



The Indiana County Office of Planning and Development Provides Whole-Home Repairs for Lillian Woods

April 2024

Whole-Home Repairs is an innovative program that helps income-qualifying homeowners access critical health and safety repairs, efficiency measures, and accessibility improvements. The benefits of this program are manifold. Repairs stabilize homes and often improve energy bills, helping homeowners stay in their homes and their communities. Repairs let homeowners access state and federal efficiency programs like WAP, which normally must defer homes in critical disrepair.

In Indiana County, Pennsylvania, Whole-Home Repairs is administered through the Indiana County Office of Planning and Development. Energy Efficiency Stories sat down with Lillian Woods, a homeowner in Indiana County, to talk about her experience receiving help through the Whole-Home Repairs program. At 78, Lillian is a Whole-Home Repairs success story. A new roof, window replacements, and accessibility improvements are helping her stay in the home she's resided in for 51 years.



"Her timing was perfect," said Planning and Development Assistant Director LuAnn Zak. "If Whole-Home Repairs funds weren't available when she walked in our front door for help, she still would be without those windows."

Read on for the whole story:

So Lillian, could you tell me a little bit about your house?

Oh, it's a duplex. That means it's a double house, but I only use one side, and I blocked off the other side. I'm just using that for storage.

And how long have you lived there?

51 years.

Wow. So it really is home.

Oh, yeah.

And how did you hear about the Whole-Home Repairs program?

Oh, I went over to Indiana Planning and Development, asking for help with my windows. My windows were wood, you know, around. And they were rotted out.

And they pointed you towards Whole-Home Repairs?

Yeah.

And what was the application process like?

Not difficult.

What was it like working with the Indiana County Office of Planning and Development?

Well, at first I thought I wasn't gonna get any help, and I was kind of disappointed. But then they called me and I was so happy.

What kind of work did they offer to do on your home?



Lillian Woods's Indiana County duplex home, which is over 100 years old. Prior to the project she was still paying for two separate electrical meter service connections. With WHR funds, the Indiana County Office of Planning and Development were able to eliminate one electrical meter, saving money and electricity.

Well, the reason I went there is for my windows. 'Cause I was even afraid to wash them. I was afraid they'd fall out. They were so rotted. Now they've done the roof, they've done the windows, and they're doing my bathroom.

Oh, that's great. What are they doing in your bathroom?

Putting in a walk-in shower.

Has your house been different since they've gotten some of the work done?

Yeah, it's been warmer.

Have you noticed any differences in your energy bills since you got the work done on your house?

Yeah. I know my furnace hasn't been coming on so much. But it really hasn't been a bad winter, either.

That's true.

But I did notice, the one time it did get really cold and there was ice and everything, there was no ice on the windows. Usually, my kitchen window is all ice in that weather. But there was nothing.



BEFORE:



AFTER:



BEFORE:



AFTER:

"Before" and "After" photos from the Indiana County Office of Planning and Development show Lillian's window replacements.

What was getting a new roof like?

Oh, I was happy about that. Some people told me to get a tin roof, but I don't like them. I got shingles, instead.

So it's been a positive experience.

Yeah. The people that are working here are really nice. They like to joke around, so that's good.

I'm 78 going on 79. And yeah, this helps me out a lot. My husband passed away 12 years ago and I've been on my own trying to keep this house up.

Do you intend to stay in the house a while longer?

As long as I live. Yeah. As long as I live. I'm not gonna move. I have seven rescue cats to take care of.

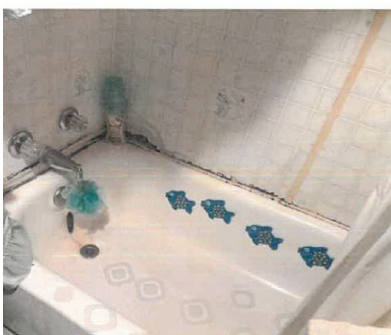
Do you have any family in the area?

Yeah, I got my son, that's my youngest.

Do you have anything else you want to share for the interview?

I just can't thank people enough for all the help I'm getting.

WHR-08 BEFORE AND AFTER PHOTOS – completed 4/12/2024



BEFORE:



AFTER:

"Before" and "After" photos from the Indiana County Office of Planning and Development show accessibility improvements in Lillian's bathroom.



The Energy Efficiency Alliance – a 501(c)(3) nonprofit – works to increase energy efficiency awareness and encourage energy efficiency action. Our nonprofit work centers on two primary objectives:

- Educate Public Officials, Regulators and Other Stakeholders About Energy Efficiency Industry Matters. We strive to provide expertise in issues related to energy efficiency and help others to understand them through communications, outreach and events.
- Engage Stakeholders and the Business Community. We connect businesses to involve them in energy efficiency industry conversations about pressing issues and to stake out leadership approaches and solutions.

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