

Neighbor Saves Frequently Asked Questions:

1. Is Neighbor Saves free?

No. Participants are responsible for paying for materials (which WNCGBC will get at a bulk discount) and \$25/hr for the supervisor's time (average \$250 per home).

2. Why is this better than just hiring a contractor?

Neighbor Saves was not created to compete with the great building performance contractors in Western NC. It was created for people want to spend less on their weatherization projects and have the ability to do some of the work or want to learn to do weatherization themselves. The benefit of participating in Neighbor Saves is that the materials for weatherization are often only 10-50% of the total cost to weatherize. By doing the labor portion of the work through sweat equity participants will spend 60-75% less to get the work done compared to hiring a contractor.

3. Do I have to attend the training?

Yes. In order to guarantee that participants understand the program requirements and are prepared to do weatherization work this training is required. It is also a great learning opportunity to better understand energy and how your home works.

4. How many hours do I have to work?

For teams of 3 household, participant will work three (including your own home) 6-hour days for a total of 18 hours. For teams of 4-7 households, participants will work four (including your own home) 6-hour days for a total of 24 hours. However, the benefit of larger teams is that there is more "labor" available to help get more done on your home.

5. If I am unable to do the physical work on my home can someone else represent me on the team?

Yes. We only require that there is one representative from each household on workdays. In other words, you can do all the work days for your grandmother, aunt, friend etc and their home will get weatherized instead of yours (or vice-versa).

6. What types of retrofits are eligible?

The following is a list of potential retrofits to be undertaken through Neighbor Saves: Air sealing in the attic and under the floor, attic insulation, duct sealing and insulating, caulking and weatherstripping around doors and windows, water heater wrap, hot water pipe wrap, programmable thermostat installation, showerhead and faucet aerator change-outs, light bulb change-outs, fireplace pillow installations, Carbon monoxide detector installations.

7. How much money will I save?

On average, participants will save 20-30% on their heating/cooling bills from the upgrades. There are water savings as well for those retrofits. For many upgrades, participants will make back their investment in 1-12 months. However, the savings are specific to every home and retrofit implemented.

8. Are there other benefits besides financial savings?

By air sealing the attic and under the floor you are decreasing the amount of air that enters your home from a place with poor air quality, increasing the health and comfort of your home. Sealing ductwork decreases air from attics and crawlspaces from entering the home. Increased comfort is also achieved through reduced drafts around windows and doors.

9. What will I learn being part of Neighbor Saves?

During your participation in Neighbor Saves, you will learn how your house works as a system, how to use basic tools and why the bills are so high in your house. For those who have never ventured into your attic or other fun places in your home, you will learn where the important systems are located and understand more about how they work.

10. Do I qualify for any rebates or tax credits?

Participants have the potential to qualify for federal tax credits and Progress Energy rebates depending on the upgrades implemented at your home.

11. What if I don't already have a team assembled?

That's alright. We will help you become part of an existing team or create a new team.

12. Is there a fee to be a part of the program?

There is a small "joining fee" due at the training which is \$10 for WNCGBC members and \$25 for non-members. Joining entitles you to purchase discounted materials, receive a t-shirt, attend the training session and other future benefits.

13. Do I have to buy the materials myself?

Once you and the supervisor determine which energy upgrades will be done on your home, the supervisor will collect all necessary materials for you and bring them on the day of the work party.

14. What happens if I have to miss a work party day?

We leave it up to teams to decide what the consequence is for missing a work day. These could be financial penalty, having to make up hours to those people, hiring someone else to do the work for them or just letting down your team.

15. What are my options for paying for the materials and supervisor time?

Participants can either pay cash at the time of project completion or take advantage of our 12 month financing option at 9% interest through Self-Help Credit Union. This option is subject to approval through Self-Help.

