IREC Green Buildings Career Map](#) to learn more about specialized training, preferred skills, and opportunities for weatherization and [home performance contractors](#).



Visit [Green Workforce Connect](#) to find local employers, training providers, and opportunities for contractors in your area. Green Workforce Connect is now active in three states and will be expanded nationwide in the fall of 2024.



1.6 Necessary Equipment & Tools

Starting a weatherization business may have some upfront costs. You'll need access to critical tools such as insulation machines, thermal cameras, HEPA vacuums, and a blower door. Getting a truck and setting up a warehouse for materials are additional expenses.



Pennsylvania Clean Energy Center

Cellulose Insulation Machine

A cellulose insulation machine is a special device used in construction. It blows or sprays recycled paper insulation into walls and attics, making homes more comfy and energy efficient. They may be rented or purchased.



NREL / Energy Resource Center

Blower Door

A blower door machine is a diagnostic tool to test how airtight a building is. It has a powerful fan that can either blow air into a building or suck air out of it. By measuring how much air moves in or out, it helps find drafts and leaks that need to be sealed. Sealing the gaps allows you to make homes more comfortable and save energy by keeping outside air from getting in or inside air from escaping.



Tools

Just like carpenters have a toolbox with the equipment they need, you'll need a collection of tools focused on making homes more energy efficient. These tools include common items such as tape measures, and ones especially for air sealing like caulking guns and a spray foam rig. They help in sealing gaps, adding insulation, and fixing things around the house.

[Click here to view a comprehensive list of tools.](#)



HEPA Vacuum

A HEPA vacuum is an important tool for your weatherization company. It is a super-powered vacuum cleaner with an advanced filter that can suck up tiny particles and allergens from the air. This helps keep homes clean and safe during weatherization projects. It ensures that any dust or debris created during the work is captured and not left behind, making the home healthier for the residents and you and your crew.



Valmedia / Shutterstock.com

Thermal Imaging Cameras

A thermal imaging camera is a special tool used by weatherization experts to "see" heat. This special camera shows heat and cold in different colors, so that you can see hot and cold spots in the home. This helps find areas where insulation or sealing is needed, making homes more comfortable and energy efficient. It's like having a superpower to find hidden problems and fix them, all to save energy and keep homes cozy.



Kurteev Gennadii / Shutterstock.com

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

Personal protective equipment, or PPE, is a must-have for weatherization contractors. PPE keeps you and your crew safe while you're working on weatherization projects. Tiny particles of dust, insulation, and chemicals often float in the air of weatherization workspaces. PPE will protect your lungs and eyes from them. Ear protection should be used when power tools and machinery are in operation. Wearing PPE also shows the customer that you follow safety rules and are professional. It makes your work easier so you can be more efficient. Plus, it helps manage risks, which means fewer accidents.



Dennis Schroeder / NREL

Box Truck or Covered Trailer

A box truck or a large covered trailer is used for carrying equipment and materials to job sites. The truck or covered trailer helps weatherization teams transport everything they need to make homes more energy efficient. It's like your mobile workshop, making it easier to do the job effectively and efficiently while keeping your tools and equipment safe and dry, safe, and secure.



Monkey Business Images / Shutterstock.com

Supply Warehouse

You will need a secure and dry location to store tools and materials when they aren't in the truck. Some people purchase bulky supplies like insulation only as needed, so they need less storage space. Others prefer a larger storage space so that plenty of materials are always on hand or so they can take advantage of bulk rates. Either way, having an inventory of supplies helps you save time and avoid multiple runs to the hardware store.

Video from the Field

Rick Helwig
DNR Construction

Discover how small business owner Rick Helwig grew his business, and helped make buildings more energy efficient and weather-proof, by offering weatherization services to residents of metropolitan Chicago.



**Scan to watch the
video!**



1.7 General Business Costs

There are important costs to consider when getting started in weatherization. These may include getting the right licenses, paying for office space and utilities, investing in marketing to find customers, making sure you have insurance to protect your business and employees, and hiring workers to help you get the job done. These costs are necessary to set up your company, find customers, follow the law, and keep everything safe and efficient.

