

# FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

[www.pscleanair.org/woodstove](http://www.pscleanair.org/woodstove)



## What is the Tacoma-Pierce County Wood Smoke Reduction Program?

- The Puget Sound Clean Air Agency, City of Tacoma and Pierce County are offering the Tacoma-Pierce County Wood Smoke Reduction Program which provides financial incentives to replace old wood stoves and wood-burning fireplace inserts with new heating devices that produce significantly lower emissions.
- The program is offered this year in certain Tacoma and unincorporated Pierce County communities to eligible households in seven specific ZIP codes.
- Incentives are offered to households of any income level (termed "General") and households qualifying for additional assistance (termed "Income-Qualified").
- Participants may be renters or homeowners.
- In order to reduce wintertime air pollution, the program promotes energy efficiency coupled with the replacement of old uncertified and pre-1995 wood stoves and wood-burning fireplace inserts (essentially a wood stove that sits inside the fireplace box and is vented through the chimney) with cleaner-heating devices; also eligible are wood-burning furnaces and coal-burning devices. Options include both zone heating appliances: freestanding natural gas stoves and fireplace inserts, and ductless electric heat pumps; and whole-house heating systems: natural gas furnaces and electric heat pumps. Additionally, homes built before 1988 must be evaluated for insulation and, if needed, have insulation in attic, floor, walls and/or ducts be brought up to current standards.
- Funding for this program comes from \$490,000 in Washington Department of Ecology grant money designated from the Washington State Legislature, and approximately \$1.2 million in energy-efficiency block grants awarded to the City of Tacoma and Pierce County from the U.S. Department of Energy, as well as program administration provided by the Clean Air Agency and the Tacoma-Pierce County Health Department.

## When does it occur?

- Between **October 7, 2010 and March 31, 2011**, or until funds run out—whichever is earlier.
- For applicants from previous year programs who are still interested in replacing their uncertified or pre-1995 device, but were unable to make the commitment before the funds or time ran out, the Clean Air Agency encourages re-application for this year's program. They can re-apply by updating their registration by using the Agency's online registration form [www.pscleanair.org/woodstove](http://www.pscleanair.org/woodstove) or by phoning 253-798-7369.
- New applicants should use the online form mentioned above or, if unable to access the form, they should call the customer service liaison at the Tacoma-Pierce County Health Department at 253-798-7369.
- All sales must be finalized (new device not necessarily installed) by **April 30, 2011**. This means that contracts must be in place between the consumers and the retailers and proof of that contract submitted to the Clean Air Agency, no later than that date. Installations must be made and all completed paperwork received by the Clean Air Agency **June 30, 2011**.

## Where is the program being made available?

The program is being offered in a portion of Tacoma and unincorporated Pierce County, which is part of the Wapato Hills/Puyallup River Valley PM<sub>2.5</sub> non-attainment area.



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98373 – Outside the City of Puyallup 98404 98408	98409 98444 98445 98446
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These ZIP code areas are targeted due to their proximity and heightened impact to and from the elevated pollution levels measured at the Tacoma - South L Street air-quality monitor. This monitor has measured 24-hour pollution levels in violation of federal air-quality standards for fine particulate matter (PM<sub>2.5</sub>).

## Why offer this program?

- The goal of the program is to bring Tacoma and surrounding Pierce County communities back to meeting federal air quality health standards.
- Old wood stoves produce excessive wood smoke, and wood smoke can be up to 80% of the air-quality problem in neighborhoods on winter nights.
- This program is targeting the replacement of existing, installed, uncertified and pre-1995 wood stoves and wood-burning fireplace inserts. Wood furnaces and coal-burning devices are also eligible for replacement through this program. Open-hearth fireplaces are not included in the program because funds were not available for devices that are not designed for heating.

