

Organization and Project Description Step One Weatherization Program

1. Organization Overview: Hour Exchange Portland is a member-led community service exchange based on the equality of time, empowering individuals to utilize their assets and enhance their lives, neighborhood and community. Hour Exchange Portland (HEP) is a non-profit, 501(c)(3) organization founded in 1996 and governed by a seven member volunteer board of directors. At HEP everyone's time and talents are valued equally, an hour for hour, no matter what the service being exchanged. There are hundreds of services available, anything from health care to home repair, cooking to computers.

During our 16 year history our members have exchanged over 150,000 hours of community service and provided 25,000 hours of free health care within the membership. In 2010 we helped approximately 140 seniors, 50 people with disabilities, 40 single parent families, and 400 lower income neighbors get services they needed while they contributed back to the community utilizing their skills to help others. Hour Exchange Portland brings people together from all social, economic, and cultural backgrounds; professional lawyers to stay-at-home parents, economically affluent as well as the recently laid off who are trying to develop their skills to start their own businesses, even refugees and immigrants new to this country striving to become citizens. Hour Exchange Portland is Everyone. Our membership has included over 2,500 individuals, nonprofits, and businesses in the Greater Portland area and we continue to grow. Currently there are 750 active members in Greater Portland.

Infused throughout HEP is the opportunity for our members to continue to educate themselves and develop their skills. Two programs that highlight the HEP mission are the Step-One Weatherization program and the Access to Health Care Program. Last year we were able to provide Step One Weatherization in over **100 homes** thanks to our coordinator cultivating strategic partnerships with other organizations including **USM, Habitat for Humanity, PROP, The Greater Portland United Way, Greater Portland Council of Governments, federal Americorps Alumni, and HEP Green Team Members.** The Step One Coordinator worked with these organizations to organize two Weatherization Blitz days.

Health care is one of the most utilized service in Hour Exchange Portland, ranging from comprehensive mental health and counseling services, to herbal medicine, traditional allopathic medicine consultations, energy therapies, exercise partners, nutritional consults, bodywork, midwifery and childbirth support, and meditation. There are also many services available through Hour Exchange that can help support you during an illness or injury, including transportation to medical appointments and fresh-cooked meal delivered to directly to homes. The majority of Green Team Members who earned time credits working on weatherization spent their credits on health care. The exchanges were relevant to all concerned.

2. Project Overview: Here in Maine, everyone pays for heat during the winter. These bills can be significantly reduced by proper basic air sealing. The United States Department of Energy highlights the fact that, "air sealing is one of the most significant energy efficiency improvements one can make to his/her home. Air sealing will not just reduce energy costs; it will also improve one's home's comfort and durability."

Hour Exchange Portland has over **four years of weatherization experience**, including both basic (caulking around windows and doors) and comprehensive (blown-in attic insulation) work. In the beginning, attention was paid to high cost comprehensive energy savings jobs. Many of these jobs operated outside of our HEP membership and we were unable to utilize our service exchange program to accomplish the tasks. This led to the creation of a sustainable program that highlights energy efficiency and incorporates members who are not certified technicians. We learned that high savings can be achieved through basic air sealing without the high costs associated with remodeling. It's estimated 80% of Maine homes use heating oil and the **average home consumes 900 gallons of heating oil a year. At \$3.50 a gallon just a 10% energy reduction from step-one weatherization can save the average homeowner over \$300 a year.** This is a tremendous positive impact for our community and our environment.

In 2009, HEP completed a weatherization pilot program that highlighted basic tasks including; caulking, spray foam and weather-stripping. We found that these steps can be done in only a few hours with little or no experience, but yet can **still save 10-40 percent on utility bills.** This program allowed all our interested members to participate on a member (earning time credits as members) basis, while receiving training and education on energy efficiency best practices.

Hour Exchange Portland **would like to increase** its Step-One weatherization program effectiveness with a strategic focus on community awareness and participation. We want to see higher levels of involvement with regard to improving our community's energy efficiency. HEP Step-One program is a great conduit for building grass roots community development. We will link neighbors together to help those in need, while educating participants on ways to save money and make alternative choices.

We will work to address energy efficient tasks, opportunities and rewards throughout Greater Portland area. HEP has the goal of weatherizing **100 low-income homes** in the community and holding 6 community awareness events. Not

only will participants help reduce their carbon footprint and lower utility bills, they will also learn important weatherization skills to utilize at their own house or apartment, as well as having the opportunity to further their skill and job prospects.

3. Describe three measurable results or outcomes of this project that will help achieve this goal.

1. **Fifty low-income home owners referred by PROP** will confirm that weatherization work was completed and that they now experience a comfortable difference. Up to fifty additional home owners will be served through the HEP membership, general public & PROP.
2. Participants **will be surveyed** before and after on their energy efficiency knowledge. Forms will show a better understanding of what each individual can do in order to minimize their carbon footprint.
3. HEP will recruit **30 to 40 new members from orientation**, online bulletin board communication and potluck dinners. This will be tracked through our Time and Talent Software where exchanges are recorded.

4. What specific activities will you do as part of this project to produce those results?

1. The Program Coordinator will schedule and attend neighborhood meetings to increase awareness of energy efficiency practices and recruit individuals interested in gaining hands on learning on how to correctly air seal their home.
2. People's Regional Opportunity Program (PROP) will provide HEP with a list of local LIHEAP certified, low-income households requesting basic air sealing. These clients are certified to receive federal funds to help cover the cost of heating bills. Many individuals have to wait years before they can receive any weatherization service.
3. HEP will create and distribute marketing material for public use on best practices in energy efficiency and creative opportunities available through service exchanges.
4. Participants will be trained to perform basic weatherization tasks safely and properly.
5. Interested Green Team Members will be provided information and guidance for Maine State Energy Certification from which they will become eligible for paid positions in the private sector. Three graduates of HEP's Green Team have successfully completed ME State Energy Certification in the last two years. Three others are earning service hours and valuable field experience while considering this line of work. There are employment opportunities available.

5. Describe how you will measure the project's progress or success? Success will be measured by increased participation in our weatherization program. These individuals will be registered through our software where aggregate hours will be actualized. We will measure recruitment by the number of homeowners who join our program. Working on non-member homes will provide us with the opportunity to expand our outreach. Evaluations will be two-fold; one for those who provided assistance and the other for those who received the services. These evaluations will help determine our program's area of strength and weakness.

6. Expected start and completion dates. We will start recruiting and bring awareness to our community in October, 2011 at our first Pot Luck gathering. In October we will train Green Team members and set up the schedule for the PROP Blitz. We will complete all houses by the end of March 2012.

7. Who will be served by or participant in this project? Besides lower income home owners, participants will include community members who may be interested in volunteering, learning a new skill, interested in a potential job and/or eager to become active members in community based currency.

8. Sustainability. Hour Exchange Portland will manage our Step-One program year-round. We will continue to harness our relationship with local nonprofits to gain materials, donations and referrals.

BUDGET REQUEST

We respectfully seek \$12,000 as a contribution toward this program. Funds will be applied as follows:

- \$5000 for weatherization materials
- \$2000 for transportation costs including vehicle registration, gas and minor repairs.
- \$1000 for the HEP Coordinator for outreach and orientation
- \$4000 for the Step One Coordinator Position
- \$12000 TOTAL REQUEST