
National Fuel Funds Network

1010 Vermont Ave., NW, #718

Washington, DC 20005

202 824-0638 (fax), 202 824-0660 (phone)

<<mailto:info@nationalfuelfunds.org>> <<http://www.nationalfuelfunds.org>>

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Although Congress passed a one month stop gap spending bill at the end of September to fund the federal government while work on the appropriations bills for FY 2010 is completed, the Department of Health and Human Services has yet to make it clear how much of the \$5.1 billion in LIHEAP funding will be made available this month.

With many LIHEAP programs scheduled to open at the beginning of November, this lack of guidance from the HHS is a source of concern. High unemployment rates across the country coupled with high home energy costs are expected to lead to an increase in the number of households seeking help with their utility bills.

In Milwaukee County, WI, tens of thousands of people are applying for energy assistance only two weeks after the official start of the program. The Social Development Commission, Milwaukee County's community action agency, has reported that the five sites taking applications for assistance have been "swamped."

In Princeton, WV, the Salvation Army reported a 100 percent increase in the numbers of first time applicants for assistance.

In Arizona, where the LIHEAP program is run year round, Cynthia Zwick of Arizona Community Action Agency reported a 47 percent increase in calls for assistance. She said that Arizonans have just completed an incredibly hot summer where the need for assistance far exceeded available funds. Ms. Zwick also pointed out that while the perception of Arizona is that the weather is hot year round there are many areas of the state where the winter weather is very cold.

Please let us know what's going on in your area. Call, email or fax us with information about the demand for assistance and how your program is handling it. The information you send to us is vital to our efforts to ensure the LIHEAP is adequately funded.

Register Now for LIHEAP Action Day

Registration is open for the **NFFN's LIHEAP Action Day**. The national grassroots day of lobbying on behalf of the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program is **February 10, 2010**. Please join us and other LIHEAP supporters as we take to Capitol Hill to voice our support for this vital program.

Click the button below to register



Come to Washington for **NFFN's LIHEAP Action Day** and make your voice heard.

Fuel Fund Actions

- Oregon HEAT kicked off its 20th anniversary celebration with a special recognition dinner at the Scottish Rites building in downtown Portland. The October 10 dinner, which included a silent auction, featured speeches by former Oregon Governor Victor Atiyeh and Tim McCabe, Director of the Oregon Business Development Department. Other speakers included outgoing Oregon HEAT board president Lisa Joerin and newly elected board president Marc Farmer. Early returns from the silent auction showed that the organization raised more than \$4,000.

State Government Actions

- Pennsylvania Governor has announced that the state's energy assistance program will open Nov. 2, a month earlier than had been projected. The state, anticipating a cut in LIHEAP funding, had originally planned on beginning the program in December. During the 2008-09 LIHEAP season, approximately 547,000 families were helped through cash grants and more than 202,000 families received crisis assistance and officials expect more demand this winter.

Utility Actions

- CPS Energy has informed the San Antonio City Council of its plans to add \$3 million to its affordability discount program, which will offer an \$8 per month discount for 40,000 customers. The city-owned utility said it will also provide \$2 million for the Residential Energy Assistance Partnership (REAP), which offers emergency help for customers at risk of having their power turned off. CPS Energy also announced that it will spend \$200 million to weatherize 50,000 homes between now and 2020.

Drive Smarter Challenge

- On-line voting to select the winning video entry in the Drive Smarter Challenge continues until Monday, October 19. The 10 entries in the contest can be viewed at <http://drivesmarterchallenge.org/contest/>. The maker of the winning video will receive \$5,000. **The National Fuel Funds Network is one of 17 partners in the transportation fuel efficiency campaign, along with the Alliance to Save Energy and the National Low Income Energy Consortium.**

The campaign's goal is to educate the American public on how drivers can significantly cut their gasoline costs – with ease and little effort – by driving smarter, properly maintaining their vehicles and driving fewer miles by combining errands, biking, telecommuting, walking, carpooling, or taking public transit.

Fire Safety

- The National Fire Protection Association has produced a series of safety videos and placed them on Youtube to mark Fire Prevention Week. The videos which deal with smoke detectors, the use of space heaters and other household safety issues can be viewed at <<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3TKVns3U6Uk>>

Awards and Honors

- The Salvation Army in Michigan has received an “outstanding achievement award” from the US Department of Housing and Urban Development for its use of Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) data to directly improve service delivery or planning

The Salvation Army Energy Assistance Project, a collaborative project of The Salvation Army's Divisional Headquarters in Western, Eastern, and Northern Michigan and Michigan's Statewide HMIS was recognized for using the HMIS to reduce the delivery time of emergency assistance grants to clients from weeks to days.

Requests for assistance through this project were originally being handled through a combination of fax machines and the mail to communicate the initial request, approval and supporting documentation. The approval process took weeks from request to check issuance and reports to funding sources required a month to compile. In order to improve service delivery time, the quality and timeliness of reports, and staff burden, Salvation Army worked with Michigan's Statewide HMIS to use the HMIS to provide District headquarters with daily request reports, collection documentation and improve service delivery time from weeks to days.

Forecasts and Reports

- The Energy Information Administration is forecasting slightly lower home heating bills this winter. Following the release of its latest “Short Term Energy Outlook,” EIA Administrator Richard Newell said “We expect household bills for space heating fuels will be 8 percent lower than a year ago. With the average household spending \$960 in the October through March winter heating season, a decrease of \$84 from last winter...We expect the largest decreases in fuel expenses in households using natural gas and propane.”

George Coling, Executive Director
National Fuel Funds Network
1010 Vermont Ave., NW Suite 718
Washington, DC 20005
202-824-0660

