



## News Release

### For Immediate Release

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### Innovative Couleecap Project serves as a National Model

Westby, WI – Couleecap’s Weatherization Deferral Project in partnership with Habitat for Humanity and the Federal Home Loan Bank of Chicago—is featured in the most recent edition of the *State & Local Energy Report*, a national publication read by energy assistance advocates, utilities, energy businesses and community organizations.

Couleecap, like many other weatherization providers in Wisconsin, has been experiencing a growing number of deferrals, having to walk away from a needy family’s home because of health and safety problems which prevent them from providing energy efficiency measures through weatherization. “The least energy-efficient homes often require other services, such as housing rehabilitation or home repairs; services that are beyond the scope of the weatherization program itself,” says Kahya Fox, Couleecap’s Housing Assistant Director. Having to walk away from a needy family’s home because of health or safety problems is demoralizing to the family, prevents necessary cost-saving energy efficiency measures from being installed, and goes against the mission of the program and our agency.

Couleecap’s Weatherization Deferral Project (WDP) was created to resolve these health, safety and structural issues; allowing them to be addressed and, then, followed up with weatherization energy efficiency services, to the long-lasting benefit of everyone. Through this project, Couleecap’s weatherization program linked with Habitat for Humanity – La Crosse Area, with Habitat providing labor and donated materials for necessary rehab work. For other projects, forgivable grant dollars from Citizens State Bank and Citizens First Bank were provided by the Federal Home Loan Bank of Chicago’s Affordable Housing Program. To date, 52 households have been served through this project.

This innovative collaboration has produced multiple benefits. The Weatherization Deferral Project has allowed Couleecap to utilize an additional \$5,000 to \$10,000 in rehab and healthy homes benefits per home, as well as provide weatherization services for those homes that would have otherwise been deferred. Most important, clients



in these 52 sub-standard homes were able to receive the full benefits of weatherization services, providing significant energy savings and addressing health and safety concerns.

Couleecap's Weatherization Deferral Project is being used as a model across the nation on how to successfully braid together weatherization funding and other grant funds to fully address homes in regards to health and safety issues, and benefit the clients as much as possible.

To learn more about the project, see the full article at [www.stateenergyreport.com](http://www.stateenergyreport.com).

Created in 1966, Couleecap is a community action program that fights poverty and promotes self-sufficiency in Crawford, La Crosse, Monroe, and Vernon counties. For more information on Couleecap programs visit our website [www.couleecap.org](http://www.couleecap.org).

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