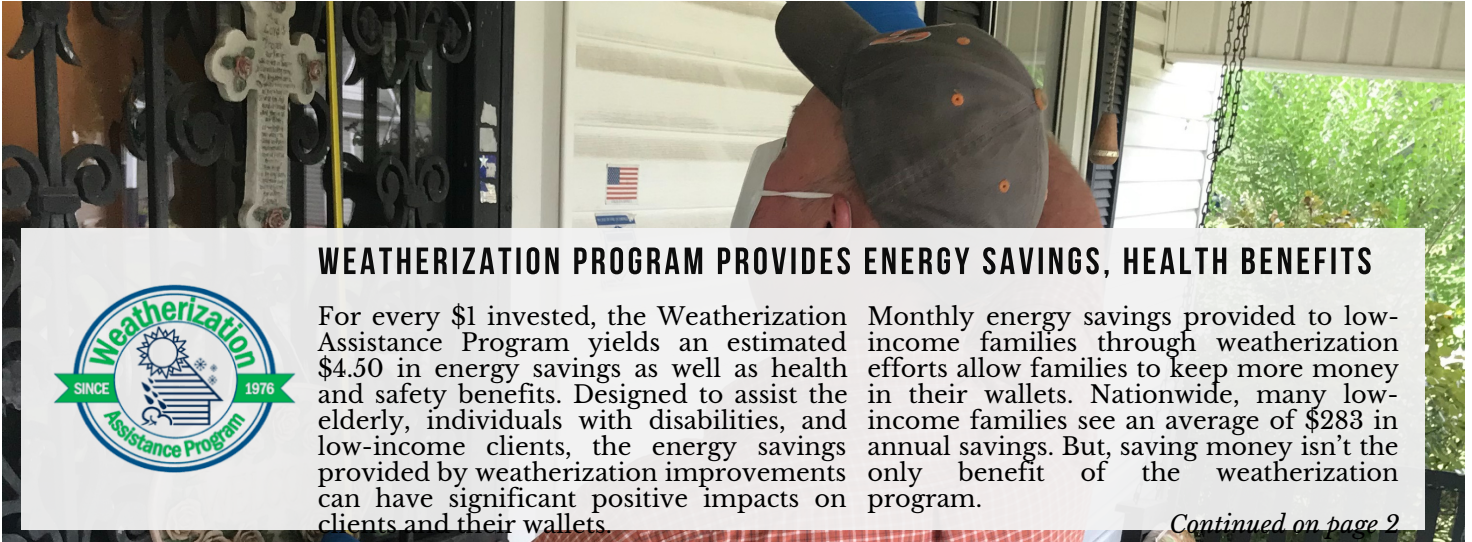




A moment to focus on the good our team is doing every day



WEATHERIZATION PROGRAM PROVIDES ENERGY SAVINGS, HEALTH BENEFITS

For every \$1 invested, the Weatherization Assistance Program yields an estimated \$4.50 in energy savings as well as health and safety benefits. Designed to assist the elderly, individuals with disabilities, and low-income clients, the energy savings provided by weatherization improvements can have significant positive impacts on clients and their wallets.

Monthly energy savings provided to low-income families through weatherization efforts allow families to keep more money in their wallets. Nationwide, many low-income families see an average of \$283 in annual savings. But, saving money isn't the only benefit of the weatherization program.

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Out in the Field



CASA RECEIVES DONATION FROM VEC CUSTOMER SHARE PROGRAM

Thank you, Volunteer Electric Cooperative Customer Share for donating \$925 to our Cumberland CASA program! This donation will allow us to train more advocates to serve the children.

Pictured, from left: Bonita Harger, Cumberland County UCHRA CASA Coordinator, and Damon Prince, UCHRA CASA Director.

Tickets are also on sale for the annual Belk Charity event. Purchase a ticket to the special sale for \$5 and receive a \$10-off coupon to use during the charity sale dates. Contact Darlene Jones at (931) 528-1127 for more information.

UCHRA TEAM PROGRAM SUCCESS STORY: OLIVIA AND NICHOLAS RICHARDS



The following information was submitted by a UCHRA program participant and has been edited for clarity.

We are Olivia and Nicholas Richards. We have been working with the TEAM (Transforming, Educating, Advocating for Multi-generations) program and our case manager, Balinda Westmoreland. Since joining the TEAM program, Nicholas and I have obtained employment, donations, resources, and referrals. We enrolled all three of our children in school and they also attended a meeting with our case manager and agreed to a paint project as a family engagement night.

In our service plan we agreed to send pictures of the boy's paintings to Balinda. We are so excited and thankful for these opportunities. Nicholas and I are working on securing better employment and Balinda helped with job readiness by going over interviewing tips and introducing us to a transportation assistant where we completed an interview. Next week we will both take an F-endorsement test and then be able to turn in our applications. We want to thank TEAM, Balinda, and everyone who donated clothes, shoes, books, and toys.

For more information about UCHRA's TEAM Program, please contact your local UCHRA office or call (931) 528-1127.



CONTINUED: WEATHERIZATION PROGRAM PROVIDES ENERGY SAVINGS, HEALTH BENEFITS

“Our health and safety measures benefit the customers in other ways such as (improving) air quality in the home, fire/carbon monoxide warnings, and preventing accidents in the home,” said Tommy Simcox, Weatherization Assistance Program manager.

According to data from Oak Ridge National Laboratory (ORNL), a families’ out-of-pocket medical expenses decreased by an average of \$514 after weatherization. Children also missed fewer school days after their homes received energy efficiency services from Weatherization Assistance Programs.

This year created unique challenges to Simcox’s work; specifically, the COVID-19 pandemic. In March, home audits and weatherization work were suspended for approximately three months. That move, Simcox says, placed home improvements — including basic insulation, weatherization, and safety measures — on hold temporarily.

“We began working on customers’ homes again in mid-July,” he said. “We now use several safety measures when in the homes; including (wearing) masks, gloves, and (social) distancing as much as possible.”

Customer-completed paperwork remains in the home to reduce the likelihood of removing anything contaminated from the home and is instead uploaded using photos of the documents. Hands and equipment are also sanitized regularly. Simcox brings a wealth of experience to the program. He first became involved in the program in 2009. Before that, he held contractor and electrical licensure through the State of Tennessee.

“With a background in the building industry, I was excited to be able to help others who needed the benefits of the program,” he said. “I have been involved in the construction industry in one form or another for most of my adult life.”

As the weatherization assistance program manager, Simcox enjoys having a mix of time in the office and on the road. He also enjoys being able to solve challenges along the way.

“Every home is different and is (in) a different state of repair,” he explained. “This creates unique challenges to address the needs of the home. Whether new or old, every customer’s residence is their home regardless of its condition. I enjoy the ability to make a difference in people’s lives.”

Any United States citizen can apply for weatherization assistance however, there are income guidelines that must be met in order to be approved for the program, explained LaNelle Godsey, Community Services Director at UCHRA.

“Currently, customers must fall below 200 percent of the federal poverty guidelines,” she said.

In FY20, UCHRA’s weatherization program weatherized 12 homes; serving 24 people. The average amount spent on weatherization was \$8,395 per household.

For more information about the Weatherization Assistance Program offered by UCHRA, visit www.uchra.com or contact your local UCHRA county office. To apply for the program, clients may request an application by mail or make an appointment to sign up at their local UCHRA office.

Copies of certain documents must be provided in order to complete the application. The Weatherization Assistance Program is a federally funded program administered by the Tennessee Housing Administration (THDA). This program provides basic insulation and weatherization measures for low-income households.