## What does it mean for an area to be in nonattainment?

- Non-attainment areas are regions that have failed to meet federal air-quality standards. The US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) designates as a non-attainment area the region around an air pollution monitor (or monitors) that has measured levels in violation of federal limits. Although state and local air agencies make recommendations, the size and boundaries of the area are ultimately determined by the US EPA. The state and local air agencies must then develop and implement plans to reduce pollution levels in that area that are sufficient to attain the federal standards.
- The non-attainment area for Tacoma and surrounding Pierce County communities designated by EPA is called the Wapato Hills/Puyallup River Valley area and is described on the Ecology website ([http://www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/air/Nonattainment/WapatoPuyallup\\_Nonattainment.htm](http://www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/air/Nonattainment/WapatoPuyallup_Nonattainment.htm)).

## Who is involved with the program?

- A long list of government, health, utility and retail partners have already joined in this program. The Puget Sound Clean Air Agency, City of Tacoma, Pierce County, Tacoma-Pierce County Health Department, Tacoma Power, Puget Sound Energy, Elmhurst Mutual Power & Light, Parkland Light & Water Co., Washington Department of Ecology, U.S. Department of Energy, and many hearth retailers and HVAC, insulation and window contractors.

## How can a consumer apply?

- Homeowners and renters in the program area of qualifying ZIP codes can sign up by filling out an online registration at [www.pscleanair.org/woodstove](http://www.pscleanair.org/woodstove). Those without Internet access can call the customer service liaison at the Tacoma-Pierce County Health Department at 253-798-7369 for assistance in registering and taking advantage of the program.



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## What consumers are eligible?

- The program is open to all households, both owned and rented, located in the designated areas with an existing, installed and uncertified or pre-1995 wood stove, wood-burning insert, wood-burning furnace or coal-burning device. A wood stove is uncertified if it does not have an EPA or Oregon DEQ label on the back, or on the top for fireplace inserts. To determine the age of a certified device, refer to the certification plate for the manufactured date.  
([http://www.pscleanair.org/images/epa\\_cert\\_wood\\_stove\\_sticker.gif](http://www.pscleanair.org/images/epa_cert_wood_stove_sticker.gif) )
- The replacement options include:
  - (1) natural gas stoves or fireplace inserts
  - (2) ENERGY STAR-qualified natural gas furnaces
  - (3) high-efficiency ductless or whole-house electric heat pumps

## How does it work?

- The customer must first register using the Clean Air Agency's online registration form (the preferred option) or by calling the customer service liaison at the Tacoma-Pierce County Health Department at 253-798-7369 for assistance in registering.
- As long as funds remain, all qualified and approved applicants will receive a General Program coupon from the Clean Air Agency, a list of participating retailers and instructions for selecting their new heating device.
- In order to receive the higher incentives available to income-qualified households, participants must submit for review an income-qualification form and a copy of last year's IRS form or equivalent to the customer service liaison at the Tacoma-Pierce County Health Department.
- If approved as an income-qualified household, the applicant will receive a replacement coupon with the higher incentive levels, using the same number as the original coupon. The original coupon will become invalid and is non-transferrable. If an applicant is determined to not be an income-qualified household, they may still use their original coupon. For income qualification, the combined gross household annual income thresholds are based on 50% of the fiscal year 2010 Pierce County area median income levels designated as the "very low income limit" category in <http://www.huduser.org/portal/datasets/il/il10/wa.pdf> . To be eligible for the income-qualified classification, the combined annual household income must be less than or equal to the following:

Combined 2010 Annual Household Income Thresholds

Household Size	Annual Income
1	\$24,400
2	\$27,850
3	\$31,350
4	\$34,800
5	\$37,600
6	\$40,400
7	\$43,200
8	\$45,950

- Customers receiving the coupons must use them by April 30, 2011, although we encourage consumers to act quickly because if there is high demand for replacements, program funds could run out much sooner and any outstanding coupons will become invalid.