General and Workers' Compensation Insurance

General and workers' compensation insurance plans are an important protection for a weatherization business. General insurance helps cover unexpected accidents or damage to property, while workers' compensation insurance takes care of employees if they get hurt while on the job.

Licenses

Licenses are official permissions for a weatherization company to do its job. They show that the company is qualified and allowed to work on people's homes. It's like a green light from the government, saying, "You can make homes more energy efficient and comfortable." Having the right licenses keeps your business legal and helps build trust with customers. Be sure to check with your local state and program administrator to confirm which licenses are required in your area.

Administrative Expenses

Administrative expenses are the costs of running the office for a weatherization company. They include paying for office space, electricity, accounting and scheduling software, and other things needed to keep the business running smoothly. It's the behind-the-scenes stuff that makes sure everything works and everyone gets paid. The time spent keeping the books, sending invoices, and managing payroll are also administrative expenses, whether you do it yourself or pay an employee or contractor.

Promotion

Marketing is the way a company tells people about its professional services. Marketing may include a website, a logo, a sign on your truck, and other forms of public presence for your business. It's how you let your community know about your work and your company. These expenses help you find customers and grow your business.



Weatherization Workers

Building a team for a weatherization company comes with costs. This includes paying salaries, providing training, and giving your workers the tools they need to do the job. You'll need to assemble a strong crew to help make homes more energy efficient and comfortable. These expenses are an important part of growing the business and getting the job done right.

1.8 Training & Certifications

Weatherization workers must have certain certifications to ensure that they are qualified to do the work. You will need to budget money and time for training and certification. Costs include fees for training programs, study materials, and sometimes travel expenses. Certifications must be renewed every few years. These expenses are important investments in your team's knowledge and skills, ensuring top-quality services and a good reputation for your business. Some certifications may be required by the Weatherization Assistance Program administrator or are necessary to obtain insurance.

➤ [Learn more about the training and certifications that will help you do your job.](#)

1.9 Tips of the Trade



Potential Barriers

As a Weatherization Assistance Program contractor, you'll have some other rules and requirements to consider. These requirements, such as a driver's license or background check, may vary depending on your location. Check with your local WAP agency to find out what's required.

Maintaining Cash Flow

Maintaining a healthy cash flow as a Weatherization Assistance Program contractor is crucial. It helps you operate your business and pay your workers on time. It also acts as a safety net for unexpected problems and enables your business to grow.



Chapter 2. How to Prepare

2.1 Prepare Your Business

2.2 Training & Certifications

2.3 Getting Ready for Work

Preparing to become a Weatherization Assistance Program contractor involves several important steps. This section will guide you through the essential preparations needed to apply successfully.

We'll cover three key areas: business preparation, training and certifications, and getting ready for work.

These steps will help you lay a strong foundation for your journey as a weatherization contractor, ensuring you're well-equipped to provide efficient and effective weatherization services to clients while meeting program requirements and industry standards.

2.1 Prepare Your Business

Business preparation includes important steps such as registering your business, getting the right licenses, making a solid business plan, managing your money, and getting the funding you need. You'll also need to set up your finances, buy the right insurance, find and hire workers, and use marketing tools to grow your business. These are the basics to make sure your weatherization business follows the rules, stays financially healthy, and has a good plan for the future in the weatherization field.

Register & License Your Business

Ensure that the business is registered and licensed at the appropriate local, state, and federal levels. Obtain any required permits and licenses for operating as a weatherization contractor. Be sure to check with your local Weatherization Assistance Program administrator to determine what is required.

Write a Business Plan

A business plan is like a map that shows how you plan to run your contracting business. It helps you set clear goals, manage money, and make sure everything runs smoothly. It's also useful for dealing with problems and finding new clients outside of the Weatherization Assistance Program. With a business plan, you can take a step back to see if you're doing well and change things if needed. It's an important tool to help you run a successful business in a clear and organized way.



Create a Financial Plan & Budget

Creating a budget helps you run your business better. It is like a map to help you spend money wisely, reach financial goals, and handle problems with more confidence.

