



NORTH CAROLINA  
Environmental Quality

ROY COOPER

Governor

ELIZABETH S. BISER

Secretary

JULIE WOOSLEY

Director

North Carolina Department of Environmental Quality  
State Energy Office  
Weatherization Assistance Program  
5 Yr. Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL)  
Request for Proposal (RFP)  
**Weatherization of Single-Family Units**

RFP release date: 9:00 am Friday, July 28, 2023

RFP deadline to respond: 5:00 pm Friday, September 15, 2023

ALL VENDORS:

The enclosed packet contains a "REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL" for Weatherization of Single-Family Units. **This approach is being utilized for the 5 Yr. BIL funds only. This solicitation model does not affect the annual Weatherization program design, or the funding allocated to the agencies supporting that program.**

The proposal consists of the following documents:

**REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL**

I. Summary .....	2
II. Background .....	2
III. Statement of Need .....	4
IV. RFP Timeline .....	4
V. Funding Source .....	4
VI. Contractor Qualifications .....	5
VII. Key Weatherization Focus Areas .....	6
VIII. Proposal Guidelines and Requirements.....	7
IX. Unit Eligibility.....	8
X. Energy Audit Tool and Workforce Resources .....	8
XI. Justice40 Initiative Guidelines .....	8
XII. Declaration of Confidential Information.....	9



XIII. Questions about the RFP .....	9
XIV. Submission Details .....	9
XV. Evaluation of Proposals.....	9
XVI. Announcement of Award Recipients .....	10
XVII. Build America, Buy America .....	10
XVIII. Reporting Requirements for Accepted Projects.....	11
XIX. Evaluation Process and Scoring – Single Family.....	13

## I. Summary

The North Carolina Department of Environmental Quality (*NC DEQ*), State Energy Office, Weatherization Assistance Program, (*NC WAP*) is committed to ensuring affordable, just, and equitable access to energy. Through the program NC WAP, NC DEQ works to assist Low-to-Medium Income (*LMI*) residents in North Carolina (*income of  $\leq 200\%$  federal poverty level*) with energy efficiency upgrades to reduce their energy burden and improve home living conditions. To boost programmatic outcomes, WAP is working to build a more sustainable workforce, innovate the existing WAP, and surge the number of homes served. The NC WAP believes that persons in need can be served more effectively by the State if both federal and state funds are blended for home energy efficiency and essential health and safety renovations. For program success, the NC WAP envisions finding lead weatherization agencies for the 7 single family Weatherization Hubs in different regions of North Carolina. These lead weatherization agencies will participate in a local cooperative between local governments, home repair and community development organizations, aging related agencies, community social services, housing and development agencies, councils of governments, and other nonprofits.

## II. Background

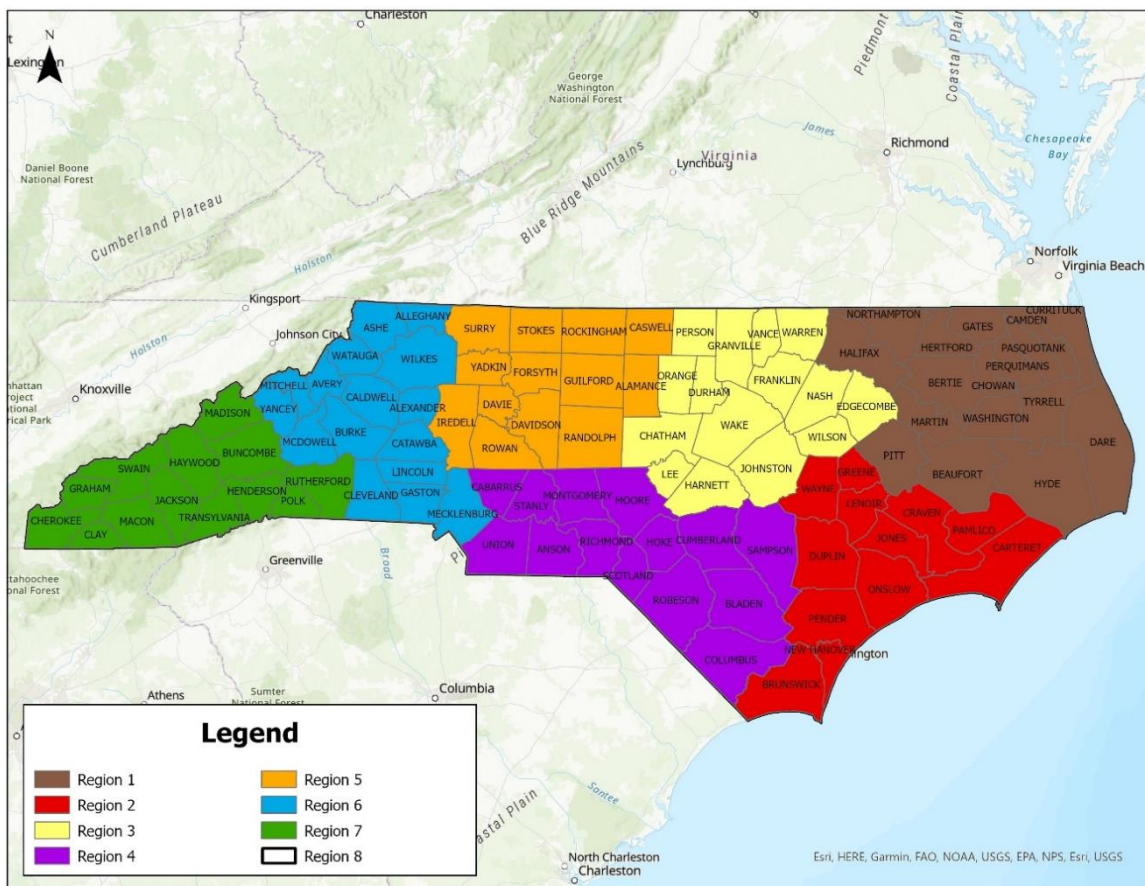
Low-income North Carolinians are faced with many multifaceted challenges including inflation, high energy and housing costs, and continued market impacts from the COVID-19 pandemic. The North Carolina Weatherization Assistance Program (*NC WAP*) aims to reduce these stressors by improving home energy efficiency, thereby fostering a healthier and more affordable life for North Carolina residents. Based on these initiatives, NC WAP has played a key role in not only decreasing energy costs for low-income persons, but also in reducing carbon emissions as well as providing and promoting jobs in clean energy.

