

Washington State Weatherization Plus Health Enhanced Grantee Profiles: Spokane Neighborhood Action Partners

Spokane Neighborhood Action Partners (SNAP) is one of six public service agencies in Washington to receive an Enhanced Weatherization Plus Health (Wx + H) Grant. From 2002 to 2015, SNAP offered the Living Green Program in Spokane County, which provided a Healthy Homes curriculum to the public using workshops, print materials, and a website but did not have resources to provide financial assistance to address problems such as mold and moisture in homes.

SNAP used Enhanced Grant funds to integrate Healthy Homes education and measures into existing weatherization and case management services. SNAP identified potential clients with respiratory issues by providing additional screening to clients in established program pathways supplemented by referrals from new community partners. The project built on SNAP's experience providing holistic, wrap-around services to clients.

SNAP provided education and assessments to 52 households, exceeding its goal of 50. Of these households, 26 received comprehensive weatherization and Healthy Homes measures and 16 received a more modest package of Healthy Homes measures.

Program Delivery Strategy

Clients were identified through SNAP's existing programs like the Energy Assistance and Weatherization programs, multiple outreach events, and referrals from new partners such as medical clinics and local agencies that provide community health worker visits and services.

SNAP intake staff screened clients for eligibility for weatherization services and sought to learn if members of the household may have asthma or another respiratory illness.

The initial energy audit and Wx + H assessment were conducted separately with SNAP's education coordinator. During the initial assessment, the

Wx + Health Program

The Wx + H Program, funded by Washington State's Energy Matchmaker Program, integrates investments in energy efficiency and healthy homes improvements in low-income households with education and services to reduce energy bills; increase home durability; and improve occupant health, safety, and well-being.

The initial focus of the Wx + H Enhanced Grant initiative is assessing the effectiveness of integrating weatherization and healthy homes services to serve households with members who have asthma or other respiratory illnesses. Enhanced grants are intended to support pilot projects to develop, test, and deploy new measures, strategies, and partnerships to deliver

household received educational guidance and developed a Family Action Plan.

After the energy audit and Wx + H assessment were completed, the auditor and education coordinator developed a proposed scope of work and met jointly with the client to finalize it. Most weatherization measures were installed by SNAP weatherization crews. Healthy Homes measures were installed by contractors.

Three months after measures are installed, SNAP completed an in-home follow-up visit, and will conduct two phone follow-ups at 6 and 12 months.

Key Lessons

Case management and wrap-around services

As this [Case Study](#) illustrates, SNAP has been effective in integrating services across programs.

However, weatherization program staff generally do not have the resources or training to provide case management services to weatherization clients. Therefore, the Wx+H Program Coordinator joined a regional Community Health Worker network and obtained invaluable training and certification.



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Broad community support for the Wx + Health comprehensive services

SNAP found it was fairly easy to make a compelling case for comprehensive Wx + H services with community partners. A proposal for support and funding for integrated weatherization and healthy housing services is currently being considered by Better Health Together, the region's Accountable Community of Health supported by the state's Medicaid Waiver.

Community health worker training

Regardless of whether full Wx + H services are provided in the future, community health worker certification and training for SNAP outreach and assessment staff would be valuable in addressing the needs of all weatherization clients and providing appropriate referrals to other community resources. The Wx + H program coordinator provided case management services but indicated that the function was not sustainable without additional resources.

Insufficient resources to meet all needs

Even though SNAP did not specifically target high-need households, many of the homes would have benefited from more intensive interventions. SNAP reported that over half of the Wx + H projects had measures that were not completed due to program limitations.

Commerce's \$4,000 cap on Wx + H expenditures (which could be lifted on review) was considered far too low. More resources to assist in prioritizing Healthy Homes investments would also be helpful.

Pre-screen potential clients with an initial home assessment

SNAP visits 500 to 600 homes a year. Only homes with clear needs for weatherization or other housing services move forward in the program. This existing pathway will be used to screen households for Wx + H services.

SNAP found it was more efficient for them, and more manageable for the client, to conduct Healthy Homes assessments and energy audits separately, and to conduct the initial home visits before a full audit

Education on operating weatherized homes is a key part of service delivery

For many years, SNAP has incorporated education about operating and living in a weatherized home as an integral part of weatherization program delivery. SNAP leveraged its experience with the Living Green Program to ensure that clients have the skills and training to effectively operate upgraded homes.

Building and maintaining capacity

Although SNAP had experience providing general Healthy Homes education, it had less experience offering Healthy Homes measures or targeted education interventions to address respiratory disease. It took time to establish internal policies and procedures, develop expectations with contractors, create assessment tools, build relationships with partners, and create systems to track information and data.

But just as that capacity was established, grant funding ended. It has been very difficult to maintain capacity and momentum in the absence of reliable future funding.