Secure Financing/Cash

Building contractors usually must spend some money during each project before they get paid for the completed job. Running out of money can cause delays in projects, leaving clients waiting for improvements. Sometimes work can't be finished, which hurts your reputation and can lead to legal issues. Clients might lose trust and go elsewhere, causing you to lose business.

Set Up Accounting System

A good accounting system will allow you to keep track of your money. You'll need to decide if you want to do this yourself or hire a professional accountant. Doing it yourself is cheaper but requires knowledge of accounting and discipline to make sure it gets done regularly. Hiring a professional accountant costs money but ensures that your books are accurate and up to date. Good accounting protects your investment in your business and will save you many headaches when it's time to file taxes. The choice depends on how comfortable you are with finances and how complex your money matters are.

Purchase Insurance

Several kinds of insurance are needed to protect your business:

- First, there's General Liability Insurance, which ensures both you and the client are covered in case of accidents during projects.
- Second, Workers' Compensation Insurance provides support to injured workers by covering medical expenses and lost wages, preventing legal issues.
- Professional Liability Insurance, also known as Errors and Omissions Insurance, safeguards contractors from claims of professional mistakes.
- For those using vehicles for work, Commercial Auto Insurance is essential, covering accidents or damage to company vehicles.
- Lastly, Property Insurance safeguards valuable tools, equipment, and office space.

Insurance requirements may vary depending on where you are, so check with your local Weatherization Assistance Program administrator to ensure you meet all necessary obligations.



Identify & Recruit Workers

Good workers are critical to your success. Finding and hiring workers for a weatherization company involves a few steps:

- Clear job descriptions will help you recruit, train, and manage employees well. [Visit Green Workforce Connect to view sample job descriptions for common weatherization roles, including Retrofit Installer Technicians and Crew Leaders.](#)
- When you have identified the role you will hire for, spread the word to friends, family, neighbors, and other business owners that you're looking for workers. Your local career center, workforce training program, and job boards can also help you attract applicants.
- Review applications, check qualifications, and interview applicants. Being transparent and reliable during this process will make a good impression on your candidates. This includes being clear about wages and scheduling expectations. Ask if they already have certifications and training, but keep in mind that a good worker is worth investing in, even if they need to learn on the job.

Help your new hires adapt to your company by training them in your rules and safety guidelines. Provide a respectful workplace and opportunities for your employees to learn and grow. This will encourage employees to stay with you and do their best at work.

Invest in Branding Your Company

Good branding will help your company get established. Get business cards and clothes with your company name as soon as possible, so that you can make a great impression wherever you go. Social media pages, brochures, and logos on your work vehicle will also help. Provide your employees with uniform items like a logo shirt, jacket, or cap, so they can represent the company and look professional on the job site. All these tools help contractors grow their business and get more clients.



2.2 Training & Certifications

Training and certifications will give you a huge advantage as a Weatherization Assistance Program contractor. We recommend you obtain certifications related to building science and weatherization, handling lead hazards, following safety rules from the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), and keeping up with local building codes. These skills will make you better at what you do and ensure that the work you perform is safe and effective for your clients.

2.2.1 Weatherization and Building Science Certifications



Weatherization certifications from the Building Performance Institute (BPI) are like special badges for contractors in the business. They give you the training and know-how and make your clients feel confident that they're working with experts on weatherization. Plus, having BPI certifications can help you get more job offers and contracts.

These certifications are strongly recommended for contractors who want to do well in the weatherization field as installers, crew leaders, or owners:



[Building Science Principles](#)



[Air Leakage Control](#)

If you enjoy the building science part of weatherization and want to offer energy auditing services, BPI offers these certifications:

[Building Analyst Technician](#) & [Building Analyst Professional](#)

This certification combination prepares you to start offering energy audits.

[Energy Auditor](#)

This is an advanced certification for people with significant energy auditing experience.

[Quality Control Inspector](#)

This advanced certification prepares BPI Energy Auditors to verify the compliance of retrofit work based on work plans and standards and recommend corrective actions.