The purpose of NC WAP is to install energy conservation measures in the homes of income-eligible persons, especially homes occupied by the elderly, persons with disabilities, and children. Funds are applied to the most cost-effective conservation measures, which are determined by conducting an on-site energy audit of the dwelling. Energy conservation measures funded through



the program may range from air sealing and insulating single-family homes to replacing heating systems, windows, and doors. Weatherization assistance is eligible in all types of housing units, including both single and multifamily housing, manufactured housing, and group homes. To achieve a successful program, NC WAP plans to build a more sustainable weatherization workforce, improve and innovate the existing NC WAP, and surge the number of weatherized homes. The state of North Carolina aims to serve low-income persons, specifically those in disadvantaged communities (DACs) that could benefit from more energy efficient dwellings.

The NC WAP is in search of weatherization agencies for both single-family and multifamily units that will participate in a cooperative home repair approach.<sup>1</sup> The state has been divided into different regions that will be served by one collaborative hub (i.e., a *Weatherization Hub*) based on the geographic jurisdictions of North Carolina’s weatherization service providers (**Figure 1**). Participating agencies will receive free training in the collaborative home repair model to better serve low-income homeowners—this will include training of a unified intake process, collaborative case management process, and uniform program assessment strategies for services such as accessibility modifications, weatherization, home repair programs, and electrification assistance as needed.



**Figure 1.** Map of North Carolina color coded by single family weatherization regions. Each region will house a collaborative hub that oversees weatherization and home upgrade services for eligible NC residents. Region 8 encompasses the entire state and is specifically for weatherization of

<sup>1</sup> SEO will follow 10 CFR 440.14 and 15 for the selection of weatherization service providers and corresponding regions.



multifamily homes.

### III. Statement of Need

The purpose of the federally funded NC WAP is to increase the energy efficiency of dwellings owned or occupied by low-income persons or to provide such persons with renewable energy systems or technologies, reduced total residential expenditures, and improve their health and safety, especially low-income persons who are particularly vulnerable such as the elderly, persons with disabilities, families with children, high residential energy users, and households with high energy burden. NC DEQ aims to identify weatherization agencies that are equipped to weatherize single family units within a region of North Carolina (Regions 1-7, Figure 1) using a collaborative approach. Participating agencies will receive free training in the collaborative model approach.

NC WAP intends to select the most qualified service provider(s) for a two-year contract with an option to extend contracts for additional program years. Initial contract periods will be for two years, contingent upon the outcomes of periodic performance evaluations.

Funding for the weatherization of single-family units is available through this funding mechanism over five years. Selected service provider(s) shall be required to service the entire region equitably and shall not discriminate. When no wait list is present, properties are to be assisted on a first come, first served basis.

### IV. RFP Timeline

RFP activity	Time and Date
RFP Posted	9:00 am Friday, July 28, 2023
RFP Questions by Service Provider(s) Due	5:00 pm Wednesday, August 2, 2023
RFP Answers Posted by NC DEQ	5:00 pm Friday, August 18, 2023
RFP Due	5:00 pm Friday, September 15, 2023
Awards Selected	5:00 pm Friday, December 15, 2023

### V. Funding Source

The Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (*BIL*) was enacted on November 15, 2021, with the Department of Energy (*DOE*) releasing specific guidance for NC WAP agencies under Weatherization Program Notice BIL 22-1 on March 30, 2022. Financial stimulus from the BIL will build on the historic strength of the NC WAP by elevating funding for the next five years. Federal BIL funding aligns with the North Carolina Clean Energy Plan (*CEP*) and will be utilized to help achieve the state's energy reduction goals of (1) decreasing electric power sector greenhouse gas emissions by 70% below 2005 levels by 2030 and (2) attaining carbon neutrality by 2050. Furthermore, in 2021, North Carolina enacted House Bill 951, which emphasizes its commitment to reduce carbon dioxide emissions in the electric power sector based on key goals presented in the CEP.

