

Five agencies in Vermont will receive about \$4.7 million to provide solar thermal and solar hot water technologies for Vermont families, Sens. Patrick Leahy (D-Vt.) and Bernie Sanders (I-Vt.) and Rep. Peter Welch (D-Vt.) announced today.

The funds also may be used to promote bulk buying strategies and cooperative partnerships in buying solar technologies in order to lower the costs of materials. Community-based marketing approaches to help families save energy and money also may be funded under the grants.

The Vermont grant recipients were among 120 organizations across the country selected to receive \$120 million under the U.S. Department of Energy's Weatherization Assistance Program.

The Bennington-Rutland Opportunity Council, Inc., located in Rutland, will receive \$900,000.

The Central Vermont Community Action Council, Inc., based in Barre, will receive \$1.1 million, and will undertake program management and evaluation in addition to the project.

The Champlain Valley Office of Economic Opportunity, Inc., located in Burlington and Hinesburg, will receive more than \$900,000.

The Northeast Employment & Training Organization, Inc., based in Derby and St. Johnsbury, will receive \$900,000.

The South Eastern Vermont Community Action, Inc, located in Westminster, will receive over \$900,000.

Vermont leads the nation in taking dramatic steps toward energy efficiency. By making low-income homes more energy efficient, families save an average of \$437 on their energy bills,

according the U.S. Department of Energy.