Training & Testing Centers

Weatherization Assistance Program training is provided through training centers. These include [BPI testing centers](#) (where you can also take the exam for your certification) as well as [training providers accredited by the Interstate Renewable Energy Council \(IREC\)](#). You can use these links to explore your training options. Be aware that, in some areas, when a contractor is contracted by the Weatherization Assistance Program, you may get access to free training and certification.

2.2.2 Lead Hazard Mitigation Certifications



[EPA's Lead Renovation, Repair, and Painting \(RRP\)](#) training is very important for working in households where there might be lead-based paint, especially if kids are around. This training teaches you how to work safely to prevent lead from harming anyone. Based on what you learn, you'll know how to follow the rules, keep people safe, and show clients that you do a good job.

These certificates are required for the following roles:

Installer


Lead Renovator Certificate

Crew Leader

Lead Renovator Certificate

Owner

Lead Renovator Certificate
Lead-Safe Certified Firm

 [Locate an RRP training class or provider in your area on the EPA website.](#)

Weatherization Career Spotlight

Adam Trujillo and Myron Quintana
Energy Efficiency Technicians

Learn why Adam Trujillo and Myron Quintana became Energy Efficiency Technicians:

"If you like helping people, this is the place to do it. It's just a great feeling to go home at the end of the day knowing that we helped somebody and we improved their quality of life."



Scan to watch the video!



2.2.3 Safety Certifications



OSHA's 10-hour and 30-hour trainings are like safety schools for businesses. In these programs, you learn how to stay safe at work by spotting dangers, using safety gear, and knowing what to do in emergencies. For workers, this means knowing how to work without getting hurt. And for bosses, it means having a team that knows how to work safely, so there are fewer accidents and injuries and lower insurance costs.

These certificates are required for the following roles:

Installer

10-hour OSHA Card (Required)
CPR/First Aid (Recommended)

Crew Leader

10-hour OSHA Card (Required)
CPR/First Aid (Strongly Recommended)

Owner

10-hour OSHA Card (Required)
CPR/First Aid (Strongly Recommended)

➤ [Find available OSHA training options on the U.S. Department of Labor website.](#)

2.2.4 Local and State Building Codes



Richard Cavalleri / Shutterstock.com

Learning about local building codes is very helpful for construction and renovation professionals. This will help you understand the rules and laws that are specific to your area, ensuring your projects are safe and high quality. By understanding these codes, you can prevent expensive mistakes, follow the law, and build structures that are safe and well made. You'll gain the knowledge to work confidently and create high-quality projects.

While building codes can vary by area, [the International Code Council \(ICC\) is a helpful starting point to get familiar with codes.](#) Contact your local building department or zoning board to find out about codes that apply to your area and information on how to comply with them.



2.2.5 Other Certifications

Local Weatherization Assistance Program providers may require additional certifications depending on the type of work being done by contractors. For example, some organizations may require certifications related to working with asbestos.

2.3 Getting Ready for Work

Make Major Purchases/Leases

To launch your contracting business, you need to be sure that you have everything you need to provide services effectively. This means having the necessary gear and tools to get the job done. Having the right equipment shows that you're prepared to deliver high-quality weatherization services to clients, meeting program requirements and ensuring success in the field.

 [Learn more about the essential equipment and tools you'll need for the job.](#)

Identify Suppliers

Identifying reliable suppliers is a critical step in setting up your contracting business. Suppliers provide the materials, tools, and equipment you need for successful projects. Look for suppliers who offer quality products, competitive prices, and dependable delivery. Building strong relationships with suppliers ensures you have a steady and efficient supply chain, which is essential for meeting client needs and growing your business in the weatherization industry. Check with your local weatherization program administrator or other contractors to find the best suppliers near you.

Visit the Green Workforce Connect Resource Hub

On Green Workforce Connect, you'll find many other resources designed to help contractors learn about the Weatherization Assistance Program and program operations.

[Visit the Green Workforce Connect resource hub to learn more](#); under the filters, click on the box that says you are a Contractor.



Chapter 3. Application

Now, let's talk about how you can apply to become a contractor performing work in the Weatherization Assistance Program. The application requirements will be different in each state, and sometimes different for each local provider in the state. But no matter where you are, there are many common things you'll be asked about during the application process. This section is designed to provide you with an overview of some of the documents and information you will likely need to have on hand to take the next step.

