



# **NEWS RELEASE**

## **STATE EMERGENCY OPERATIONS CENTER**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
**No. 0XX April 24, 2020**

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## **Residents spending more time at home can save on energy costs**

### ***MDHHS Weatherization Assistance Program offers tips***

LANSING, Mich. With Michigan families staying home to slow the spread of COVID-19 and a colder-than-average spring, they may find their heating bills higher than usual and the air inside their home getting a little stale. Michigan's Weatherization Assistance Program at the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) has some tips to help.

"The Weatherization Assistance Program is one way that MDHHS provides access to important services that give Michigan residents the opportunity to improve their well-being and health," said Lewis Roubal, MDHHS chief deputy director for opportunity. "We know many people are struggling to pay the bills during these unprecedented times as a result of the coronavirus. We want to help them save energy and save money."

The Weatherization Assistance Program works with low-income families, the elderly and people with disabilities to improve both the energy efficiency and air quality of their home.

"Sometimes the money people save on utilities means they can buy something they really need, such as medicine," said Ray Judy, director of the state's weatherization training center, which certifies contractors to do the specialized work.

With the weatherization program that sends experts into homes temporarily on hold due to COVID-19, Judy offers a few steps you can take – whether you live in a house, manufactured home, or apartment – to help improve indoor air quality and lower your energy bills.

#### **Stop heat loss**

If you have access to your attic through an opening in the ceiling – sometimes it's a small passageway in a closet or hallway – make sure it is closed tightly so the warm air stays in your living areas and doesn't float up into the attic.

#### **Filter facts**

Check the filter in your furnace or air conditioner every 30 to 45 days and change if it is dirty. A dirty filter makes your heating system work harder because it can't move the air easily.

#### **Dial down**

Lowering your thermostat even a degree will save you money. Start with your thermostat at your usual setting, then drop it one degree at a time to see what your comfort level is. For example, if you keep the thermostat at 70 degrees, try lowering it to 69. If you use an air conditioner, do the same in reverse. If you usually keep it at a cool 67 degrees, try 68.

The best temperature for hot tap water is 120 degrees. If it's hotter than that, you're likely adding cold tap water to cool it for uses such as bathing and handwashing. Save money by turning down the temperature on your water heater. If the heater's temperature dial does not have "degree" markings on it, fill a glass with hot water from the tap and check the temperature with a food thermometer. If it's over 120, turn the dial down a bit, give the heater time to adjust, and check the temperature again.

#### **Air it out**

If you have working exhaust fans in the bathroom or kitchen, use them to remove excess moisture produced during bathing and cooking. That moisture can build up and cause mold.

These steps are useful for all residents to potentially improve the energy efficiency and air quality in their homes.

Additionally, the Weatherization Assistance Program is free to residents who qualify and provides extensive energy efficiency and air quality improvements. If you are interested in applying for the program, or becoming a contractor with the program, find your local Weatherization Provider by visiting [www.michigan.gov/weatherization](http://www.michigan.gov/weatherization).

Meanwhile, check for leaks, replace your filter, dial down, and turn on the fan.

Information around this outbreak is changing rapidly. The latest information is available at [Michigan.gov/Coronavirus](http://Michigan.gov/Coronavirus) and [CDC.gov/Coronavirus](http://CDC.gov/Coronavirus).

**To Apply for Weatherization Services in the  
counties of Calhoun, Kalamazoo, Barry,  
Branch, and St. Joseph, please contact  
Community Action of South Central  
Michigan  
877-422-2726  
[Contact@caascm.org](mailto:Contact@caascm.org)**