A strong champion

Much of the success of the program was attributed to the efforts the Wx+H Program Coordinator, who worked tirelessly to promote the program inside SNAP and in the community, and provided most of the community outreach, recruitment, and education services to clients. However, much of SNAP's capacity to deliver these services in the future was lost when the Coordinator left SNAP.



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Meeting data and information needs to support health outcomes research

SNAP's strength is in program delivery, not research. It has set up effective data systems to track and manage weatherization data, but SNAP has less experience tracking and managing data related to Healthy Homes installation measures and outcomes.

Client sensitivity regarding medical self-reporting is a particular concern. SNAP drew on local expertise at the Spokane Regional Health District and WSU Spokane to address this issue, and captured comprehensive data on clients prior to participation. The loss of ongoing funding will significantly restrict post-intervention follow-ups, limiting what we can learn from this investment.

Going Forward

SNAP continues to provide follow-up calls to Wx+H clients. Future plans are contingent on whether additional Matchmaker Funds are available and if the capacity lost by the departure of the Program Coordinator is replaced.

SNAP valued the additional flexibility to install Healthy Homes measures in households with clear health needs. SNAP indicated they would likely continue to provide additional Healthy Homes measures for some clients, especially if there was more flexibility in Healthy Homes spending caps

SNAP outreach staff found value in providing home visits and low-cost measures such as cleaning kits (since the Living Green program funding ended) and HEPA vacuums as part of the services, and would consider continuing to provide that service for some clients if it was allowable.

SNAP will also continue to participate in Better Health Together, the region's Accountable Community of Health to support comprehensive health and housing services.

Partners

SNAP is a nonprofit Community Action Program that provides services to those who reside in Spokane County. All enhanced program services are delivered by SNAP's Housing Improvements Department.

Medical partners

SNAP built referral networks through partners in the medical community such as the Spokane Asthma Clinic, Providence Medical Center, and Better Health Together (Spokane's designated Accountable Community of Health).

Spokane Regional Health District

The Health District has extensive experience with community coalition building, and collecting and managing health outcomes data.

Local government

Spokane city and county governments have made funds and low-interest loans available for home repair and rehabilitation. Eligibility requirements are complex and varied. SNAP helps its clients navigate and connect with the right resources.

Services provided by these partners are summarized in Table 1. Table 2 lists eligible Healthy Homes measures.

Budget

Enhanced Wx + H Grant: **\$218,000**

Contact Information

Kristi Sherlock, Interim Director
SNAP Housing Services
509-456-7627 x 2407; Sherlock@snapwa.org



Energy Program

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Washington State University Energy Program
905 Plum Street SE, P.O. Box 43165
Olympia, Washington 98504



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Table 1. Services Offered by SNAP

Service	SNAP	Medical Partners	Spokane Regional Health District & WSU	Local Government & Dept. of Commerce
Outreach and referrals	X	x	x	
Intake screening/qualification	X			
Initial Healthy Homes assessment	X			
Energy audit/assessment	X			
Service coordination	X			x
Weatherization	X			
Healthy Homes measures	X			
Client education and follow-up	X			
Data reporting and research	X		x	
Healthy Homes and Lead Hazard Reduction Coalition	X	X	X	X
Additional services (repair, social)	x			X

LEAD = X, Support = x, *Green shading indicates new partner or existing partner in new role*

Table 2. Percentage of Wx + H Projects: Healthy Homes and Weatherization Measures Installed (n=42)

Plus Health Measures			Weatherization Measures		
Measure	All Grantees	SNAP	Measure	All Grantees	SNAP
Green cleaning kit	94%	96%	Air sealing	77%	93%
Bedding (Dust mite)	71%	31%	Floor insulation	44%	17%
Mechanical ventilation	65%	62%	Attic insulation	54%	45%
HEPA vacuum	65%	31%	Wall insulation	12%	19%
Walk-off mats	65%	2%	Windows	17%	36%
CO detector	57%	31%	Door	19%	50%
Low VOC flooring	33%	36%	Duct insulation	20%	7%
Smoke detector	24%	31%	Duct repair	10%	2%
Advanced ventilation	18%	20%	Duct sealing	33%	19%
HEPA/MEPA filter	17%	7%	HVAC - replace	33%	19%
HVAC cleaning	17%	58%	Furnace T and Cn	22%	2%
Air filter	15%	4%	HVAC - repair	13%	10%
Plumbing repair	13%	9%	Thermostat	15%	19%
Gutter, downspout	13%	22%	Passive venting	44%	50%
Moisture/mold abatement	13%	13%	Lighting	33%	
Roof repair, replace	11%	7%	WH low cost	52%	19%
Pest mitigation	9%	11%	Water heater	12%	17%
Comprehensive cleaning	8%	42%	Electrical repair	13%	2%
Crawlspace	7%		Wx repair	1%	
Slip/fall prevention	5%	4%			
Dehumidifier	2%				

Darker cell colors indicate higher rates of installation.

Blank cells indicate that a measure was not installed by the grantee.

