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## Energy program can help reduce your bills

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Homeowners in Whatcom County can take advantage of a program to reduce energy use, save money, improve comfort, increase home value and protect our environment.

The Community Energy Challenge (CEC) is designed to provide homes and small businesses with an opportunity to access technical expertise and financial assistance to cut back on energy use and start saving money. The CEC was developed through a partnership between two local nonprofits, the Opportunity Council and Sustainable Connections.



Homeowners can sign up for a home energy assessment and have a certified building analyst evaluate their home's insulation, air leakage, heating and cooling systems and any other potential energy losses. Following the assessment, a home energy advisor meets with each homeowner to explain the results and provide recommendations for improvement. The CEC can also connect homeowners with qualified contractors to make the recommended repairs and provides 100 percent quality assurance on all work done through the program.

More than 500 people in Whatcom County have benefited from the home energy assessments since the program started in July 2010. On average, the CEC has helped homeowners realize annual savings of \$200 to \$400, or 20 to 30 percent of their yearly energy costs.

An energy assessment typically costs \$600, but it is available now for \$195. Limited-time funding provides direct incentives to cover about 30 percent of project costs and a unique low-interest loan opportunity to cover the remainder of retrofit costs.

The incentive special is only available through the end of the year, so interested homeowners are encouraged to sign up soon.

For more information, visit [www.communityenergychallenge.org](http://www.communityenergychallenge.org). To sign up for an assessment, call 360/676-6099 or email [communityenergychallenge@oppco.org](mailto:communityenergychallenge@oppco.org).

*Alex Ramel is the Energy and Policy Manager for the CEC.*