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- The consumer receives the discount at the point-of-sale after the retailer or contractor has verified that the installation address is in the eligible ZIP code and that the stove or insert to be replaced is an eligible device.
- Retailers complete and submit to the Clean Air Agency via online, fax or e-mail the Proof of Work Order to confirm the purchase contract with the replacement customer and the availability of funds. The Clean Air Agency will reply confirming the availability and confirmation of funds, or the depletion and declination of funds. When funds are confirmed, the retailer then arranges for professional installation of the new system; removes, disables and arranges for scrapping the old stove; and submits the completed Coupon and Certificate of Destruction, original Proof of Work Order or print-out of submitted online Proof of Work Order, itemized invoice, recycling report and three photos (old installed stove, old dismantled stove and new installed stove) to the Clean Air Agency for reimbursement.
- Customers submit all utility rebate forms to their respective utilities, then submit copies of all invoices/receipts and utility forms to Kathy Ross, the customer service coordinators, at the Tacoma-Pierce County Health Department. A customer's Wood Smoke Reduction Program rebate will total the remaining balance (not to exceed \$4,000 per home, or \$5,000 for income-qualified home) of the total of all invoices/receipts less the utility and Clean Air Agency rebates. Additional funding may be available for Income Qualified households.
- Further information is available on the Web at: [www.pscleanair.org/woodstove](http://www.pscleanair.org/woodstove) .

## What are the benefits of replacing an old wood stove or insert?

- Natural gas stoves and inserts, high-efficiency natural gas furnaces and electric heat pumps are more efficient and burn much cleaner than old wood-burning devices.
- Other significant benefits may include saving money on fuel, protecting family's health, making a home safer, reducing dust and soot in the home, and improving local air quality.

## What are the liabilities of an old wood stove or fireplace insert?

- Old wood stoves are inefficient and produce a lot of smoke, both indoors and outdoors.
- They also waste fuel, create a safety hazard and are a health hazard because of the smoke they produce.

## What are the health implications of an old wood stove or insert?

- The smoke given off by wood stoves or wood-burning fireplace inserts can cause or aggravate health problems ranging from burning eyes and runny noses to bronchitis, asthma attacks and even heart attacks and strokes. Children, older adults and people with heart disease, and asthma or other lung diseases are the most vulnerable to the health impacts caused by fine particle pollution in wood smoke.

## Why aren't you offering new wood stoves to replace old wood stoves?

- While certified wood stoves and pellet stoves were offered in earlier wood stove replacement programs, the Clean Air Agency and its partners are now focusing on heating devices that will maximize pollution reduction. Even though new certified wood stoves and inserts can operate up to 60 percent cleaner than older uncertified wood stoves and inserts, a natural gas or electric device will result in a 99 percent to 100 percent fine particle emission reduction.



- For those homeowners wanting to keep wood as a fuel, a federal energy tax credit of up to \$1,500 is available through December 31, 2010 for qualifying biomass (wood or pellet) devices.  
[http://www.energystar.gov/index.cfm?c=tax\\_credits.tx\\_index](http://www.energystar.gov/index.cfm?c=tax_credits.tx_index)

## What are the incentive amounts offered to qualifying residents?

### General Program Incentive Rebates

- **\$1,500** from the Clean Air Agency for the removal of an uncertified or pre-1995 wood stove or fireplace insert to be put toward the purchase of a natural gas stove or fireplace insert; high-efficiency natural gas furnace; or electric heat pump
- **Up to \$4,000** from Pierce County or the City of Tacoma toward a new heating system AND upgrading insulation to current standards for homes built before 1988. Remain funds can also be put toward optional window and/or water heater replacement.

### Income-Qualified Program Incentive Rebates

- **\$3,000** from the Clean Air Agency for the removal of an uncertified or pre-1995 wood stove or fireplace insert to be put toward the purchase of a natural gas stove or fireplace insert; high-efficiency natural gas furnace; or electric heat pump
- **Up to \$5,000** from Pierce County or the City of Tacoma toward a new heating system AND upgrading insulation to current standards for homes built before 1988. Remain funds can also be put toward optional window and/or water heater replacement.

### Utility Rebates

- Additional rebates are available from Tacoma Power and Puget Sound Energy for qualifying heating devices and insulation upgrades.

## What are additional program details?

- Objective: Replace approximately 300 old wood stoves with cleaner burning technology (approximately 100 in City of Tacoma and 200 in unincorporated Pierce County).
- Incentives Budget: \$490,000 in incentive money for replacements from Washington Department of Ecology and approximately \$1.2 million in energy-efficiency block grants from U.S. Department of Energy.