The NC WAP will distribute \$89,776,045 of BIL funds for the purpose of enhancing energy efficiency in the homes of low-income families, particularly those in disadvantaged communities





(DACs), throughout all 100 counties of North Carolina. The NC WAP energy upgrades provide homeowners relief through energy savings and home improvements that support equitable health and safety for North Carolinians. The NC WAP anticipates that the ~\$89.7M BIL stimulus will aid over 6,000 households across the state. **\$69.783M has been reserved for direct weatherization services (Table 1).**

It is important to note that NC WAP 5 Yr. BIL funds will follow the DOE March 2022 [Administrative and Legal Requirement Document \(ALRD\)](#) PERIOD OF PERFORMANCE guidance. The \$69.783M will not be released as one lump sum. Releasing the funds are based on evaluation of project performance, project schedule adherence, the extent milestone objectives are met, compliance with reporting requirements and overall contribution to the program goals and objectives.

As a result of this evaluation, DOE may, at its discretion, authorize the following actions: (1) continue to fund the project, contingent upon the availability of funds appropriated by Congress for the purpose of this program and the availability of future-year budget authority; (2) place a hold on federal funding for the project, pending further supporting data or funding; or (3) discontinue funding the project because of insufficient progress, change in strategic direction, or lack of funding.

**Table 1.** Total 5-year Funding Distribution for Direct Weatherization Services by NC Region<sup>2</sup>

Region	Program Operations	Admin	Health & Safety	Total 5-year Allocation	Anticipated Number of Weatherized Units	Status
1	<del>\$2,132,760</del>	<del>\$284,700</del>	<del>\$533,190</del>	<del>\$2,950,651</del>	266	Awarded
2	\$3,655,809	\$488,010	\$913,952	\$5,057,771	456	Open
3	\$7,739,504	\$1,033,139	\$1,934,876	\$10,707,519	966	Open
4	\$3,913,039	\$522,348	\$978,260	\$5,413,647	489	Open
5	\$11,161,893	\$1,489,991	\$2,790,473	\$15,442,357	1,394	Open
6	<del>\$7,722,417</del>	<del>\$1030,858</del>	<del>\$1,930,604</del>	<del>\$10,683,880</del>	964	Awarded
7	<del>\$3,522,266</del>	<del>\$470,184</del>	<del>\$880,567</del>	<del>\$4,873,017</del>	440	Awarded
8	\$10,592,424	\$1,413,973	\$2,648,106	\$14,654,502	1,323	Open
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$50,440,112</b>	<b>\$6,733,203</b>	<b>\$12,610,028</b>	<b>\$69,783,343</b>	<b>6,298</b>	

## VI. Contractor Qualifications

To qualify for implementation of contract activities Service Provider(s) must:

1. Be a Community Action Agency (CAA) or other public or nonprofit entity.
2. Have detailed knowledge of, and experience in, weatherization services, including performance of energy efficiency retrofits.
3. Be familiar with the NC WAP and have relations with weatherization related agencies in the state.
4. Be familiar with methods for blending federal, state, and local funding opportunities in

<sup>2</sup> The funding allocations were calculated using [U.S. DOE's Allocation Formula](#) that incorporates factors such as [heating/cooling degree days](#), low-income population based on [U.S. Census data \(S1702\)](#), and residential energy burden based on [U.S. DOE's LEAD tool](#). This methodology may be found in 10 CFR 440.10(3) and (4).



weatherization.

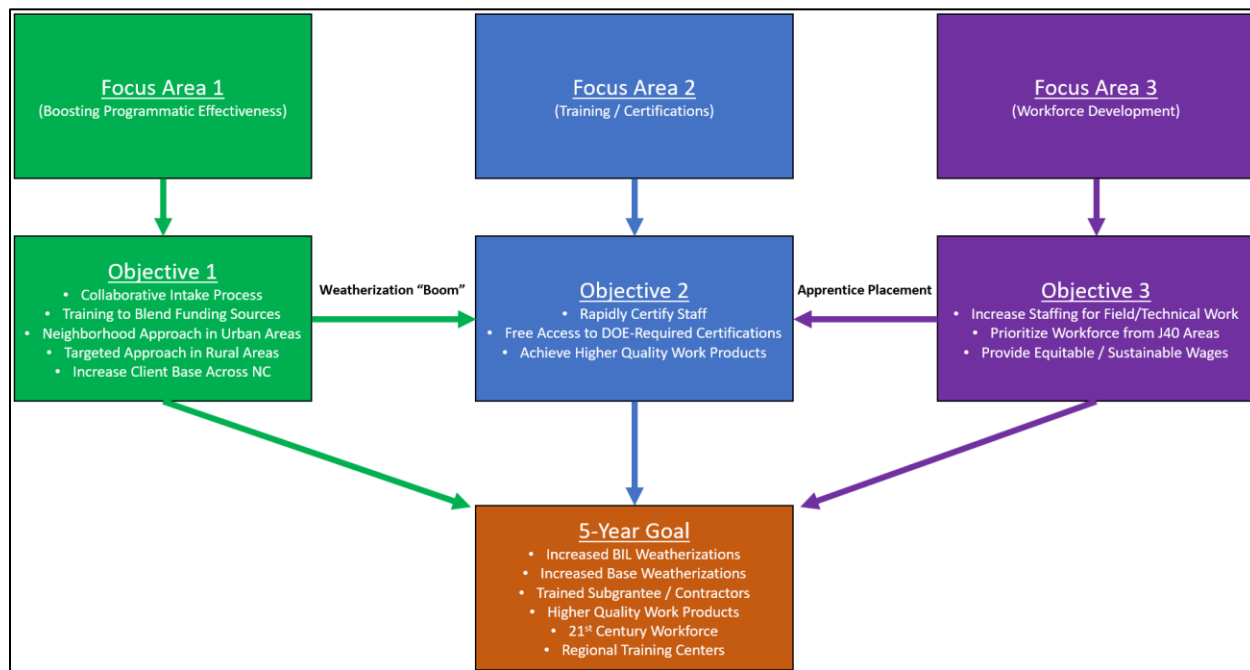
5. Demonstrate the ability to complete projects and serve all residents across the state of North Carolina.

