

HOME WEATHERIZATION VS. REMODELING

The WEATHERIZATION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM is a federal program managed by the State of Utah, Department of Community & Economic Development. It is designed to help residents - who meet low-income guidelines - lower their utility bills and improve the comfort of their homes. This is achieved by home weatherization and client education.

Weatherizing a home involves conducting an energy audit to identify cost-effective energy improvements that can be performed on the dwelling and then making those improvements at no cost to the household.

The three major improvements performed in the home weatherization are: 1. Reducing excessive air infiltration. 2. Reducing heat loss through the walls, ceilings, floors, doors, and windows. 3. Tuning or otherwise making the heating system more efficient.

The Weatherization Program is not a remodeling or rehabilitation program. The amount that can be spent on each dwelling is limited. Repairs to the home are only made to facilitate the installation and preservation of weatherization materials - not to improve the capital value of the home. Typical incidental repairs include repairing small portions of a roof to keep insulation dry, repairing siding to prevent air leakage and water penetration, and repairing windows, doors and furnaces.

As a rule, the Weatherization Program does not install storm windows or storm doors. On occasion new prime windows can be installed, but only when necessary to reduce air leakage and to increase a window's insulating value. These are usually considered low-priority retrofits because they are not as cost-effective as other improvements, such as insulating and locating and sealing air leakage. Program regulations prohibit the substitution of low-priority measures for more cost-effective ones.

Typical improvements requested that are not allowed include storm doors, water heater replacements, roof or siding replacements and painting.

Those applying for Weatherization who assume their home will be remodeled or repaired often become frustrated. Other programs are better suited for remodeling purposes. We suggest referring these clients to their local housing authority, county rehabilitation agency, ASSIST Inc., or applicable human service agencies.