

NATIONAL FUEL FUNDS
NETWORK

Toolkit for
**National Fuel Funds Network's
LIHEAP Action Day
February 15, 2012**



NATIONAL FUEL FUNDS NETWORK

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What's NFFN's LIHEAP Action Day?

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 15, 2012, as well as suggestions and ideas to help you organize events in your community if you cannot come to Washington.

LIHEAP Action Day February 9, 2011

On a crisp, clear February morning more than 140 NFFN members and LIHEAP supporters spread out over Capitol Hill to visit with Congressional decision makers to urge them to maintain funding at \$5.1 billion for this vital safety net program.

Action Day participants took part in several hundred meetings on Capitol Hill and NFFN Chairman Tom Stovall joined Representatives Ed Markey of Massachusetts, Rose DeLauro of Connecticut and Gene Green of Texas for a Capitol Hill press conference.

To read more about LIHEAP Action Day 2011, click on <http://www.nationalfuelfunds.org/AdvocacyPublicPolicy/>

Summer LIHEAP Action Day August 2, 2011

The NFFN's Summer LIHEAP Action Day brought 70 participants from across the country to Capitol Hill August 2 to urge Congress to reject cuts to the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program and approve \$5.1 billion for federal energy assistance in the next fiscal year.

To read more about Summer LIHEAP Action Day 2011 click on <http://www.nationalfuelfunds.org/AdvocacyPublicPolicy/>



Texas Congresswoman Gene Green addresses media during NFFN LIHEAP Action Day 2011 news conference near the Capitol.



Former LIHEAP recipient Nora Mendez, left, and Kim Porter of the Office of Human Concern, Rogers, Arkansas, conclude a successful meeting with Senator Mark Pryor (D-AR) on Summer LIHEAP Action Day 2011.

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.

As we prepare for the 10th annual LIHEAP Action Day, our effort has grown to become the signature event signaling the beginning of the lobbying effort on behalf of the federally funded energy assistance program. In 2012, the NFFN plans to continue to build on the successes of the past events and to have a strong impact on the future of this important program.

If you can come to Washington on February 15, 2012, here's the program in a nutshell.

In February, the federal budget process will begin when the President sends to Congress his budget request for Fiscal Year 2013. The National Fuel Funds Network has selected Wednesday, February 15, 2012 for its 10th annual LIHEAP Action Day, which will kick-off the grassroots lobbying effort for LIHEAP funding. The NFFN will also convene Summer LIHEAP Action Day, tentatively on July 31, 2012.

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.

Our Message to Congress

LIHEAP Action Day participants will ask the members of Congress to provide \$5.1 billion in funding for the federal energy assistance program for FY 2013 so that LIHEAP can continue to function as an effective national program.

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?

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

NFFN will support local activities by:

- ◆ Providing the services of our media consultant to assist with crafting your message and organizing a news conference;
- ◆ Making our staff available to provide up to the minute briefings on the current legislative situation; and
- ◆ Sharing contact information of other members who have planned local events in the past.

Activities organized after Action Day 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, government agencies, 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 up request.

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 coling@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.
- ◆ Consider purchasing paid advertising in local media.
- ◆ Host a news conference. To view a news conference held by LIHEAP supporters in California, click on the following link: <http://www.nationalfuelfunds.org/NFFN/videos.html>.

Social Networking

- ◆ Use your social networking accounts like *Facebook* or *Twitter* to spread the word about LIHEAP Action Day
- ◆ On LIHEAP Action Day, post as your *Facebook* status **“Congress should approve no less than \$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. The same message should be posted on your Twitter account and tweeted to the offices of your Congressional delegation. Twitter hatchtags for your Representatives and Senators can be found on their Congressional office websites.

Please share your supporting events and information with NFFN by

E-mail: coling@nationalfuelfunds.org or Fax: 202-824-0638



For more information:

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Congress

To find your Senator:	www.senate.gov
To find your Representative:	www.house.gov
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

LIHEAP Clearinghouse
888-294-8662
www.ncat.org/liheap

National Energy Assistance Directors' Association
(NEADA)
202-237-5199
www.neada.org

Office of Energy Assistance, USDHHS
202-401-9352
www.acf.dhhs.gov/programs/liheap



Additional Resources:

- ◆ The Support LIHEAP website accesses a program to write all US Senator and Representatives an email requesting appropriate funding for LIHEAP. Users may select the existing text or edit it for a personal message. See www.supportliheap.org.
- ◆ 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 "*2012 State LIHEAP Fact Sheets*" to provide to offices on hill visits. The state fact sheets include the funding levels (FY 2008-2012), 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>.

If you have trouble downloading these sheets or have questions regarding the data, contact Brandon Avila at (202) 331-2962 or email to bavila@btbv.com.