## VII. Key Weatherization Focus Areas

NC WAP is working on addressing capacity building within the subgrantee network to expand services within the regions where weatherization services are most needed. To that end, NC WAP created three focus areas to bolster efforts in the 5-Year BIL Program. Successful applicants will incorporate strategies in their answers to collaborate with selected providers in the following three focus areas:

- 1) Focus Area 1 – Weatherization Collaborative Lead Agency
- 2) Focus Area 2 – Upgrades to Weatherization Training Program
- 3) Focus Area 3 – Weatherization Workforce Development Program

More information about the three focus areas may be found in Section 1.06 of the “*State of North Carolina Bipartisan Infrastructure Law Weatherization Assistance Plan*” that is housed on the NC WAP webpage: <https://www.deq.nc.gov/energy-climate/state-energy-office/weatherization-assistance-program>



**Figure 2.** North Carolina’s training and technical assistance approach for the BIL program.

## VIII. Proposal Guidelines and Requirements

To make certain proposed projects meet the criteria above, eligible applicants will be expected to provide, at minimum, the following information concerning the anticipated single family weatherization services:

- Agency name(s), address(es), and technical lead(s).
- A description of the agency's experience and preparedness to implement weatherization services across the state of North Carolina.
- A description of recruitment strategies that will be utilized to identify single family units to weatherize throughout the state. How are units within disadvantaged communities and households with elderly, disabled, young children, high energy burden, and high energy users recruited? A specific plan should be developed for methods to reduce weatherization deferrals in the state. *Note: approximately 50% of income-eligible clients in North Carolina are deferred due to items such as general health/safety concerns, disrepair of mechanical or electrical systems, structural deficiencies, and severe mold/moisture problems.*
- A description of how your agency retains and advances a modern workforce in weatherization. Include how your agency will build upon these efforts.
- A list of weatherization contractors or related agency partners. Please describe how you and partners will implement both (1) energy efficient and (2) clean energy upgrades that assist in a more resilient energy grid.
- A list of metrics that will be collected for persons in single family units to be weatherized, including methods for keeping private and personal information safe.
- Regular reporting on objectives metrics, project progress, and any project setbacks (*with root cause analysis*) encountered.
- A detailed workforce development plan describing how this project will support equitable job opportunities, an increase in the diversity of hired employees, training within the energy sector, and a commitment to jobs with living wages and benefits that aligns with the Justice40 initiative. *(Please note that participating in the apprentice program and placing apprentices within their organization will likely be a requirement under BIL funding.)*
- Identify at least one or more Go/No-Go milestones in the project. A Go/No-Go milestone is a major milestone in the project that if not completed on time may result in a cancellation of the subaward. Progress towards meeting the Go/No-Go milestones must be reported in the quarterly progress reports submitted to NC DEQ and DOE. At these Go/No-Go milestones, NC DEQ will evaluate project performance, schedule adherence, and contribution to the NC WAP goals and objectives.
- A detailed budget, including a line item for the number of single-family dwellings.
- Resumes of those who will manage the single-family unit weatherization program, including those who will lead relevant training sessions.
- Certificates of Insurance that document relevant coverage for weatherization services, the limits of liability and coverage dates of service provider(s) policies. All documents and coverage must be current.



## IX. Unit Eligibility

A dwelling unit is eligible for weatherization assistance if it is occupied by a family unit that meets the income guidelines set forth within this Weatherization Program Notice (*WPN*) and meets the building eligibility guidelines detailed in 10 CFR 440.22.

## X. Energy Audit Tool and Workforce Resources

As defined in the policy, computer modeling audit is to be used for the following building types:

- a. Single-family dwellings up to 4-plexes, and
- b. Mobile homes

Energy Auditors and Quality Control Inspectors (*QCI*) will be required to have proper certification for (1) single-family dwellings up to 4-plexes; and (2) mobile homes. This includes training on energy auditing software titled, “*Weatherization Assistant*” (*i.e.*, *National Energy Audit Tool (NEAT)*); and *Manufactured Home Energy Audit (MHEA)*) and the Building Performance Institute (BPI) QCI certification.

