
National Fuel Funds Network

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Congress passed and sent to the president legislation providing \$5.1 billion in funding for the Low Income Home Energy Assistance program for the current fiscal year. The bill is a combination of several appropriations bills that had not been passed before the start of this fiscal year.

The LIHEAP funding includes \$4.5 billion in formula funds and \$590 million in contingency funding. LIHEAP and many other government programs had been operating under funding provided through a continuing resolution that was set to expire December 18.

With LIHEAP funding for the current fiscal year secured, low-income energy assistance advocates can now turn their attention to the appropriations process for FY 2011. The kick-off for that appropriations process will be the NFFN's annual LIHEAP Action Day scheduled for February 10, 2010.

LIHEAP Action Day is a national grassroots lobbying effort on behalf of the federal energy assistance program that each year attracts hundreds of LIHEAP supporters and NFFN members to the nation's capital to meet with members of the House and Senate.

Registration for LIHEAP Action Day is on-going and hotel rooms at reduced rates are available. For more information on registration for LIHEAP Action Day and accommodations click on the button below.



[http://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx?
sm=Nv7i8K0eVSi6NvIWQ_2bW_2bmw_3d_3d](http://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx?sm=Nv7i8K0eVSi6NvIWQ_2bW_2bmw_3d_3d)

Photo Campaign for NFFN's LIHEAP Action Day

As we prepare for LIHEAP Action Day, the NFFN continues to collect photographs that illustrate the increased demand for energy assistance. We are seeking photos of people lined up to apply for energy assistance or photos of crowded waiting rooms that can help us demonstrate just how important energy assistance is to millions of Americans. We ask that you use your digital cameras or cell phone cameras to record what's going on in

your area and then email the images to info@nationalfuelfunds.org. Please include a date and place with each photo, if possible. Also, please check your local newspaper for photos that you could forward to NFFN.

Depending on what we receive from you, we'll produce a brochure, collage or other package of images to illustrate the demand – and put faces on it – to Congress on that day. We'll share the results on our website.

We would like to thank those of you who have already sent in photographs and encourage our other members to do the same. Remember the old adage that a picture is worth a thousand words.

REMEMBER TO OBTAIN PHOTO RELEASES FROM INDIVIDUALS YOU PHOTOGRAPH!

Public Utilities Commission Actions

- The Indiana Utility Regulatory Commission ordered Vectren, Peoples Gas and the Northern Illinois Public Service Company (NIPSCO) to increase the utilities contributions to their bill assistance programs to 25 percent of the cost of the funds. Previously, the utilities contributed between 18 and 23 percent of the cost of the programs.

Utility Actions

- AmerenUE will give \$100 energy gift certificates to 500 families this Christmas. The utility has partnered with local charities and organizations to identify customers who need energy assistance but might not qualify for traditional energy aid programs.
- Michigan Gas Utilities and the Salvation Army have formed the “Share the Warmth” program, which is designed to help the utility’s customers with their heating bills. The utility will match 50 cents for every dollar donated to “Share the Warmth.”
- Avista has made a \$200,000 contribution to its Project Share Fund, which provides emergency energy assistance to residents of eastern Washington and northern Idaho.
- The Northern Illinois Public Service Company (NIPSCO) announced that its Winter Warmth heating aid program will no longer provide funds for reconnection deposits. Grants from the program can only be used to pay arrearages.

Fuel Fund Actions

- Colorado Secretary of State Bernie Buescher joined the board of directors of Energy Outreach Colorado. Buescher, a long time supporter of low income energy issues, served two terms in the Colorado General Assembly prior to being appointed Secretary of State in 2008. Energy Outreach Colorado executive director Skip Arnold said “We’re extremely fortunate and pleased that Secretary of State Buescher will be lending his leadership to furthering our mission of helping all Coloradans afford home energy.”

Business Community Actions

- The Walmart Foundation donated \$100,000 to the Ohio Department of Development for energy assistance. The Department of Development administers the state’s Low Income Energy Assistance Program. The Foundation also donated \$250,000 to the Ohio Association of Second Harvest Foodbanks.

. In Pittsfield, MA, the Legacy Banks Foundation announced it will provide up to \$10,000 in matched funds to the Berkshire Community Action Council for emergency fuel assistance to Berkshire County residents. Donations are being accepted at any of Legacy Banks 11 offices in Berkshire County. The Foundation's president Richard Sullivan said "Current economic conditions as well as rising fuel costs will make this winter extremely difficult for many...We are hoping that this Foundation grant along with the generous support of our customers and others will be as successful as last year in helping to provide some of the emergency relief that will be necessary."

According to Don Atwater, executive director of the Berkshire Community Action Council, approximately 7,000 households apply for aid during the winter. He said, however, that he expects that number to increase this year.

State Government Actions

. The Kansas Housing Resources Corporation started an appliance rebate program that rewards low income households for replacing old, inefficient household appliances with new energy efficient models. The State Energy Efficient Appliance Replacement Program, which is funded through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, will provide \$2.6 million for the replacement of an estimated 4,800 appliances. Low income households will receive rebates ranging from \$200 to \$800 for recycling their old appliances and purchasing new ones with ENERGY STAR labels. The program covers refrigerators, clothes washers, freezers, dishwashers, and window air conditioners.

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