



FACT SHEET

The Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP)

Prepared for National Fuel Funds Network's (NFFN) LIHEAP Action Day, February 9, 2011

The Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) is a federally funded energy assistance program designed to help low income households cope with the financial burdens of heating and cooling their homes.

Created by Congress in response to rising home energy costs resulting from the oil embargo of the 1970's, LIHEAP has evolved into a year-round energy assistance program and an important part of our nation's social safety net.

LIHEAP is a block grant program administered by the Department of Health and Human Services. The programs funds are divided into two types, regular funds and emergency contingency funds. The regular program funds are allotted to the states through a complex formula while the emergency contingency funds distributed at the discretion of the President and the HHS secretary.

The states establish eligibility criteria and devise their own plan for the distribution of assistance funds. In most states, LIHEAP provides heating assistance and cooling assistance. States may use only ten percent of their allotment for administrative purposes.

Many LIHEAP recipients are elderly, disabled or have young children in their households, all of whom are vulnerable to temperature extremes. A recent survey by the National Energy Assistance Directors Association found that more than 90 percent of LIHEAP households contained at least one of those vulnerable groups.

LIHEAP Funding. In FY 2010, LIHEAP was funded at \$5.1 billion and served roughly 8.9 million households.

Currently LIHEAP is being funded through a continuing resolution that will expire on March 4. The continuing resolution set funding for LIHEAP at the FY 2010 level but only provided for the release of funds equal to the amount released to the states through March 4, 2010. In accordance with those standards, slightly less than \$4 billion has been made available to the states.

Because of the enactment of a continuing resolution as a funding vehicle, Congress must take up two funding bills for LIHEAP this year. One bill will fund the program for the rest of FY 2011 and the second appropriations bill will fund LIHEAP for FY 2012.

NFFN Position: Congress should appropriate the fully authorized amount of \$5.1 billion in FY2011 and FY2012.

LIHEAP Funding

FY 2009 = \$5.1 billion

FY 2010 = \$5.1 billion

FY 2011 = ~\$4 billion (as of March 2011)

In 2010, the \$5.1 billion in LIHEAP funds helped **8.9 million households - approximately 23 million people** - heat and cool their homes.

Even with LIHEAP funding at the \$5.1 billion level, that amount was **only enough to assist 1 in 5 eligible Americans.**

Contact:

National Fuel Funds Network * 1010 Vermont Avenue, NW, Suite 718, Washington, DC 20005 * 202-824-0660, info@nationalfuel funds.org.