



## *National Fuel Funds Network*

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### **Energy Safety Net Bulletin #134**

Dear Member: Reports from across the country indicate that the demand for energy assistance has reached record levels. News reports from Maine to California demonstrate just how many households are struggling to keep up with their home utility bills.

Dale McCormick, director of MaineHousing, said she expects about 70,000 households to receive funds through the federal energy assistance program LIHEAP. Nearly 46,000 applicants had been approved by late December.

Meanwhile, in California, Southern California Edison reported that 10 percent more customers had their power turned off from January to October last year than over the same period the year before. Pacific Gas and Electric reported that shut-offs were up 17 percent in 2008 compared with 2007.

As we prepare for the NFFN's **LIHEAP Action Day**, February 11, 2009, we need to know what is going on in your community. Please call, fax, or email us with any information you have about the situation in your program, agency or community. This information will help us shape our appeal to the decision makers in the Congress and the Obama administration.

Please register for LIHEAP Action Day and support NFFN's 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary gala by purchasing a ticket, becoming a sponsor and/or placing an ad in the Network's commemorative booklet. Details at [www.nationalfuelfunds.org](http://www.nationalfuelfunds.org).

**Energy Conservation**

- The National Association of Regulatory Utility Commissioners (NARUC) and several partner organizations have launched a national energy efficiency campaign that will use an interactive website, music, comics, videos and other forms of media to carry the energy conservation message.

The campaign is called “Anybody Can Serve, So Let’s Conserve” and is designed to involve the general public in energy conservation and efficiency practices. As a kick off for the campaign, NARUC is asking the public to participate in the National Day of Utility Service on January 19<sup>th</sup>.

For more details about the campaign and the organizations involved visit the website at [www.anybodycanserve.org](http://www.anybodycanserve.org).

### **Utility Actions**

- AEP Ohio has contributed \$1 million to establish the Crisis Response Fund which will provide energy assistance to households with incomes above the eligibility levels for federal energy assistance. The utility will also provide weatherization kits for low income households.

The Crisis Response Fund will be managed by the Ohio Department of Development through 36 Community Action Agencies.

- The National Grid Foundation has given the Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Albany, NY a \$25,000 grant to provide energy assistance to low income households in 14 counties in the northeastern part of the state.
- Dominion East Ohio has contributed \$1.4 million to Community Action Agencies across its service area to help eligible consumers with bill payment assistance and energy conservation.

The Salvation Army received \$500,000 for the EnergyShare program, the Empowerment Center of Greater Cleveland received \$425,000, and the Consumer Protection Association received \$125,000. In addition, Dominion announced that it would distribute another \$417,000 to Community Action Agencies in its service area.

- Avista has made a \$280,000 contribution to Project Share which provides emergency energy assistance to customers in eastern Washington and northern Idaho. The funds will be used to help households that have exhausted other avenues of aid.

The energy company also donated \$100,000 to energy assistance programs serving consumers in eastern Washington. Eighteen non-profit organizations received a portion of the contribution.

- The Southern Tier Chapter of the American Red Cross and NYSEG have started a new energy assistance program designed to help the utility's residential customers with energy emergencies.

The new program will be funded through a \$500,000 contribution from NYSEG and be called the Matching Incentive Payment Program. The program will provide grants of up to \$600 to eligible customers who are facing service disconnection due to nonpayment and will match any additional payments customers make toward past-due accounts up to \$400.

### **Fuel Fund Actions**

- In Indianapolis, the United Way of Central Indiana kicked off the annual fund raising drive for its Winter Assistance Fund. The goal for this year is \$750,000 and organizers were surprised when they received donations from seven donors totaling \$620,000. Last year's fund raising effort brought in \$311,456.