



## *National Fuel Funds Network*

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### **Energy Safety Net Bulletin #101**

Dear Member: A group of health care professionals in Massachusetts studying the impact of high home energy costs on the children of low-income families has recommended that LIHEAP should be funded at the maximum authorized level.

The study entitled “Unhealthy Consequences: Energy Costs and Child Health” was prepared by the Child Health Impact Working Group, a group of pediatricians, public health researchers, health economists, and lawyers from several universities, medical schools and hospitals in the Boston area.

“Because energy benefits play an important role in buffering low-income children from the adverse health effects of high energy costs, we should encourage increased participation in LIHEAP, which will certainly require additional funding,” the study reported.

The study also recommended that the Massachusetts state government “should allocate supplementary funds for LIHEAP” to increase benefit levels for vulnerable Massachusetts families. In 2005 and 2006, the state legislature provided additional funds to supplement LIHEAP and the study urges the state government to continue to do so.

A copy of the report can be found at [www.mlpforchildren.org](http://www.mlpforchildren.org).

#### **Fuel Fund Activities**

- John Rich is the new Executive Director of the Mid American Assistance Coalition. Mr. Rich replaces Jan Marcason, who has left the MAAC to run for the city council in Kansas City, MO.

Mr. Rich most recently was the Chief Operating Officer of the Local Investment Commission (LINC) in Kansas City. He has owned a small business and directed a non-profit.

- Nearly \$150,000 was raised for the Keep Wisconsin Warm Fund during Culver's restaurants Week of Warmth event. From November 13<sup>th</sup> through the 19<sup>th</sup> Culver's 112 individually owned and operated restaurants in Wisconsin offered customers the opportunity to donate \$1 and receive a dollar-off certificate on their next purchase.

The "Give a Buck, Get a Buck" promotion raised more than \$70,000 that was matched dollar for dollar by the state government for a total of nearly \$150,000. In addition, Culver's donated \$10,000 to the fund raising effort.

- In Connecticut, Operation Fuel executive director Pat Wrice kicked off the fuel fund's annual fund raising drive by urging state legislators to consider expanding energy assistance. Ms. Wrice termed as "crucial" a proposed state earned-income tax credit, increased funding for LIHEAP, "aggressive fundraising for local fuel banks and the promotion of energy conservation.

Gov. M. Jodi Rell has said she expects to make more funds for fuel assistance available when the Legislature meets in January.

Also appearing at the Operation Fuel news conference was economist and former NFFN Board member Roger Colton who explained his study of the home energy affordability gap. Colton said his study indicated that the per-household average shortfall in Connecticut is about \$1,100.

### **LIHEAP**

- Congress opted not to take up legislation funding LIHEAP for the current fiscal year during the lame duck session. Instead, legislators passed another continuing resolution funding the program until the new Congress takes office in January.

Under the terms of this current continuing resolution, LIHEAP is being funded at \$2 billion, \$1 billion less than was provided for the last fiscal year. The resolution expires February 15.

- Maine Senators Susan Collins and Olympia Snowe have written to the Director of the Office of Management and Budget requesting \$5.1 billion for the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program be included in the administration's 2008 budget request.

### **Utility Actions**

- NIPSCO is offering Indiana residents a chance to give the gift of warmth this winter through its Gift of Energy program. The program allows people to buy a

NIPSCO gift certificate of any amount and the utility will credit that amount to the recipient's account.

- Duke Energy Indiana has contributed \$500,000 to the state to be distributed to low-income seniors and disabled customers. The funds are part of an agreement, approved by state regulators, which calls for the utility to provide \$500,000 to the state for each of the next five years.

The deal grew out of Duke Energy's merger with Cinergy. In addition to the \$2.5 million contribution to the state, the utility will also provide \$40 million in rate credits to customers over one year beginning in June 2007.