

ADVOCATING FOR LIHEAP

A presentation for the PEPCO Summit

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Advocacy

Advocating for federal legislation or lobbying is one kind of advocacy.

Other kinds of advocacy include:

- Expressing and organizing support for a specific public policy position
- Commenting on federal rule-making
- Intervention in adjudicatory proceedings
- Litigation
- Community Organizing

For more information, consult the Alliance for Justice at www.afj.org/nonprofits-foundations/about-advocacy/.



Why we advocate

“Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has.”

▶ Margaret Mead



Advocacy for the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP)

- ▶ LIHEAP is a program of the US Department of Health and Human Services.
- ▶ LIHEAP originated in 1981. Serves 15 – 20% of those eligible with federal funding of \$4.7 billion.
- ▶ LIHEAP is a block grant to the states with federal eligibility requirements. Supplemented by charitably-donated contributions to fuel funds. Approximately \$150 million.
- ▶ LIHEAP is not an entitlement program like Medicare or the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP).
- ▶ Congress appropriates funds for LIHEAP for each fiscal year.
- ▶ The fiscal year is October 1 – September 30.



Federal Budget Cycle – Simplified outline

- ▶ February – President presents budget request for the next fiscal year to Congress
 - ▶ Spring and summer – House and Senate appropriations subcommittees consider and “mark up” appropriations legislation.
 - ▶ Spring and summer – House and Senate Appropriations Committees consider legislation passed by subcommittees and report legislation to the full House and Senate
 - ▶ No later than September 30 – House and Senate pass appropriations legislation. Meet in conference to resolve the differences and send to the President for signature.
 - ▶ Beyond September 30 – Congress must pass and the President must sign a Continuing Resolution (CR) to fund government programs not funded by the above process at last year’s levels.
 - ▶ There are opportunities for advocacy at each of step of the process.
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Current legislative situation for LIHEAP appropriations (October 1—November 18, 2011)

- ▶ LIHEAP appropriation rose to \$5.1 billion for FY 2009 and remained there for FY 2010 and initially for FY 2011
- ▶ Congress rescinded \$400 million in April budget agreement. Total available LIHEAP funding was \$4.7 billion for FY 2011 (October 1, 2010 – September 30, 2011).
- ▶ February 2011: President Obama requested \$2.57 billion for FY 2012. Same as FY 2008. Home energy prices have stayed level, he said.
- ▶ Outcry and concerted advocacy for \$5.1 billion from LIHEAP advocates
 - ▶ Home energy prices, particularly home heating oil, are higher.
 - ▶ Unemployment and poverty higher than in FY 2008.
 - ▶ Demand for LIHEAP had increased. Proposed level would cut 3.1 million families from LIHEAP
- ▶ September: Senate Appropriations Committee approves \$3.6 billion for LIHEAP in FY 2012. House Appropriations Committee supports \$3.4 Billion.



Current legislative situation for LIHEAP appropriations (October 1—November 18, 2011)

- ▶ September 30: Neither the House nor the Senate completes appropriations work.
- ▶ Now: Government is running on a Continuing Resolution through November 18, 2011. CR technically includes \$4.7 billion for LIHEAP in FY 2012
- ▶ Soon: The Administration will release some of the \$4.7 billion to states shortly, but not the full \$4.7 billion. Levels from appropriations committees may provide a marker for the release.
- ▶ Supercommittee meets to cut federal expenditures. Report to Congress by November 23.



Next steps

- ▶ Join the campaign. Contact your legislators
- ▶ Spread the word. Use the resources. Coalesce with supporters.
- ▶ Sign up to be invited to participate in national conference calls and to sign next all parties letter.
- ▶ *Plan now for NFFN's next LIHEAP Action Day, February 15, 2012*
- ▶ Registration opens soon at www.nationalfuelfunds.org.
- ▶ *Join National Fuel Funds Network.* Receive the full complement of advocacy services (and other services) from now on. Apply at www.nationalfuelfunds.org.



2011 LIHEAP legislative campaign – amplifying and broadening the voice

- ▶ Kickoff: NFFN's LIHEAP Action Day, February 9. 150 delegates fan Capitol Hill.
 - ▶ Letters, postcards, emails to Congress. Steered towards specific steps in the legislative process.
 - ▶ All parties letter to Congress (200 signers in fall 2010; 992 in September 2011).
 - ▶ Rallies – 1500 in Chicago in March.
 - ▶ Press conferences
 - ▶ Weekly national conference calls. Focus on grassroots actions.
 - ▶ Summer LIHEAP Action Day, August 2, 70 delegates, local supporting events
 - ▶ Advocacy websites
www.saveliheap.org
www.coalitiontokeepmichiganwarm.com
 - ▶ Coalition-building throughout
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LIHEAP Advocacy Resources

Action on LIHEAP

www.nationalfuelfunds.org

National Fuel Funds Network on Facebook

www.supportliheap.org -- connects directly to Congressional offices, pre-written, editable messages.

www.liheap.org – Campaign for Home Energy Assistance; county by county LIHEAP data

Policy and reference

www.neada.org – National Energy Assistance Directors' Association; LIHEAP data and studies

www.chn.org – Coalition for Human Needs; advocacy information on many human needs programs, including LIHEAP

www.cbpp.org – Center for Budget and Policy Priorities; detailed policy information on LIHEAP, the Budget Control Act of 2012

www.aga.org, Click on “Our Issues”, then “LIHEAP” – American Gas Association, extensive collection of policy information and legislative documents

www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/ocs/liheap/ -- US Department of Health and Human Services, Division of Energy Assistance, that administers LIHEAP; state contacts, program information

<http://liheap.ncat.org/> -- LIHEAP Clearinghouse; a federally-funded resource center for those interested in home energy assistance; newsletter, state snapshots, reports

www.gpoaccess.gov/usbudget/fy02/pdf/guide.pdf -- Executive Office of the President, *A Citizen's Guide to the Federal Budget, 2002*

General Information on Institutional Issues regarding Advocacy

www.afj.org/for-nonprofits-foundations/about-advocacy/ – Alliance for Justice; detailed information on advocacy, technical assistance requests and a blog



Save The Dates ...

February 15, 2012

National Fuel Funds Network's LIHEAP Action Day

Capitol Hill, Washington, DC

For more information and registration open October 17, 2011,

see www.nationalfuelfunds.org.



June 11-13, 2012

National Energy and Utility Affordability Conference

Presented by National Fuel Funds Network and National Low Income Energy Consortium

Sheraton New Orleans

For more information and registration open in early 2012, see www.neuac.org.



July 31, 2012 (tentative date)

Summer LIHEAP Action Day

Capitol Hill, Washington DC

For more information and registration open in June 2012, see www.nationalfuelfunds.org.

