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## **NEWS RELEASE**

### **KNOXVILLE EXTREME ENERGY MAKEOVER TO TRANSFORM 1,200 HOMES** *KEEM will provide energy upgrades for local families through \$15 million in TVA funding*

Today, local partners announced the launch of Knoxville Extreme Energy Makeover (KEEM), a new program to improve the energy efficiency of more than 1,200 homes in Knoxville over the next two years.

KEEM is funded by TVA, which selected Knoxville to receive \$15 million in funding through the TVA Smart Communities: Extreme Energy Makeovers project. A team led by the Knoxville-Knox County Community Action Committee (CAC) in partnership with the City of Knoxville, Knoxville Utilities Board (KUB), and the Alliance to Save Energy applied for this funding and was one of just two initial teams selected by TVA.

In April, TVA announced a grant of \$7.1 million to the Knoxville program, but announced today that the amount will be increased to \$15 million.

"This is a tremendous opportunity for the Knoxville community, and we are grateful to TVA for providing an unprecedented amount of funding for local energy efficiency efforts," said Knoxville Mayor Madeline Rogero. "KEEM will dramatically improve the lives of hundreds of Knoxville families, who will be better able to stay warm in the winter and cool in the summer without breaking their household budgets."

Starting today, the CAC will offer energy efficiency retrofit services to more than 1,200 local homes between now and Fall 2017. KEEM builds on the CAC's existing weatherization programs that provide energy efficiency upgrades to income-eligible families.

"Many families in Knoxville struggle with utility costs because their homes are not well insulated or sealed from outside air," said CAC Executive Director Barbara Kelly. "KEEM will finance energy upgrades that will help hundreds of our community's most vulnerable citizens control their utility bills."

KEEM will provide whole-home energy efficiency upgrades to electric-heated homes built before 1995 and occupied by eligible applicants. The type of improvements depend on the specific needs of each home, but the improvements are designed to reduce each home's annual electricity use by at least 25 percent. Common upgrades include installation of weather stripping, upgrades of heating units, air sealing, and insulation of walls, ducts, pipes and attics.

"We are excited to be a part of this program, which brings such significant resources to our community to support energy efficiency," said Mintha Roach, KUB President and CEO. "The partnerships we have locally, combined with financial support from TVA, will really make a difference for these customers."

In addition to helping families manage their utility bills, the program will also create opportunities for local businesses. The CAC will hire residential and energy efficiency contractors to perform the upgrades at each home and is actively recruiting local firms who are interested in bidding on these projects.

KEEM also seeks to educate the Knoxville community about ways to control utility bills through energy-efficient habits. The Alliance to Save Energy, a national nonprofit that promotes energy efficiency through public policy, education and outreach will be hosting multiple educational workshops and working with schools and community groups to help area residents learn low-cost ways to save energy and manage utility costs.

The Project Team applied for this funding to support the Smarter Cities Partnership, a coalition of more than 20 community organizations seeking to improve the quality, comfort and affordability of Knoxville homes through energy efficiency. KEEM is one of several local programs that support the Smarter Cities Partnership's efforts to promote and increase resources for Knoxville families that haven't been reached by existing efficiency programs.

In October of last year, the Partnership was awarded a \$60,000 Partners for Places grant from the Funders' Network for Smart Growth and Livable Communities, United Way of Greater Knoxville, and East Tennessee Foundation. That grant supported the launch of "Savings in the House," a local campaign to educate residents about energy efficiency.

Earlier this spring, KUB launched Round It Up, a pilot program that raises funds to help weatherize the residences of low-income homeowners and renters throughout KUB's service area. Whereas KEEM is only a two year program, Round It Up offers a sustainable, local funding source for weatherization services.

"We are excited to partner with the KEEM team on this innovative project designed to aid lower-income homeowners," said Cindy Herron, vice president of TVA EnergyRight and Renewable Solutions. "This award is the result of Knoxville and its community partners coming together in an extraordinary demonstration of teamwork to help those with the greatest need save money while making their homes more energy efficient."

The project partners invite all Knoxville-area residents to "Join the KEEM Team." Here are a few ways to get involved:

- Want to apply for an upgrade? Come by CAC offices (2247 Western Ave., Knoxville) on August 31 – September 4 to submit an application. Find eligibility and application requirements at [www.KEEMteam.com](http://www.KEEMteam.com).
- Contractors interested in performing upgrades may attend a Contractor Information Session on August 27<sup>th</sup> at 5pm at the CAC (2247 Western Ave, Knoxville) or visit [www.KEEMteam.com](http://www.KEEMteam.com) to learn more.
- All residents are invited to a free Savings in the House workshop to learn about low-cost ways to save energy. The first one-hour workshop will be August 29<sup>th</sup> at 11am at Christenberry Elementary School (927 Oglewood Ave, Knoxville). Additional workshop times and locations may be found at [www.KEEMteam.com](http://www.KEEMteam.com).
- Want to learn more? Visit [www.KEEMteam.com](http://www.KEEMteam.com) for more info and events.

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