What you'll need may include references and testimonials; proof that you have a registered business; the right licenses, insurance, and certifications; a brief company description; and evidence that you have the necessary equipment and tools. You'll also need to fill out an application form, or a bid package, and complete any required program or contract documentation. Being well-prepared and keeping everything organized during this phase will help you get up and running quickly as a weatherization contractor.



References & Testimonials

Getting good reviews from clients is important when you're just starting as a weatherization contractor. It helps show that you're good at what you do and that people can trust you. When you have these positive comments from past clients, it can help you get on the Weatherization Assistance Program Contractor list and make your weatherization business successful and well respected.



Prequalification Documents

You will need to submit prequalification documents, such as proof of business registration, licenses, insurance coverage, and certifications (e.g., BPI's Air Leakage Control Installer Certification).



Capacity Assessment

The program administrators may assess your capacity to handle weatherization projects, including the availability of skilled workers, equipment, and resources.



Technical Expertise

You may need to demonstrate your technical expertise in weatherization measures, energy efficiency improvements, and building science principles.



Contractor's Guide to Success



Application

A Weatherization Assistance Program contractor application is the formal process through which contractors apply to become a certified weatherization contractor under the Weatherization Assistance Program.



Contractual Agreement

Successful applicants may need to sign a contractual agreement with the Weatherization Assistance Program, outlining your responsibilities, obligations, and expectations as a certified weatherization contractor.

➤ [Click here for a guide to the weatherization contractor application process, and example application forms.](#)

Be a Home Energy Professional in the United States

The Weatherization Assistance Program is hiring team members and contractors all across the country. With on-the-job training, competitive pay and benefits, and nationally recognized certifications, it is a great place to start or grow your career.

[Get Started](#)

You can locate your local Weatherization Assistance Program provider by visiting your state page on [Green Workforce Connect](#).

Currently, providers are listed in [Oklahoma](#), [Wisconsin](#), and [Pennsylvania](#). Green Workforce Connect will be expanded to be a nationwide resource in the fall of 2024.

Contractors in other areas can find state-level Weatherization Assistance Program contacts for the program on the [U.S. DOE website](#). From those links, you can find local weatherization contacts in your area.



Chapter 4. Starting Work & Quality Control

4.1 Good Business Practices

4.2 Business Management Training

4.3 Optimizing Your Weatherization Business

4.1 Good Business Practices

This section will help you think about how to support your business as a weatherization contractor. Some of the examples here are good business practices that aren't specific to the Weatherization Assistance Program. This includes billing and invoicing, managing money, keeping good records, using tools to manage your work, managing your workers, and getting the word out about your business.

Key Relationships

Building strong relationships is essential for a successful weatherization contractor. First, you want to get along well with your Weatherization Assistance Program administrator, their staff, and auditors so you can work together smoothly and follow program rules. Having good relationships with your suppliers is also important. And, of course, don't forget your clients—building a good relationship with them is key to getting more jobs and keeping your business strong. So, in the weatherization industry, being on good terms with staff, suppliers, and clients is a big part of being successful.

Invoicing and Payment

It's very important to set up a system for sending invoices and getting paid quickly by the Weatherization Assistance Program administrator. Ask the administrator to make sure to explain exactly what should be in each invoice and maybe even show you an example to make it as clear as possible. This way, both sides can keep the money part of weatherization projects working well, so they can focus on doing great work for clients.

Cash Flow Check

Making sure you have a system to handle your business's money is crucial. By keeping track of the money that comes in and goes out of your business, you can plan for essential tasks like buying materials and paying workers. This way, you can take on more jobs and grow your business without worrying about running out of money.



Key Relationships

It's very important to keep good records, which includes saving receipts, contracts, and notes about your projects. These records help you stay organized and remember all the important details for each job. If there are ever questions or issues, you can look back at your records to find answers and make sure everyone understands what happened. Plus, if you ever need to show proof of the work you did or how much money you spent, having clear records is a big help.

