

Energy Efficiency and Natural Gas Utilities

Focus on energy-intensive low income neighborhoods

NEW JERSEY COMFORT PARTNERS PROGRAM (NJCP) AND SOUTH JERSEY GAS

The NJCP program, administered by the NJ Board of Public Utilities Office of Clean Energy, was established 15 years ago to assist low-income families with significant energy usage and incomes at or above 225% of the federal poverty guidelines. The program is delivered by local natural gas utilities and electric utilities through the New Jersey Clean Energy Program (NJCEP). The program offers free energy education and whole house energy-saving improvements to low-income families—who typically spend a high percentage of their income on energy—helping them reduce their energy use and costs. The program also includes safety testing of all major appliances and checks for gas leaks. The education component instills conservation habits, which help household members maintain energy and cost savings long after the efficiency retrofits are completed. It also educates them on maintenance steps that may help reduce the risk of fire, carbon monoxide poisoning, mold and other hazards. The whole house improvements result in increased comfort, and more importantly, a safer home environment, which is essential for all who live in the home, and especially children, the elderly and the infirm. More than 90,000 families have benefitted from this program.

More recently, the New Jersey Board of Public Utilities approved a pilot program which includes mold remediation as a health and safety measure available to low income families. In collaboration with Atlantic City Electric and the NJCEP, South Jersey Gas was able to help one such family in Atlantic City, after it was hit hard by Super Storm Sandy—restoring its home and reviving its hope. The Crumble household of six received all new insulation for the floor, wall and attic, duct wrap, air sealing, a boiler, a hot water heater, energy saving light bulbs, and smoke and carbon monoxide (CO) detectors. (The home had CO leakage from old heating and water hearing equipment.) Additionally, the home underwent the new mold remediation process. Furthermore, the Atlantic City Area-based contractor, GreenLife Energy Solutions, made extensive improvements to the home, including repairs to the roof, siding, gutters, downspouts and entrance door. The contractors also restored the foundation, rendering it airtight and watertight. The Crumble family now has a much warmer, safer, energy efficient home, because of this collaborative effort among the utilities, state regulator, contractor, and customer. The New Jersey Comfort Partners program serves as an example of how low income programs not only save energy and costs, but also provides services that can also save lives.

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South Jersey Gas serves Atlantic City, New Jersey — one of 50 communities across the United States competing in the Georgetown University Energy Prize to make the most significant impact on energy savings.