Computer energy audits require a physical inspection of the home, specific diagnostic tests, and proper data input into the software program. An energy profile of the existing home is compared to a set of improvements recommended for installation. Each measure is then evaluated, and a report is generated with the cost-effectiveness of each measure listed by Savings to Investment Ratio (*SIR*) greater than 1.

Service Providers are required to have staff members certified in the use of residential energy modeling software. If a modeling analysis is completed by a non-certified user, it must be reviewed by a certified user.

DOE developed and maintains the [Standard Work Specifications \(SWS\)](#) for home energy upgrades to ensure that energy efficiency upgrades are effective, durable, and safe. The “*Single Family Site-Build Housing*” and “*Manufactured Housing*” Job Task Analyses (*JTA*’s) define the knowledge, skills, and abilities (KSAs) that practitioners use to perform jobs effectively and safely. The *JTA*’s provide a foundation for developing high-quality training and credentialing programs. In addition, DOE supported the development of single family and manufactured housing energy auditing tools to advance the NC WAP’s ability to address these building types. For example, DOE also supported the development of an optional priority list for single family and manufactured housing units in “*Climate Region 2*” via [WPN 22-8](#). At the time of posting this RFP, the optional priority lists are not approved in the State of North Carolina; however, NC WAP is undergoing the process for them to be an approved option for the 5-Year BIL Program. NC WAP will share additional information with Subgrantees regarding the addition of other energy audit tools and requirements in a future memorandum.

## XI. Justice40 Initiative Guidelines

[Justice40](#) is a whole-of-government effort to ensure that Federal agencies work with states and local communities to deliver at least 40 percent of the overall benefits from Federal investments





in climate and clean energy to DACs. For additional information, see Weatherization Program Notice BIL 22-1 11 Executive Order 14008, Federal Register: Tackling the Climate Crisis at Home, and the Office of Management and Budget (*OMB*) Memorandum 21-28.

Weatherization of single-family units should align with Justice40 Initiatives. NC DEQ has created a map of the top-priority, overlapping places to weatherize (*TOP-W*) in NC. The training agency should prioritize weatherization of single-family units within the defined geographic areas.

## **XII. Declaration of Confidential Information**

If a proposer deems that certain information required by this RFP is confidential, the proposer must label such information as CONFIDENTIAL prior to submission. The proposer must reference where the information labeled CONFIDENTIAL is located in the proposal. For each subsection so referenced, the proposer must provide a convincing explanation and rationale sufficient to justify an exemption of the information from release under the Freedom of Information Act. The explanation and rationale must be stated in terms of (1) the prospective harm to the competitive position of the proposer that would result if the identified information were to be released and (2) the reasons why the information is legally exempt.

## **XIII. Questions about the RFP**

Eligible Service Provider(s) shall carefully review this RFP. Questions must be directed to Matthew Davis via the [question portal](#) on or before 5:00 p.m. Eastern Standard Time, Wednesday, August 2, 2023.

NC DEQ will not respond to verbal questions. All questions received by 5:00 p.m. Eastern Standard Time, Wednesday, August 2, 2023, will be answered in writing; NC DEQ's written response will be posted to the DEQ WAP webpage (<https://www.deq.nc.gov/energy-climate/state-energy-office/weatherization-assistance-program>) by 5:00 p.m. Friday, August 18, 2023.

## **XIV. Submission Details**

RFPs should be formatted to have 1-inch margins with 12 pt font. The agency name(s) and page number should appear on each page. NC WAP recommends that proposals do not exceed 15 pages. Any example training material may be provided as appendices.

All proposals shall be received by 5:00 PM Eastern Standard Time, on Friday, September 15, 2023. Proposals may be [submitted through this application portal](#). Proposals shall be submitted in PDF format.

## **XV. Evaluation of Proposals**

NC DEQ's WAP will evaluate submitted proposals using the criteria listed in the table below. Numerical scores will be provided to each proposal. Applicants will be notified of committee decisions on Friday, December 15, 2023, at 5:00 p.m. Eastern Standard Time. NC DEQ will choose a favored contractor to begin contract negotiations, and may, failing to reach satisfactory terms, choose another service provider. Further, NC DEQ reserves the right to choose any contractor – regardless of score.



Evaluation Criteria	Points
Weatherization Experience & Preparedness	10
Recruitment Strategies to ID Single Family Units to be weatherized and Plan to Reduce Deferrals	20
Leverages Partners in Implementing EE and Clean Energy Upgrades	20
Workforce Development Plan & J40 Initiatives	25
Metrics and Keeping PII safe	7
Report Project Progress and Setbacks	10
ID of Go/No-Go Milestones	8
<b>Total Score</b>	<b>100</b>

By rule of the Code of Federal Regulations (*CFR*) [10 CFR § 440.15](#), preference is given to any CAA or other public or nonprofit entity which has, or is currently administering, an effective program under this part or under title II of the Economic Opportunity Act of 1964, with program effectiveness evaluated by consideration of factors including, but not necessarily limited to, the following:

- a. The extent to which the past or current program achieved or is achieving weatherization goals in a timely fashion;
- b. The quality of work performed by the subgrantee;
- c. The number, qualifications, and experience of the staff members of the subgrantee; and
- d. The ability of the subgrantee to secure volunteers, training participants, public service employment workers, and other Federal or State training programs.

