



Research & Development Highlights

Technical Series
92-207

Energy Conservation Impact of the Residential Rehabilitation Assistance Program

Introduction

The Residential Rehabilitation Assistance Program (RRAP) helps low-income homeowners pay for house repairs to bring substandard housing up to municipal standards. From 1974 to 1989 the program, a Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) initiative, spent nearly \$1.9 million assisting in the upgrade of 300,000 homes and 120,000 rental units. Although the bulk of the funds are for renovations related to health and safety, energy conservation upgrades are also eligible.

Research Program

To evaluate the impact of RRAP on energy conservation issues, the consultant examined RRAP funding in relation to energy conservation, based on telephone interviews with homeowners in Ontario who had received RRAP assistance. CMHC also reviewed the Ontario RRAP database and corresponding files.

Findings

Energy conservation is often cited as a reason for participating in the RRAP. The program directly supports energy conservation activities such as caulking, weatherstripping, insulation, window and door replacements, and heating system replacements. The program also supports energy conservation indirectly by increasing awareness and encouraging homeowners to change their behaviour, for example, by lowering thermostat levels in winter, servicing heating systems more often, and modifying heating and cooling settings.

RRAP funding led to increased energy efficiency in most of the houses surveyed. The respondents were asked to state why they were having work done. The results are indicated below.

Reason for Work Done

• Repair, replacement, improvement or upgrade	91
• Energy conservation	44
• Health and safety	13
• Maintenance	4

A majority of respondents saw positive benefits in terms of energy conservation awareness and increased energy efficiency in the home.

Energy Benefits Since Participating in RRAP

• Respondents perceive homes to be more energy efficient	78
• Respondents saved money on subsequent energy bills	71
• Program influenced respondents' attitudes and behaviour	73
• Respondents have modified or adopted energy conservation behaviour (lowered thermostat settings, serviced heating system more regularly)	62

Conclusion

While RRAP does not have a mandate to promote energy conservation, this survey shows that the RRAP has an impact in this area. These findings will be used in the ongoing evolution of RRAP and will help us target new or existing CMHC programs.

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Research Report: Evaluation of the Energy Conservation Impact of the Residential Rehabilitation Assistance Program

Research Consultant: Canadian Market Research

Housing Research at CMHC

Under Part XXV of the National Housing Act, the Government of Canada provides funds to CMHC to conduct research into the social, economic and technical aspects of housing and related fields, and to undertake the publishing and distribution of the results of this research.

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