



Families Get Help To Save On Winter Energy Bills

Reported by: [Bill Price](#)
Email: bprice@wcpo.com
Photographed By: Ronnie Fischer

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Chances are you may have worried about your winter heating bill after you woke up to freezing temperatures Thursday morning. But you don't have to wait for winter to start lowering your utility bills.

Once again, the Cincinnati Hamilton County Community Action Agency is offering more help to winterize homes or apartments against escalating heating bills. This year, the agency received \$2 million to help insulate over 360 homes for low income families.

At one Price Hill family's home that was getting the winterization treatment, it was noisy both inside and outside the Feibelman home on Enright Avenue. That's because contractors from the Community Action Agency were there, helping the Feibelms stay warm this winter for less money.

Kathy Feibelman is a mother of two. She told 9News, "I think it's wonderful to get this kind of help because I think it's important to learn how to live more simply in the world and use less resources. And this is really going to help us

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out a whole lot."

The Federal Department of Energy says that this weatherization program can help families cut their heating bills by 32 percent on average, or save \$350 or more a year.

Feibelman was surprised the action agency said she'd get more savings by adding insulation to her walls, instead of buying new windows.

Doug Misenheimer is the agency's Weatherization Director. "They can spend less money on insulation and get that money back faster through energy savings than what it would take for windows itself," he said.

Feibelman added, "I always thought that getting new windows or putting up plastic on the windows would save on the heating bills. But he was explaining there is a lot more space when you look at all the walls."

While new windows and putting plastic sheets over windows does help, the Action Agency is putting its money on wall insulation and better insulating doors. One test it runs shows how much cold outside air gets in if doors aren't properly insulated.

Misenheimer said, "People always tell us they notice a difference right away, especially in the winter months, even just doing one wall. They can feel the difference right away."

If you earn less than \$32,000 a year for a family for four, you may qualify for weatherization help.

To find out more, call (513)569-1840 and ask about the Weatherization Program.

Here are some of the tips on winterization and saving on your winter energy bills from the Cincinnati-Hamilton County Community Action Agency.

- Weatherstrip doors and cover windows with plastic. However, release this weatherstripping and plastic will have to be replaced every winter, or after a couple of years, if you keep the plastic up all year long.
- Install a programmable thermostat and turn your heat or air conditioning down 5 to 7 degrees, while you're sleeping or away from home
- Wear seasonal clothing around the house, if you still feel a chill in the winter
- Replace or repair missing plaster in the ceiling and in the walls to stop air from leaking out of your house
- Add insulation in the attic up to an R-38 rating
- Consider insulating walls and attics before you buy new windows
- Have furnace and central air serviced at least once every 2 years by a certified contractor
- Change your furnace filter every 30 to 45 days
- Open blinds on the sunny side of the house during the day to increase the solar heat in your home during the winter. Do the opposite in the summer to keep your home cooler
- Wash clothes in cold water
- Hang clothes out to dry, if you can; instead of always using a dryer

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