## XVI. Announcement of Award Recipients

Applicants will be notified of their proposal funding status by e-mail on Friday, December 15, 2023, by 5:00 p.m. Eastern Standard Time.

## XVII. Build America, Buy America

The Build America, Buy America (*BABA*) provisions of the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (*BIL*) establish a domestic content procurement preference for all federal financial assistance obligated for infrastructure projects after May 14, 2022. [Per Weatherization Assistance Program Memorandum 104](#), “Only weatherization on public housing or privately owned buildings that serve a public function are required to comply with the *BABA* requirements”

[BABA requires](#) the following:

- a) Iron and Steel Products
  - All manufacturing processes must occur in the United States.
- b) Manufactured Products
  - All manufactured products must be produced in the United States; and
  - 55 percent or more of the total cost of components must be mined, produced, or manufactured in the United States.



- c) Construction Materials
  - o All manufacturing processes must occur in the United States.

### **XVIII. Reporting Requirements for Accepted Projects**

Contingent on use of BIL funding, any selected entities will be mandated to follow the most up-to-date DOE and NC WAP program and reporting requirements. All grant awards made under this Program shall comply with applicable law and regulations including, but not limited to, the NC WAP regulations contained in 10 CFR 440, the Uniform Guidance at 2 CFR Part 200 as adopted by DOE at 2 CFR Part 910, and the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (*Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act*), Public Law 117-58. This will include, but may not be limited to:

- The reporting and audit requirements of 2 CFR Part 200, including submission of an annual audit of weatherization funds conducted in accordance with 2 CFR Part 200, Subpart D & F.
- Travel regulations that include travel authorization, reimbursement, advancements, and per diem rates that do not exceed the State of North Carolina’s maximum amount.
- Funding requirements. Funds shall not be expended for the items or services other than those listed in 10 CFR 440.18. T&TA funds cannot be used to purchase equipment used in the day-to-day installation of weatherization measures. Where a need exists to purchase tools and equipment Subgrantees should use “*Program Operations*” funds.
- Subgrantees shall comply with the Environmental Protection Agency (*EPA*) regulations as set forth in 40 CFR Part 247 - Guidelines for Procurement of Recovered Materials, which encourages the use of recyclable materials. Subgrantees shall use recyclable materials whenever possible. Compliance with EPA regulations also applies to the decommissioning of replaced baseload appliances whether subcontracted out or not.
- Adjusted Average Cost Per Dwelling Unit (*ACPU*): *ACPU* expenditure of financial assistance provided under WAP for labor, weatherization materials, and related matters cannot exceed \$6,500, as adjusted (*see, 10 CFR §440.18(a) and (c)*). The adjusted average for BIL grants is determined by using the percentage increase in the Consumer Price Index (*CPI*) (*all items, United States city average*) for FY 2021 or 3 percent, whichever is less. The percentage increase in the *CPI* for the previous 12-month period (*September 2020 – September 2021*) was 5.4%. Therefore, the adjusted average expenditure limit for at the time of the BIL grants is \$8,009. This average includes units computed in a multifamily building of 5 units or greater.

Each Subgrantee shall submit certified and timely reports to NC DEQ detailing the progress made towards the program objective(s) and all administrative and program expenditures. The report must agree with the Subgrantee’s accounting records, client database, and be certified by the Subgrantee’s Chief Executive Officer or their designee via handwritten or certified electronic signature.

- I. Required reporting documents for a complete monthly billing package include:
  - a. Purchase Order [*NC WAP Template*]
    - o Signature, Date, and Title of two separate Management Staff.



- b. Invoice *[NC WAP Template]*
    - Signature, Date, and Title of two separate Management Staff.
  - c. Financial Status Report “286” *[NC WAP Template]*
    - PDF (*signed, dated, and title of certifying official*) and Excel (*unsigned*) versions of the FSR 286, respectively
    - The Preparer and Program Coordinator should be a different person than the Certifying Official.
  - d. Project Expense Summary *[NC WAP Template]*
    - Date of Purchase
    - Vendor Invoice Number
    - Vendor Name
    - Subgrantee Project ID
    - Invoiced Amount by Budgeted Line-Item Category (*to include a statement of whether sales tax was charged for all expenses*).
      - 1. Official receipts and supporting documentation to match the exact amount billed (*i.e., for educational materials, subcontractor costs, general ledgers, payroll reports, etc.*),
      - 2. Subgrantee writes “*Subgrantee Project ID*” on receipts and how much was charged to DOE funds.
  - e. Building Materials Amount
  - f. Checkbox for whether purchases align with NC WAP’s “*Build America, Buy America*” guidance.
  - g. Training Amount
  - h. Project Total for Billing Cycle
  - i. Signature, Date, and Title of Financial Director.
- II. Reporting Format – NC DEQ has provided all Subgrantees with online access to software for the purpose of reporting weatherization activities. All weatherization Subgrantees are required to use program software for reporting purposes.
- III. NC WAP cannot approve an incomplete billing package. Expenses will not be reimbursed without providing all items listed above on a monthly basis (*regardless of whether expenses were made*).