You might want to consider using a CRM (Customer Relationship Management) software program to help you keep track of your clients. This type of software can be very helpful for managing your client information, such as names, contact details, and what work you've done for them in the past. It makes it easier to stay organized and provide great service to your clients. Plus, it can remind you of important things you need to do, like following up with clients or scheduling appointments.

Human Resources Management

To be successful as a new weatherization contractor, it's important to manage your team well. This means creating a positive and welcoming workplace, keeping skilled workers, and making sure everyone is ready to do great weatherization work. You also want to have a system for finding and hiring new workers, have an onboarding system in place, and break down any barriers that might get in the way. It's crucial to make sure everyone feels safe and comfortable at work, no matter where they come from. This helps ensure your weatherization business is ready for success.

Green Workforce Connect has [template job descriptions](#) available for key weatherization positions.

Marketing Presence

To become a well-respected Weatherization Assistance Program contractor, it's important to let people know how good you are at your job. You can start by making a professional website and social media profiles to present your work and skills. Share pictures that illustrate how you transform homes for the better. It's also a good idea to ask satisfied clients to write reviews online to boost your reputation. And don't forget about traditional ways of getting the word out, like business cards and flyers, especially in your local area. When you have a strong marketing presence, more people will notice your skills, and you'll become known as a top Weatherization Assistance Program contractor who does excellent work.



4.2 Business Management Training

As you begin growing your business, it's a great time to boost your business skills and knowledge. Take some time to explore the topics below and identify places in your community where you might learn more. By continuing to learn and improve your business skills, you're taking a big step forward in your journey as a successful contractor. Your local [Small Business Administration office](#) or [Workforce Development Board](#) might have courses or resources covering the following:



Business Basics

Foundational knowledge for running a successful contracting business.



Marketing & Branding

Strategies for promoting your services and creating a strong brand identity.



Project Management

Skills to plan and execute weatherization projects efficiently.



Leadership and Team Management

Learn how to better lead and manage your team effectively.



Legal and Regulatory Compliance

Understanding and adhering to laws and regulations relevant to your industry.



Financial Analysis and Decision-Making

Techniques for analyzing finances and making informed business decisions.



Advanced Business Strategies

Advanced strategies to help your contracting business thrive and grow.



Workers who like to learn and grow are often your most valuable employees. Offering your staff opportunities to advance their professional skills is an important way to keep them satisfied, engaged, and loyal to your company. Keep in mind that the suggested certifications below, offered by BPI, can be earned over time, in a way that's right for your business.

Installer

[Retrofit Installer Technician](#)

Crew Leader

[Site Supervisor Certificate](#)
[Retrofit Installer Technician](#)
[Building Analyst Certification](#)
[Quality Control Inspector](#)

Owner

[GoldStar Contractor](#)

4.3 Optimizing Your Weatherization Business

In this section, we'll explore different ways to improve your operations. There are many organizations you can connect with to learn more about home energy performance and weatherization.

Join a Professional Network

To become better at weatherization work, you should keep learning and talk to other weatherization contractors. Learning about the newest ways of doing things helps you do a great job for your clients. Also, being part of a group of other weatherization contractors lets you share what you know and learn from them too. It's like being on a team where everyone helps each other get better. The [Building Performance Institute](#) and the [Building Performance Association](#) are both organizations that support contractors in home energy performance and weatherization.

Follow the Standardized Work Specification System (SWS)

The Weatherization Assistance Program has clear and concise [Standard Work Specifications](#) (SWS) for weatherization work that must be followed by contractors performing this work. Each state also has field guides for the Weatherization Assistance Program that must be followed (see examples from [Texas](#) and [Oklahoma](#)). When your workers have clear, step-by-step rules to follow, it makes their work easier and more organized. The National Renewable Energy Laboratory also has [job aids](#) for weatherization tasks and even offers a badging system so you can determine worker competency. These resources provide a toolbox so you and your workers can quickly find the right information to perform their job. Having a good system helps both the business and its workers, helping weatherization projects run smoothly and be successful for everyone.



