

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS



Will my energy savings really make a difference?

Yes! By increasing your energy efficiency you:

- Save money. (Weatherization can cut energy costs up to 30%!)
- Increase the resale value of your home.
- Reduce our dependence on fossil fuels.
- Create green jobs and boost our local economy.
- Become a community leader; look smart by increasing awareness of energy efficiency so that others can reap the benefits too!

Will getting an energy assessment alone help reduce my energy costs?

Yes! An energy assessment will provide a comprehensive list of quick fix and low cost upgrades along with long-term solutions. The first steps are usually extremely easy, with little to no cost, and you can start saving right away. An assessment also gives you personalized information about how changing simple behaviors in your home can reduce energy use immediately.

When can I get an energy assessment?

The Community Energy Challenge Residential Program will begin assessing homes in the spring of 2010. We are busily training auditors, evaluating contractors, and assembling the One Stop Energy Shop so that we can provide accessible high-quality services. We encourage you to sign up to be contacted about our services by e-mailing your name, street address, phone number and e-mail address to communityenergychallenge@oppco.org or calling 360-676-6099.

Who is eligible to be part of the program?

This program is designed to serve places of residence throughout Whatcom County regardless of size or income level. If you live in a mobile home, large multifamily building or are eligible for low-income weatherization services we may refer you to another organization which can better meet your needs.

How much will an energy assessment cost?

The assessment is valued at \$600, but participants only pay \$195. Once you decide on which energy efficiency measures to complete in your home, \$95 of this fee will be applied to the cost of these improvements, effectively providing an assessment for only \$100.

Can I participate if I am renting or if I own rental property?

Not immediately, but please check back with us next year. For 2010 this program is focused on owner-occupied homes; however, in 2011 we hope to expand the program to rental property. We look forward to working with tenants and landlords to arrange mutually beneficial energy efficiency upgrades in future years of the program.

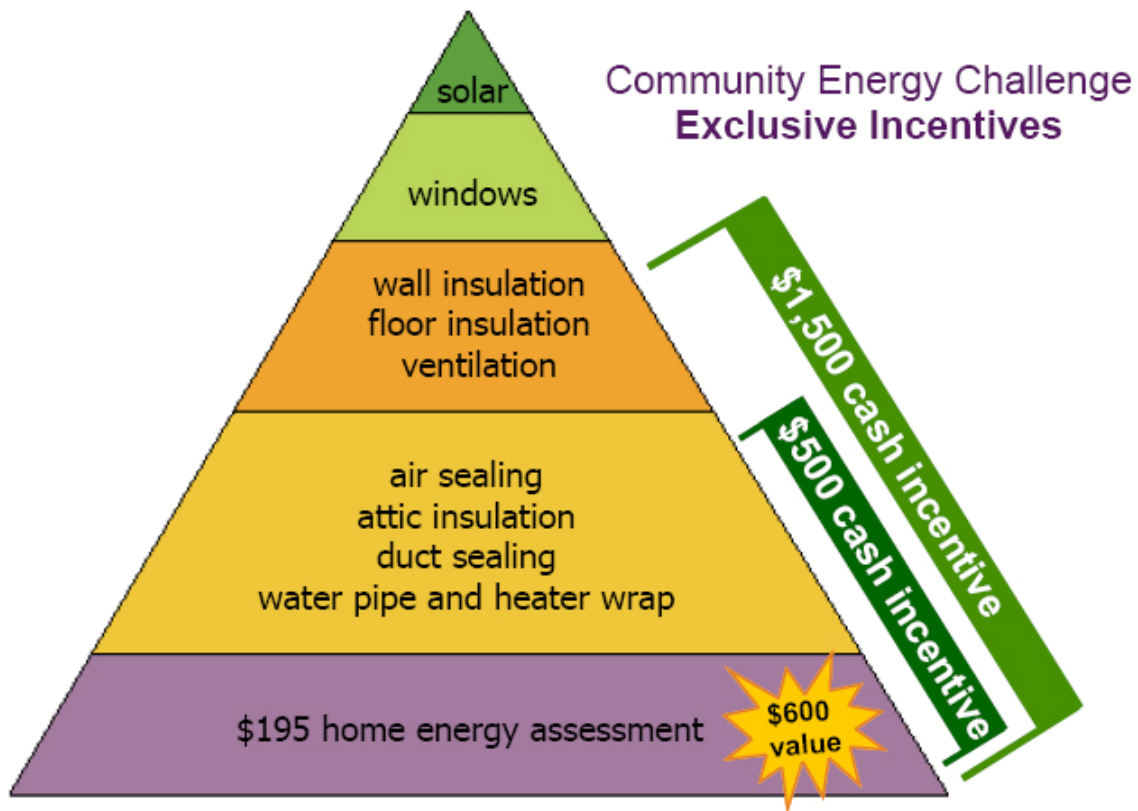
What are some common recommendations for home energy efficiency?

Air Sealing and Duct Sealing: Air leakage allows conditioned air to escape, forcing your heating and cooling equipment to work overtime. Sealing up these holes in your home is the first step to dramatically improving energy efficiency.

Insulation: Insufficient, damaged, or poorly installed insulation can reduce the effectiveness of heating and cooling equipment. Adding attic or wall insulation where necessary can be a great way to improve a home's energy performance.

I am planning to get my windows replaced; can this program make my project more affordable?

We are interested in helping households take a comprehensive approach to energy efficiency. Window replacements are typically not the most cost-effective measure to improve energy efficiency, and therefore not prioritized in our program. Furthermore, in a house that has not been air sealed or has insufficient insulation, new windows will do little in the way of improved comfort. If you are addressing all the critical weatherization work first and wish to replace windows as a finishing touch, we may be able to provide attractive financing and other assistance. Below is a pyramid illustrating how we prioritize home energy efficiency upgrades.



Cost Effective Home Energy Efficiency Upgrades

- + possible additional incentives for appliance upgrades and furnace upgrades

Does the Community Energy Challenge provide financing to help with the cost of energy efficiency installations?

Yes. We are pleased to provide access to preferential term loans for participants to help cover costs. We are also offering enhanced rebates for specific measures made available for a limited time by federal stimulus funding.



Why now?

There has never been a better time to address energy use in your home. First, improving energy efficiency is more affordable than ever. The stimulus money is available now, offering you a limited time to take advantage of reduced costs. Second, energy efficiency is easier than ever. A high-powered team has been assembled specifically for the Community Energy Challenge bringing together utility companies, government agencies, non-profits, and financial institutions as never before to make our community a national leader in efficiency. Don't let this unique opportunity pass you by!

How do I sign up?

Send your name, street address, phone number and e-mail address to communityenergychallenge@oppco.org. Call 360-676-6099. Or visit the One Stop Energy Shop 1322 N. State St, Bellingham, WA 98225.