## **XIX. Evaluation Process and Scoring – Single Family**

Each application will be assessed to the degree in which applications meet the following evaluation criteria:

- (1) Applicant’s experience and preparedness to implement weatherization services across the state of North Carolina,
- (2) Recruitment strategies to identify single family unit to be weatherized, specifically how will units within disadvantaged communities (*DACs*) and households with at risk population be recruited and a plan to reduce weatherization deferrals,
- (3) Retention and advancement of a modern workforce in weatherization and how the plan aligns with Justice 40 (*J40*) Initiatives,
- (4) How the agency leverages partners in implementing energy efficient and clean energy upgrades that assist in a more resilient energy grid,
- (5) Metrics collected for persons in single family homes and methods for keeping private and personal information safe,
- (6) The plan reporting project progress and any project setbacks, and,
- (7) Identification of Go/No-Go milestones in the project.

Each criterion will be scored using the options provided in **Table 1-1** by a panel. The application’s final qualitative score for each criterion will be calculated by averaging the qualitative scores from each panelist.

Please note that answering every question, while informative, will not necessarily guarantee an “*Exceeds*” score. Finally, prompts included here are by no means mutually exclusive or exhaustive; any additional information to support the merit of the application is welcome.

The following information is intended for guidance only and is not a request for information. The following template is only intended to help the reader understand the grant application process.





**Table 1-1: Criteria Scoring Options**

Scoring Option	Description
Not at all	The application does not address the criterion at all.
Minimally	The application addresses the criterion, but information in the application may be confusing, unclear, and/or incorrect. The degree to which the application demonstrates the criterion is minimal, and references to the criterion do not include substantive information.
Partially	The application partially addresses the criterion, but the application may lack clarity and/or strong support, have some minor inconsistencies, or not address all components of the criterion. The degree to which the application demonstrates the criterion has been met is mediocre.
Mostly	Although the application may include a few minor inconsistencies or areas that need more clarity, there is strong support for most components of the criterion. The degree to which the application demonstrates the criterion has been met is acceptable.
Entirely	The application is clear, concise, and complete; provides examples; and is supported by data. It addresses all components of the criterion and may have a particularly compelling narrative. The degree to which the application demonstrates the criterion has been met is excellent.
Exceeds	In addition to addressing all components of the criterion, being clear, concise, complete, and supported by data, the application articulates the impact of the project in catalyzing broader efforts (such as project type awareness) as they relate to the criterion. The degree to which the application demonstrates the criterion has been met is beyond excellent.

The North Carolina State Energy Office, Weatherization Assistance Program (*NC WAP*) will apply the scoring options listed in **Table 1-1** to all seven qualitative criteria. Note that point values vary among each criterion. The graded scoring and point scales for each criterion are included later in this document.



Tip: If you cite an attachment within the application, include the attachment name and location within the description and/or narrative, and be sure to implement proper naming conventions and ensure all attachments are relevant.

To achieve maximum points, applicants are encouraged to delineate clearly and completely the following:

- Implementation Measures
- Population Impacted
- Community Engagement and Other Outreach Activities
- Leveraging Partners

**Evaluation Criterion 1: Applicant's experience and preparedness to implement weatherization services across the state of North Carolina (10 possible points)**

The score received for Criterion 1 will depend upon how well the application details the following elements: (1) the organization’s experience, (2) knowledge of rules and regulations of weatherization services, (3) the organization’s proficiency with utilizing the United States Department of Energy (DOE) approved energy audit tools (i.e., *Weatherization Assistant [NEAT / MHEA]*), and (4) the degree to which applicants’ program(s) have been successful in producing desired results in weatherization services.

Not at all	Minimally	Partially	Mostly	Entirely	Exceeds
0	2	4	6	8	10

**Evaluation Criterion 2: A detailed plan to address weatherization deferrals, Recruitment strategies to identify single family units to be weatherized, specifically how will units within disadvantaged communities and households with at risk population be recruited (20 possible points)**

The score received for Criterion 2 will depend upon how well the application details how the project will: (1) address weatherization deferrals, and (2) reach DACs.

- If the application does not include a reference or incorporate any of the Key Weatherization Focus Areas, then the highest point allotment available is Partially. Application(s) that clearly state the approach to collaborate with Focus Areas 1, 2 or 3 can the proposed project is benefiting a DAC can score Mostly or Higher.

Not at all	Minimally	Partially	Mostly	Entirely	Exceeds
0	4	8	12	16	20



### Evaluation Criterion 3: How the agency leverages partners in implementing energy efficient and clean energy upgrades that assist in a more resilient energy grid (20 possible points)

Leveraging Partners allows applicants to access complementary strengths from neighboring communities, states, the federal government, and non-profit and private partners. This potentially helps the applicant from a cost basis and serves the local community's greater good.

