

## Master Family & Consumer Sciences Volunteer Program Summary

Institution: Montana State University Extension

Program: Montana Seniors Energy and Safety Volunteer Program

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Seniors are facing an affordability crisis related to housing and home energy; seniors desire to stay independent in their own homes. Since most seniors live in older, energy-inefficient homes and energy costs continue to escalate, the dream of independent living at home is diminishing. Documented cases indicate that many seniors are spending over 50 percent of their income on home energy bills.

The Montana Seniors Energy Volunteer Program is a volunteer community-based program to help seniors understand the benefits of weatherizing their homes, to inform them of local energy and human service assistance programs and to apply cost-effective weatherization materials to their homes.

The Seniors Energy Volunteer Program is coordinated on the community-level by a community program leader who is responsible for planning, implementing, and evaluating the project using guidelines provided in a "Leader's Handbook". To implement the Seniors Energy Volunteer Program, the leader:

- Works with local agencies and groups (utilities, senior services, etc.) to recruit, screen and select volunteers to make senior home visits;
- Organizes a local training program for volunteers;
- Works with local senior services to obtain seniors for home visits;
- Supervises and follows up progress of volunteers' home visits;
- Publicizes the project through newspapers, radio, television and other media; and,
- Administers evaluation forms to determine success of the local program.