



50 Washington Street
Suite 3000
Westborough, MA 01581

t 508.836.9500
f 508.870.5975
www.csgrp.com

The White House Stephen Cowell, CEO, Conservation Services Group

12/9/13

Weatherization Assistance Program: Innovation, equity and economic development

Since 1976, the Weatherization Assistance Program has been at the center of innovation for residential energy efficiency. In fact, we would not have this industry if not for the Weatherization Assistance Program. How do I know? Because I owe them my own education and guidance that led to the creation of Conservation Services Group, and the residential energy efficiency industry.

Past: In 1979 I was a State Agency director in Massachusetts, serving as liaison to the Action Agency (VISTA) during the Iran oil embargo. I received a call from the Carter Administration: "Energy prices and costs are killing our economy and harming every consumer in America! We need to do something. How can you help us fight back?"

I walked down the hall to the Weatherization Program, and asked them about energy conservation. They explained low-cost measures that could be performed, air sealing and insulation. Together, we put a program in place to bring that message (and a kit of materials) to every Massachusetts consumer.

After educating hundreds of thousands of households about saving energy--using skills provided by the Weatherization Program--we realized that this strategy could change the world. We could bring poor and rich together with common purpose: Lower energy use, transform foreign policy dynamics, reduce costs, and improve our energy supply system. From that effort arose Conservation Services Group (CSG). Leadership came from the program and the community action community, with original incorporators John Wells and Elliott Jacobson from the weatherization community.

CSG has been able to bring energy efficiency to the non-low-income community and help expand the industry. We have worked hard to reach beyond the 7.4 million low income homes that have been improved by the Weatherization Assistance Program.

Present: In the past three years, the Weatherization Assistance Program grew their service delivery dramatically: by over 1 million homes. CSG performed Quality Assurance for the program in several states, and provided training and technical support in many more. The work delivered was high quality and effective. Low income consumers were able to lower their energy costs by 20-40%; the balance between heating and eating was tipped in favor of eating.

What more was created? Learning centers now expand the industry's technical capabilities. Thousands of private sector contractors were recruited, who now deliver these services; some are in this room today. Standards for work and measures performed were developed, via collaboration among the Building Performance Institute, Weatherization Assistance Program, private sector Home Performance Industry, and U.S. Department of Energy.

Future: We have so much more to do! Millions of low income homes still need to be served. Collaboration between low income programs and broader residential programs is just gaining steam. **NOW IS NOT THE TIME TO STOP. NOW IS THE TIME TO FIND THE COURAGE TO FIND THE PATH TO CONTINUE THIS PROGRAM THAT HAS HELPED PAVE THE WAY FOR SO MANY INNOVATIONS AND SO MANY SUCCESSES.**

Thank you to my friends at DOE who have led the program, and at the community action agencies who have delivered vital services for over 30 years. I am honored to be part of this effort.