

LACAP Weatherization Training Center

The Weatherization Assistance Program enables low-income families to permanently reduce their energy bills by making their homes more energy efficient. During the last 32 years, the U.S. Department of Energy's (DOE) Weatherization Assistance Program has provided weatherization services to more than 6.4 million low-income families.

Identifying the Need

The Louisiana Association of Community Action Partnerships (LACAP) is an organization comprised of 42 Community Action Agencies that provide weatherization services within the 64 parishes in the state. Through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (Recovery Act), Louisiana was awarded over \$50 million to weatherize an additional 5,000

LACAP Weatherization Training Center

Located in Baton Rouge, LA

Completed July 2009

Launched September 22, 2009

As of April 2010:

- Trained 197 students
- Completed 6,520 hours of total class time



The LACAP Weatherization Training Center provides 17,000 square feet of classroom, office, lab and state-of-the-art demonstration and hands-on training modules space.

Photo credit: Louisiana Association of Community Action Partnerships (LACAP)

low-income homes by March 2012. LACAP needed to prepare for the tremendous amount of additional weatherization work it was about to take along with maintaining its existing program. Jane Killen and Jon Phelps at LACAP knew they, along with the neighboring state and agencies, would need to bring on hundreds of new employees, crews, auditors and contractors to handle the additional Recovery Act work. And the new staff would require in-depth comprehensive weatherization training. With the closest weatherization training center hundreds of miles away, LACAP saw the immediate need to develop a state-of-the-art weatherization training center to serve Louisiana and the Southeast region.

Creating the Opportunity

In March 2009, LACAP began the process to create a training center. The goal was to have the center ready for training by July 2009, which was a monumental goal. The first task was to find a building to house the training center. The building needed to offer ample space to house classrooms, a lab area, office space, and allow enough open space for hands-on and demonstration training areas. LACAP was fortunate to find a 17,000 square foot industrial warehouse in Baton Rouge that met their requirements. LACAP purchased the warehouse and began the process to design the building around their training needs. LACAP structured the interior to create 11,000 square feet of hands-on and demonstration area that includes traditional classrooms, a Combustion Safety Lab, and an area to house a full-size mobile home for hands-on training. LACAP allocated the rest of the space for offices, a computer lab, a library and a conference room.

While the training center was under construction, Jon Phelps knew he needed a resource to bring in qualified and experienced trainers to train the students, train the new LACAP trainers, and assist in developing a weatherization curriculum. Jon hired a private weatherization training consultant to help create the best training program to incorporate the three fundamental components: *classroom*, *demonstrations*, and *hands-on trainings*. In addition, the team designed the training program to address the unique climate of Louisiana and the Southeast region.



The LACAP training center provides three diagnostic cabins for students to use for the “house as a system” training, which includes blower door tests and live combustion appliances.

Creating the Experience

LACAP took full advantage of the generous amount of space and created numerous “real world” demonstration and hands-on training modules.

The **Attic Demonstration Units** show the students real-world situations and challenges in an controlled environment. The **Attic Hands-on Units** provide students the ability to take what they just learned and practice proper venting, ductwork and how to check insulation levels.

The **Insulation House and Training Unit** showcase proper and improper insulation installation within a home. The training unit simulates actual dense pack wall insulation and offers different

interior wall materials for students to review.

The **Pressure House** was designed with a control panel that enables the trainer to show the students a number of energy inefficiency scenarios based on the typical Louisiana home. Once the students have completed the Pressure House, they can move to one of the three **Diagnostic Cabins** for “house as a system” hands-on training. The cabins allow the students to perform blower door tests and solve insulation leaks and problems.

Within the **Combustion Safety Lab**, students review and perform testing on three types of furnaces, water heaters, and space heaters. In addition, the center provides **Lead Safe Weatherization (LSW)**

training as well as the required classroom time to become an EPA certified renovator.

The LACAP Weatherization Training Center has truly become a valued resource for the region. Since the training center officially opened on September 22, 2009, they have trained over 197 students and have completed over 6,520 hours of training class time. Over the next year, LACAP expects to stay very busy — they are projecting to hold 96 classes and train around 336 students.

If questions remain, contact:

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