



## *National Fuel Funds Network*

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### **Energy Safety Net Bulletin #132**

Dear Member: The increase in federal funding for LIHEAP has become a featured story in news media outlets across the country. We have all seen stories about the lines of people waiting to sign up for LIHEAP. The media is also reporting that the souring of the economy has led to reduced charitable donations.

We need to know what you are seeing and experiencing. Are donations down compared to last year? What are you doing to promote contributions to your programs? Please let us know your situation.

The information you give us may help other members of the Network.

Just a reminder, on line registration is available for Washington Action Day for LIHEAP, February 11, 2009. Visit the NFFN website at [www.nationalfuelfunds.org](http://www.nationalfuelfunds.org), and click on the Action Day button. While you're at the website take the opportunity to also register for the NFFN Silver Anniversary Gala which will take place the night before Action Day.

These are two events you can't miss. Register now.

#### **Fuel Fund Actions**

- Energy Outreach Colorado has received a top rating from Charity Navigator, an independent charity evaluator, for the seven consecutive year. The Colorado fuel fund received a four star rating from the organization that annually ranks the financial health of more than 5,000 organizations.

Energy Outreach Colorado recently announced that it would distribute \$9.35 million through its 2008-2009 programs. The funds will be used help thousands of Colorado households afford home energy.

- A California based producer of custom awnings has agreed to donate \$100 to the Dollar Energy Fund for each shade device the company manufactures and installs during 2009. The projects must be registered with the federal Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design program.

Officials at Eide Industries in Cerritos, CA said they selected the Dollar Energy Fund as the recipient of their donations because “the award winning organization partners with 17 utility companies across Pennsylvania, New York and New Jersey – a populous region whose poor are expected to particularly hard hit this winter by the recent spikes in energy costs.”

- Heating Energy Assistance Team, Inc. (HEAT), Georgia’s oldest fuel fund, marked its 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary recently. The Atlanta based organization has raised nearly \$17 million in energy assistance for 82,000 families since it was formed in 1983.
- The Heat and Warmth Fund (THAW) in Detroit and DTE Energy have created a voluntary new energy assistance program that allows DTE Energy customers to round up their utility bills to help those in need.

Called “Cents for Energy,” the program is designed to “help a growing segment of our population – working individuals and families who struggle to make ends meet, but may not qualify for other assistance programs,” said Joyce Hayes-Giles, DTE Energy senior vice president for customer service.

Donors will have the choice of rounding their bill up to the nearest dollar, rounding up and adding \$10, or making a one-time donation to THAW.

John X Miller, THAW’s executive director, said “By targeting customers at a slightly higher income level than THAW normally assists, DTE Energy is providing a safety net to individuals and families that might otherwise fall through the cracks.”

### **State Government Actions**

- Maryland has launched a website designed to be a one stop resource for families in need of economic assistance. The site, [www.problemsolver.maryland.gov/](http://www.problemsolver.maryland.gov/), includes information on a wide range of government services including energy assistance, employment assistance, and services for seniors and those living with disabilities.

Also included on the website is an assistance eligibility calculator, which helps residents determine what services they may qualify for such as food stamps, the

Temporary Cash Assistance program, Medical Assistance, the Maryland Energy Assistance Program and the Electric Universal Service Program.

### **Reports and Studies**

- The number of people living in poverty is expected to increase by 7.5 to 10.3 million if the current economic downturn continues, according to a new study by the Center on Budget and Public Priorities.

According to the report, written by Sharon Parrott of the Center, the number of children living in poverty will increase by 2.6 to 3.3 million and the numbers in deep poverty will rise by as many as 2 million.

The report calls for increased funding for food stamps, expanded and extended unemployment benefits, and increased federal aid to the states. The complete report can be viewed on the Center's website at <http://www.cbpp.org/11-24-08pov.pdf>.