

NATIONAL FUEL FUNDS  
NETWORK

Toolkit for  
**National Fuel Funds Network's  
LIHEAP Action Day  
February 10, 2010**



**NATIONAL FUEL FUNDS NETWORK**

**1010 VERMONT AVENUE, N.W. , SUITE 718  
WASHINGTON, DC 20005  
(202) 824-0660; FAX (202) 824-0638  
WWW.NATIONALFUELFUNDS.ORG**

## What's NFFN's LIHEAP Action Day?



*NFFN Chairperson Sue Montgomery-Corey answers questions from media during a Capitol Hill press conference on LIHEAP Action Day 2009.*



*Rep. Bennie G. Thompson (D-MS) talks with LIHEAP recipient Victoria Seals (second from right) of Jackson, MS during one Action Day meeting. Ms. Seals was accompanied to the meeting with the Congressman by Rhonda Perry, Case Manager Hinds County Human Resources Agency, Liz Brister, Manager, External Affairs Entergy, and Gloria Johnson, Director Customer Service Entergy.*

### What's in the Tool Kit?

The LIHEAP Action Day Tool Kit is designed to help you participate to the fullest in this important undertaking. The kit contains information on Capitol Hill activities on February 10, 2010, as well as suggestions and ideas to help you organize events in your community if you cannot come to Washington.

### LIHEAP Action Day's Largest Turnout

On February 11, 2009 the National Fuel Funds Network's 7th annual LIHEAP Action Day brought more than 190 NFFN members and LIHEAP supporters to the nation's capital to lobby Congressional delegations for increased funding for the federal energy assistance program.

The participants visited over 200 Congressional offices, including most of the new members of the House and Senate, as they carried the message that funding for FY 10 should be maintained at \$5.1 billion.

"This was the largest number of LIHEAP supporters to participate in the coordinated lobbying effort since the NFFN began organizing the event seven years ago. The large turnout underscored the importance of educating the new Congress about this vital program," said NFFN Executive Director George Coling.

This year's LIHEAP Action Day marked the first time that LIHEAP supporters have come to the Capitol since the election of President Obama. With new leadership in the White House and Democratic majorities in both houses of Congress, LIHEAP Action Day took on new significance.

Participants began their activities the night before Action Day with a gala dinner marking the NFFN's 25th anniversary.

The first LIHEAP Action Day, January 8, 2003 drew twenty NFFN members, called on a rush basis over the holidays. Together the members visited over thirty legislative offices and held a successful press conference with the Senate and House Northeast Midwest Coalition. NFFN members in eight states organized supporting activities ranging from press conferences to submission of client-signed petitions to Congressional Delegations. LIHEAP Action Day was the sparkplug for the Bush Administration to release \$100 million in LIHEAP emergency funds and subsequent legislation applying another \$200 million to LIHEAP.

LIHEAP Action Day on January 20 2004 drew thirty members, who called on over 50 Congressional offices. On February 1, 2005, ninety NFFN members and LIHEAP advocates from 17 states, including large contingents from Baltimore and Delaware, came to Washington for the third annual LIHEAP Washington Action Day and visited more than 100 Congressional offices.

LIHEAP Action Day has grown to become the signature event signaling the beginning of the lobbying effort on behalf of the federally funded energy assistance program. In 2010, the NFFN hopes to build on the record setting numbers of members and LIHEAP supporters who participated in LIHEAP Action Day last year.

## **If you can come to Washington on February 10, 2010, here's the program in a nutshell.**

In January 2010, Congress will return to session and during the first week of February, the President will send to Congress his budget request for Fiscal Year 2011. The National Fuel Funds Network has earmarked Wednesday, February 10, 2010 for its annual LIHEAP Action Day. NFFN picked the date to coincide with the beginning of the federal budget cycle.

The NFFN will equip its members arriving in Washington and those across the country with the latest information on the exact status of LIHEAP funding and arguments for increased funding. Fact sheets providing concise state-by-state details on LIHEAP funding and the numbers of households served will be distributed. Participants in LIHEAP Action Day will present this information – along with local data and anecdotes about local needs – to legislators, when possible, in teams of utility and nonprofit organization representatives.

LIHEAP Action Day advocates will ask the members of Congress to approve no less than \$5.1 billion in funding for the federal energy assistance program in the FY2011 budget so that LIHEAP can continue to function as an effective national program. LIHEAP Action Day participants will also urge Congress to support including additional funding for LIHEAP in other legislation moving through the Congress.

## **If you can't come to Washington, please support Action Day for LIHEAP by organizing local activities**

You can amplify Washington advocates' requests for LIHEAP funding with a strong message from your community. Focus your message on what is happening locally:

- ◆ How does the demand compare with the funds that you have available?
- ◆ How does the demand compare with that for this time last year?
- ◆ Are you changing eligibility or reducing payments?
- ◆ Are you seeing increased donations in your charitable energy assistance programs?
- ◆ Are you making special accommodations for new clients that may be generated by households whose unemployment benefits have run out?
- ◆ How many jobs are created through energy assistance and weatherization programs in your community?
- ◆ How would advance funding for LIHEAP benefit your program?

### **NFFN will support local activities:**

We will rush multiple copies of NFFN'S "LIHEAP Saves Lives Bookmarks" to you. The bookmarks are a simple reference guide to LIHEAP advocacy meant for mass distribution.