[Click here to learn more about SWS, field guides, and job aids for weatherization.](#)



Invest in Quality Assurance and Quality Control

An internal quality assurance process is a special system to check the quality of your weatherization projects. It's a bit like a trusted friend who checks your work to make sure it's perfect. It helps your team complete projects correctly, reduces time spent on expensive callbacks, and ensures satisfied clients. So, having a quality assessment system is a smart thing for any weatherization contractor to do.



[Click here to learn more about quality assurance in weatherization.](#)

Adopt a Customer Service Protocol

A customer service protocol is a special guide that tells everyone on your team how to treat clients the right way. This protocol ensures that every client gets the same high level of service and care. Think of it as a map that leads to happy clients who trust your work. When you provide excellent customer service, you are more likely to get additional weatherization contracts. Having a clear customer service protocol helps build a strong and trustworthy reputation for your business.

Employ Project Management Tools

A project management tool or app, often used on mobile devices or tablets, is like a helpful assistant that brings several benefits. It keeps everything organized, streamlines your work, improves communication, reduces mistakes, and maintains detailed records. These tools allow contractors to update information in real time, making projects more efficient and successful, which benefits your business. There are many different types of solutions for contractors, and it might take some time to find the best fit for your business. For example, you might consider whether you need something that will integrate with an existing computer or accounting system that you are already using.

Ensure Compliance with Weatherization Assistance Program Guidelines

Staying up-to-date with Weatherization Assistance Program guidelines is crucial for weatherization contractors. It ensures that your work aligns with industry standards and regulations, guaranteeing quality and compliance. One important website to follow is the Department of Energy's [Weatherization Assistance Program](#) page. This site provides valuable resources, program updates, and guidelines, helping contractors navigate the program effectively. You should also remain connected to your local weatherization program service provider and be familiar with the program requirements that may be unique to your state or local area.



Chapter 5. Growing Your Business

5.1 Getting Ready for Business Growth

5.2 Other Residential Weatherization Services

5.3 Other Home Improvement Service Areas

Once you've got your business well established and operating successfully, there are many areas you can explore to scale and diversify your business. With a strong foundation in place, you're now poised to expand your service offerings and explore new opportunities for growth. This phase marks an exciting journey toward broadening your horizons within the home performance and weatherization industry.

5.1 Getting Ready for Business Growth

In this section, we're gearing up to make your business even better and ready for growth. We'll explore ways to fine-tune your operations, like tracking important numbers and creating a dashboard to see how your business is doing. It's all about preparing your company to become even more successful and take on new opportunities. Think of it as getting your business in tip-top shape for the exciting journey ahead.

Systematize Procedures

When weatherization contractors organize their business procedures, everything runs smoothly and efficiently. This doesn't just help the company; it also makes customers happier, boosts profits, and makes the company more competitive. Having these systems in place also gives the owner more flexibility, so you can take time to enjoy the money you've earned or focus on growing your business.

Optimize Your Business

Optimizing your business means making it work as well as possible. It is like fine-tuning a car to make it run smoother and faster. It involves taking an inventory of your business to make everything work better—from how you do your work to how you make money. When you optimize your business, you find ways to save time, spend less money, and earn more profits. It's all about making your company the best it can be and staying ahead in the business world.



Track Your Progress

Tracking metrics and creating a company dashboard is like having a scoreboard for your business. It helps you keep score of how well things are going. By measuring things like how much money you're making, how many clients you have, and how satisfied your customers are, you can make better decisions and see where you need to improve. Tracking metrics and using a company dashboard is a smart way to keep your business on the right track.

Organize Your Finances

Organizing your finances is a bit like sorting your money puzzle. It's all about getting your dollars and cents in order so you can grow your business. When you're preparing to scale, you want to make sure you have a clear picture of how much money is coming in and going out. This helps you plan for expansion, like hiring more workers or buying new equipment. It's about making sure all your puzzle pieces fit perfectly together, so your business can keep growing and thriving.

Prepare to Scale Up

A scaling strategy is the game plan for your business's big growth adventure. It outlines how to get from where you are now to where you want to be. This involves setting clear goals, deciding what steps you need to take, and making sure everyone on your team knows their role. It's a bit like drawing a map for your business journey, so you can navigate the path to success with confidence and purpose.

