

Keweenaw Bay Indian Community

‘First Steps’

Toward Tribal Weatherization Human Capacity Building

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Final Report

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Tribal Energy Program

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Executive Summary:

From October 1st. 2009 to September 31st. 2011 the Keweenaw Bay Indian Community planned, designed and implemented a program to build the Tribe's own capacity by establishing a comprehensive Tribal Community Weatherization Program that promotes & improves energy efficiency in Tribal Member owned homes located within the Tribe's five county service area. Funding for this effort was provided by the U.S. Department of Energy's Tribal Program under First Steps grant award DE-EE0002528.

The program's centerpiece was a house-by-house needs assessment, in which Tribal staff first visited each homes conducting energy audits at over 18 homes qualified under LIHEAP guidelines and another 25 homes qualified under the D.O.E. over LIHEAP guidelines. Staff held community educational training, technical assistance and performed minor repairs as needed on energy savings related renovations.

The Tribal community now has a Weatherization Office which coordinates all Tribal Weatherization efforts, however due to the lack of sufficient continuation funding the newly trained staff are now primarily unemployed due to the lack of funding. Current work being performed by the drastically reduced trained staff is related to finishing the D.O.E. over LIHEAP guidelines homes. Once these funds are expended there is no current weatherization funding and the program will be inactive.

Project Overview:

The objective of the program to train staff, both new and existing from various KBIC departments in the core competencies was needed to develop a comprehensive Tribal Community Weatherization Program to promote energy sufficiency within the community. A weatherization program office was established to coordinate all of the programs and department staff and was placed under the KBIC's (newly formed) Public Works Department, which consolidates the former Tribal Construction Company and Tribal (KBIC) Maintenance.

Early in the program staff developed job descriptions for the positions required to staff this branch of the Public Works department. Each member of the Weatherization staff has obtained BPI certification in various Tracks, Energy Efficiency Auditor – Building Analyst (2) or Envelope Professional (6).

In the meantime, the programs education and outreach component conducted workshops with potential weatherization services candidates in energy efficiency and renewable energy. Handing out a series of pertinent brochures, fluorescent lights and gift bags which contained many handy items designed to save on daily energy cost.

Field work began as soon as possible in an attempt to complete as many homes as possible given the different grant established deadlines, some staff needed to attend training while the work was commencing by other.

Objectives:

The long term goals of the program were to reduce energy costs for Tribal Members – focusing on our elderly, people with disabilities and children while ensuring their health and safety. More specifically the program sought to develop sustainable operations by Tribal Staff that would have provided energy efficiency services to tribal members in the Tribes five county service area. The program also strove to promote economic development through energy services and job training, while empowering our Tribal Weatherization Program.

The project team conducted all of the activities required to meet the objectives. The quantitative objectives that were originally outlined for the project were reduced significantly as some planned funding never materialized. In the end 18 LIHEAP eligible homes were served and 25 D.O.E. over LIHEAP guideline eligible homes are being served.

There were several factors that contributed to our inability to complete the target number of audits in the allotted time. One being our over estimation of available funding, two the audits turned out to be more difficult and time consuming than was anticipated. The assumption that many Tribal members would be able to afford conducting these audits as a private business, under contract for the low fee available coupled with the requirement for insurance cost led to no responses to our RFP, for these services. Based on this non-response, we sought the services of two individuals who had obtained BPI audit certification through our Tribal Housing Agency, contracting with them, due to their already busy schedule; it took much longer than anticipate to generate any of the contracted 19 energy audits. No audits were received until June of 2011. The enclosed print out of our power point presentation highlight the training seasons that occurred along with a pictorial history of each training season held.

Description of Activities:

Contracts were made to ensure training And technical support for the energy audit courses were held onsite. The original focus was on obtaining instructors and materials for Tribal members and employees to be trained and to obtain certifications. Classes started April 5th 2010 and concluded on May 3rd – Seven

(7) individuals were certified as in building analyst, eight (8) Envelop Professional and nine (9) BPI professional analysts were certified to conduct Energy Audits. A Weatherization Coordinator was hired, Auditor contract Agreements were drafted and each of the individuals that had been trained and certified to conduct these audit were mail and agreement, none responded due in part to the low amount offered to conduct the audits and additionally the insurance requirement. Three set of the auditing equipment were purchased. New positions were created under the newly formed Public works department and these individuals were sent to training to pick up all required training/certifications. Some of the initials audits (19) were sub-contracted while the new staff obtained the appropriate certification. Energy Audit Software was purchased. The weatherization attended a Department of Energy workshop in Green Bay, Wisconsin in March, 2011. Policies and guidelines were approved by KBIC Tribal and implemented. Work was completed in accordance with the energy audit conducted on 18 LIHEAP guideline eligible homes (not to exceed \$10,000) and 25 D.O.E. over LIHEAP guideline eligible homes (not to exceed \$2,500).

Conclusions and Recommendations:

Hindsight is 20/20, the vision for this undertaking verses the realities of establishing a workforce that is trained and ready to conduct the established work with a set time frame prior to grants and funding deadlines turned out to be a much longer and more complicated undertaking.

Also, planning and developing a trained work force without guaranty of continuation funding source in these hard economic times has led to only short term employment solutions. We have a trained work force with no ongoing resources to keep them employed; therefore if and when any additional funding comes available hopefully we will be able to recall some of our previously trained employees assuming that they are available.

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