For those wishing to thank legislators for LIHEAP support, we will rush you quantities of post cards designed for clients or individuals to send to Senators and Representatives in Washington.

Activities organized later than February 10 will still have an impact. Please keep NFFN informed about activities you organize.



## **SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES:**

### **Create a “District/State Action Day for LIHEAP”**

Partner with local fuel funds, utilities, energy marketers, fuel oil companies, social service providers, weatherization programs.

Invite:

- ◆ Local/District Congressional staff.
- ◆ Local legislative representatives, state, county, and city representatives, public utility commissioners, etc.
- ◆ Energy assistance recipients.
- ◆ Other low-income advocates, such as housing programs, hunger advocates, etc. Ask them to talk about the link between hunger or housing and the need for energy assistance.
- ◆ Include the media

### **Schedule appointments with local Congressional offices**

Provide accurate information. Make it relevant, short, and easy to reference. Keep written materials to one page. You may provide additional background material with your main message, but don't leave reams of paper. Include your contact information. Another option is to let staff know what kind of resources you have available should they need them. The appointment is especially important if your Senator or Representative is a member of one of the Appropriations Subcommittees that consider LIHEAP funding. NFFN will distribute rosters of the Subcommittees' memberships.

### **Sponsor a “Call-in-Event”**

Distribute flyers to staff, Boards of Directors, coalition members, and clients with phone numbers to your local congressional office or provide cell phones to call Washington DC legislators' offices.



## SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES:

### Petition Campaign

Ask your staff, Boards of Directors, coalition members, clients and other citizens to sign petitions asking for increased funding and advanced appropriations. Personally deliver them to local Congressional offices if possible. Mail copies to your Senator and Representative's offices in Washington, your Governor and the White House.

A sample petition can be obtained from the NFFN offices. Email your request to [info@nationalfuelfunds.org](mailto:info@nationalfuelfunds.org).

### Media Events

- ◆ Meet with the editorial staff of your local newspaper to explain the LIHEAP program and seek media support.
- ◆ Write an op-ed piece.
- ◆ Host a press conference.
- ◆ Consider purchasing paid advertising in local media.

### Social Networking

- ◆ Use your social networking accounts like *Facebook* or *Twitter* to spread the word about LIHEAP Action Day
- ◆ On LIHEAP Action Day, February 10, 2010, post as your *Facebook* status "Congress should approve at least \$5.1 billion in funding for LIHEAP, the federally funded home energy assistance program." and encourage all of your *Facebook* friends to do the same.

Please share your supporting events and information with NFFN by

E-mail: [info@nationalfuelfunds.org](mailto:info@nationalfuelfunds.org) or Fax: 202-824-0638



## For more information:

### National Fuel Funds Network

George Coling, Executive Director  
1010 Vermont Avenue, NW, Suite 718  
Washington, DC 20005  
[coling@nationalfuelfunds.org](mailto:coling@nationalfuelfunds.org)  
[www.nationalfuelfunds.org](http://www.nationalfuelfunds.org)  
Phone 202-824-0660; Fax 202-824-0638

### Congress

|                              |  |
|------------------------------|--|
| To find your Senator:        | <a href="http://www.senate.gov">www.senate.gov</a> |
| To find your Representative: | <a href="http://www.house.gov">www.house.gov</a>   |
| House/Senate switchboard     | 202-224-3121                                       |

### The President

White House  
Washington, DC 20500  
Phone 202-456-1414; Fax: 202-456-2461

Campaign for Home Energy Assistance  
202-331-2962  
[www.liheap.org](http://www.liheap.org)

LIHEAP Clearinghouse  
888-294-8662  
[www.ncat.org/liheap](http://www.ncat.org/liheap)

National Energy Assistance Director's Association  
(NEADA)  
202-237-5199  
[www.neada.org](http://www.neada.org)

Office of Energy Assistance, USDHHS  
202-401-9352  
[www.acf.dhhs.gov/programs/liheap](http://www.acf.dhhs.gov/programs/liheap)



## Additional Resources:

- ◆ The **Edison Electric Institute** has prepared a collection of advocacy tools for use in planning for the NFFN's LIHEAP Action Day. These tools include an audio file with tips on scheduling Congressional meetings; a draft press release; and a draft thank you letter to members of Congress. To view the file click on the link. <http://www.eei.org/whatwedo/PublicPolicyAdvocacy/FedLegislation/LIHEAP/Pages/Advocacy.aspx>.
- ◆ The **National Energy Assistance Directors Association** has data on the number of households receiving LIHEAP aid and a state by state breakdown of LIHEAP funding. Visit the NEADA website at <http://www.neada.org>.
- ◆ The **Campaign For Home Energy Assistance** has produced "*2010 State LIHEAP Fact Sheets*" to provide to offices on hill visits. The state fact sheets include the funding levels (FY2008-2010), number of households served, and demographics of each state. These fact sheets can be an effective resource in demonstrating to Congressional office the investment and impact that the program is making at the state level. These profiles can be found at <http://www.liheap.org/factsheet.html> (*FY2010 will be updated on the Campaign's website by 2/4/10*).

If you have trouble downloading these sheets or have questions regarding the data, contact Brandon Avila (202) 331-2962.