



COLD CLIMATE HOUSING RESEARCH CENTER  
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## ENERGY FOCUS

### AHFC's ENERGY REBATE PROGRAM

By Ilya Benesch, Building Educator at CCHRC

In Fairbanks, CCHRC has been funded by AHFC to create the PORTAL (Portal On Retrofits Training And Loans) to help make the statewide weatherization and rebate programs more accessible to the public. The PORTAL office maintains and updates a centralized client sign up list for certified energy raters, provides program applications, and answers questions about energy ratings and weatherization. The Portal is located at 326 Driveway Street Suite 100 and can be reached by phone at 455-4328. Their hours are 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday – Thursday, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Friday. This is the first of two articles about AHFC programs, and outlines the steps in the rebate program.

Visit the PORTAL to obtain the rebate program application package (also available online, [www.cchrc.org/portal](http://www.cchrc.org/portal)). Once an appointment has been made with an energy rater, s/he will visit your home and perform the initial “as-is” assessment. This is a detailed walk-thru inspection of your home and a blower door depressurization test which generates solid data on the home’s air tightness. The rater will measure and record all aspects of the home relevant to the retrofit program, including house size and volume, window and door information, mechanical systems analysis, and insulation types and values in all areas. These results are later entered into AHFC’s AkWarm computer program which uses a point system to rate the home on a scale of 1 to 5 stars plus and calculates where the biggest improvements can be made. Generally the rater will need the owner who is responsible for doing the upgrades to be present. This initial site visit is a good time to share any information you have about the house that will help the rater in his analysis. It is also your opportunity to learn about your home and the rating process.

Raters will require payment at the time the service is given. They are private contractors so the fee is variable depending on the size of the house or if the rating requires extra time. The rater will tell you the amount of the fee before starting. He will contact you when the paperwork and calculations have been completed. Once you have the initial rating, you should apply for reimbursement right away. Use the PORTAL staff as a resource to answer any questions. AHFC will reimburse \$325.00 of the rater’s fee upon receiving the completed rating papers. At that time AHFC will also set aside your home’s maximum rebate amount for 18 months.

The rating is a valuable document that lets you prioritize your work according to the AkWarm point scale. Choose what and how many improvements you wish to make, but they MUST be listed on the rating. You can perform the work yourself, or hire a contractor. The PORTAL cannot recommend a specific contractor, but staff there can offer general information and advice about completing the work.

If you complete your desired upgrades within the allotted 18-month window, and are applying for the rebate, you will be required to get a Post Energy Rating. A certified energy rater will perform an inspection similar to the initial “as is” assessment to verify the new energy efficiency rating of your home. When you have

your new rating package, attach it to the receipts for the work you have completed and send it to AHFC. It can take up to 60 days receive the rebate.

Keep in mind there is a back log in the rebate program, but more raters are being trained to meet the demand. The good news is right now there are still plenty of opportunities to apply and start the process.

**Ilya Benesch is the Building Educator at the Cold Climate Housing Research Center (CCHRC). For questions or comments please contact CCHRC at (907) 457-3454**