The score received for Criterion 3 will depend upon how well the application incorporates: (1) partnerships (*e.g., state, territory, Tribal, private, district, local community*) that will ensure the project meets community needs, (2) an explanation of how these partnerships benefit DACs, (3) timeline(s) for implementation; and (4) an explanation on the anticipated outcome of those partnerships (*e.g., leveraging resources such as financial, material, and educational resources, coordinating multi-jurisdictional projects, heightened focus on equity related issues*).

*A disadvantaged community may be characterized by variables including, but not limited to: low income, high and/or persistent poverty, high unemployment and underemployment, high housing cost burden and substandard housing, distressed neighborhoods, disproportionate environmental burden and high cumulative impacts, disproportionate climate impacts, high energy cost burden and low energy access, and all geographic areas within Tribal jurisdictions.*

If a population impacted as demonstrated by the application does not include a DAC, then the highest point allotment available is Partially. Application(s) that clearly state the proposed project is benefiting a DAC can score Mostly or Higher.

*Additional considerations for completing the application.*

- What partners were involved in the project design? How did partners contribute to the application? What partners will contribute to the implementation of the project? Partnerships can take many different forms. For example, partners may contribute financially, support and promote the proposed project, help generate community-wide awareness of the risks the proposal is designed to address, etc.
- To what extent were non-governmental organizations, including those organizations that represent disadvantaged groups, universities, or other government entities consulted for advice or assistance? How has collaboration with surrounding jurisdictions supported project development?
- To what extent have other programs or funding sources been leveraged for the project?
- What community groups will participate in this project? What potential exists for partnerships to continue beyond implementation of the project?

Tip: NC WAP recommends clearly describing disadvantaged communities within the narrative and uploading documentation relevant to disadvantaged communities outlined in the application.

Not at all	Minimally	Partially	Mostly	Entirely	Exceeds
0	4	8	12	16	20



### Evaluation Criterion 4: Retention and advancement of a modern workforce in weatherization and how the plan aligns with Justice 40 Initiatives (25 possible points)

The score received for Criterion 4 will depend upon how well the application describes: (1) how the organization’s existing employees will be retained, trained, and have opportunities for advancement, (*a career advancement plan*), (2) a detailed plan to support apprentices, living wages and J40 Initiatives.

- Are strong labor standards incorporated? For example, the use of project labor agreements (PLAs), requiring workers to be paid wages at or above the prevailing rate; use of local hire provisions; using a directly employed workforce (*as opposed to a subcontracted workforce*); use of an appropriately skilled workforce, (*e.g., through apprenticeships or other joint labor-management training programs that serve all workers, particularly those underrepresented or historically excluded*); and use of an appropriately credentialed workforce (*i.e., satisfying requirements for appropriate and relevant pre-existing occupational training, certification, and licensure*).
- If the application does not include a reference or incorporate any of the Key Weatherization Focus Areas, then the highest point allotment available is Partially. Application(s) that clearly state the approach to collaborate with focus areas 1, 2 or 3 can the proposed project is benefiting a DAC can score Mostly or Higher.

Not at all	Minimally	Partially	Mostly	Entirely	Exceeds
0	5	10	15	20	25

### Evaluation Criterion 5: Metrics collected for persons in single family homes and methods for keeping private and personal information safe, (7 possible points)

The score received for Criterion 5 will depend upon how well the application describes: (1) what and how information is collected on people in the household based on the “*State of North Carolina Bipartisan Infrastructure Law Weatherization Assistance Plan*” that is housed on the NC WAP webpage: <https://www.deq.nc.gov/energy-climate/state-energy-office/weatherization-assistance-program>, and (2) the policies and procedures of keeping private and personal information safe.

Not at all	Minimally	Partially	Mostly	Entirely	Exceeds
0	1.4	2.8	4.2	5.6	7



### Evaluation Criterion 6: The plan reporting project progress and any project setbacks (10 possible points)

The score received for Criterion 6 will depend upon how well the application: (1) provides the plan for their reporting and project progress timelines, (2) articulates project process and setbacks, and (3) contains contingency plans for how to handle breakdowns of project setbacks.

Not at all	Minimally	Partially	Mostly	Entirely	Exceeds
0	2	4	6	8	10

### Evaluation Criterion 7: Identification of Go/No-Go milestones in the project (8 possible points)

The score received for Criterion 7 will depend upon how well the application: (1) articulates a milestone plan complete with detailed timeline and progress reports; (2) justifies initiating the project; (3) supports the project's feasibility within the allotted timeframe; (4) contains resources to implement the project plan; (5) identifies alternative solutions to potential obstacles; and (6) determines the methods to choose alternative solutions to potential obstacles.

If the application does not include a reference or incorporate any of the Key Weatherization Focus Areas, then the highest point allotment available is Partially. Application(s) that clearly state the approach to collaborate with focus areas 1, 2 or 3 can the proposed project is benefiting a DAC can score Mostly or Higher.

Not at all	Minimally	Partially	Mostly	Entirely	Exceeds
0	1.6	3.2	4.8	6.4	8

The following information is intended for guidance only and is not a request for information. The following template is only intended to help the reader understand the grant application process.