Be a Market Leader

Being a market leader is not just about being good at what you do; it's about becoming known for your quality and integrity, and leading the way for others. A market leader reputation can open doors to new opportunities and partnerships that will help you scale and diversify your business. Others in the industry will look up to you for guidance and trust your expertise. It's like having a spotlight on your business, and it can help you sail smoothly into the exciting waters of growth and expansion.

Marketing is a key component in establishing and maintaining this leadership position, as it helps showcase your expertise and value to potential clients and partners. Representing your company through business associations and civic involvement can also help you develop a reputation as a market leader.



5.2 Other Residential Weatherization Services

You can develop new income streams by learning how to offer weatherization services for multifamily and commercial buildings. You can learn about these services by obtaining certifications from the Building Performance Institute (BPI). These certifications are like a passport to new adventures, allowing your business to scale and diversify into different markets. Expanding your credentials and services is a smart way to grow your business while staying versatile and adaptable.

Manufactured Housing

Manufactured housing, also known as mobile homes or trailers, is a type of home that's built in a factory and then moved to where it's going to be lived in. These homes come in different sizes and styles, and they can be put on a foundation like a site-built house. They are often less expensive than other houses, but they can sometimes need extra work to make them more energy efficient and comfortable to live in.

Manufactured Housing Certificate

Manufactured Housing



Lindasj22 / Shutterstock.com

Multifamily Housing



Konstantin L / Shutterstock.com

Multifamily Housing

Multifamily housing refers to buildings where multiple households (five or more) live in one structure, such as apartments or townhouses. They are often more affordable to live in than single-family homes and may be more common in urban areas.

Multifamily Building Analyst

Multifamily Building Operator



5.3 Other Home Improvement Service Areas

Critical Home Repairs

Critical home repairs address urgent issues that can affect a home's safety and wellbeing. Households are often in distress when they need critical home repairs. If you choose to expand into this line of work you might sometimes feel like a superhero at the end of your work day! Many of these types of repairs require additional licensing and certifications, but they can be a good way to expand and diversify your business. By offering critical home repair services, you can become a trusted problem solver for households facing unexpected crises and make a positive impact on the community.

Home Accessibility Modifications

Expanding into home modifications for accessibility offers a helping hand to households that need it the most. It involves making changes to a home to accommodate individuals with mobility challenges or disabilities, such as adding ramps, widening doorways, or installing grab bars. By offering these services, you can make homes more accessible and comfortable for people of all abilities. This expansion allows you to enhance quality of life for a diverse group of clients while also growing your business in a meaningful way.

Healthy Housing/ Hazard Mitigation

Healthy housing and hazard mitigation means taking steps to ensure that homes are free from health hazards like mold, lead, and poor indoor air quality. By offering these services, you can play a vital role in safeguarding families and their homes. Many local weatherization programs provide these services to their clients. Adding these capabilities to your business can open doors to a wider range of projects and clients, making the business more versatile and valuable.

Weatherization Career Spotlight

Martijn Fleuren
CEO & President at HomeWorks Energy

In this video, expert contractor Martijn Fleuren will guide you through the process of weatherization, starting with a comprehensive energy audit.



**Scan to watch the
video!**



Decarbonization & Electrification

Decarbonization and electrification means helping homes move away from fossil fuels to clean, sustainable energy. It is the future of home energy services! This can include upgrading heating and cooling systems, water heaters, and appliances to run on electricity rather than oil or gas. By offering these services, you can contribute to reducing carbon emissions and making homes more environmentally friendly. There is lots of room for growth in this field because most existing homes in America need decarbonization services.

Resilience & Disaster Prevention/ Mitigation

Resilience and disaster prevention/mitigation means making homes more resilient to natural disasters like hurricanes, wildfires, or extreme weather events. This can include reinforcing structures, installing storm-resistant windows, and creating disaster plans. By offering these services, you can help households prepare for and withstand disasters. This expansion allows you to serve clients who want to protect their homes and families from unexpected challenges, while also growing your business by contributing to community resilience.



Nagy-Bagoly Arpad / Shutterstock.com

