

HEP STEP ONE WEATHERIZATION PROGRAM

Step One Weatherization is a program of Hour Exchange Portland that focuses on permanent, low cost, energy efficiency improvement for homeowners. By taking energy efficient steps homeowners will witness a decrease in energy consumption and smaller energy bills. HEP is pleased to offer these services for little, if any, cash charge (materials only). Hour Exchange Portland is proud to offer our community and its members the opportunity to decrease carbon footprints, save money and increase living comfort.

Our program illustrates our service exchange model, allowing members to earn and spend hours helping fellow neighbors. Those interested in *earning* hours and learning proper weatherization techniques may join the Green Team. Green Team members need no prior handyperson or carpentry experience, only a can-do-attitude. We encourage acts of kindness and service to flow naturally between members, driven by each situation. One example is that some homeowners provide snacks or meals to the Green Team after the work is completed. This good feeling is just as important as the immediate need being filled to create warm homes and warm communities. This encourages participation in the Green Team that not only can they feel good helping their neighbors, but the Hours they earn can be exchanged for a home cooked meal or a massage or any of the hundreds of services Hour Exchange Portland members provide.

Step One work includes air sealing, outlet insulators, pipe insulation and appliance replacement upgrades. Green Team members will use spray foam and caulking to fill all seams and gaps inside the house. Weather-stripping and foam tape will be applied on doors and windows to prevent cold drafts from entering the home. All water pipes will be insulated in the basement to prevent heat loss and freezing (This also increases DHW efficiency). Homeowners will receive new CFL light bulbs, aerators and low-flow shower heads that green team members will install upon request. Trainings are facilitated by our coordinator who covers energy efficient steps, safety and proper material use.

Those interested in receiving Step One weatherization utilize our service exchange membership too. In many cases, homeowners don't have time or understanding to properly weatherize their homes. Instead, members can *earn* hours by providing any service, to any other member. When those members have earned enough service credits, they can *spend* hours for weatherization for their homes. Homeowners are encouraged to provide snacks or meals to our Green Team, in part because after a hard day of labor, the workers are hungry. We have found that nothing brings people closer together than sharing food. This exchange builds relationships and in the dialogue over the meal, often other service needs are identified. HEP offers over 1800 services to its members including health care, transportation, adult education classes, small business support, theater and sports tickets, music lessons and a myriad of other exchanges for all needs.

WARM ME UP ALLIANCE

Beginning in late summer 2010, HEP is delighted that a partnership with the local community action agency, the United Way, Habitat for Humanity and the ME State Housing Authority will rejoin (second year) for the purpose of providing step one weatherization services to low income clients in our shared community.

Support is provided in grants, training, storage of materials, material donations, build-out of plastic window inserts, transportation, home energy evaluation/audits and installation of (labor for) energy saving materials.