



National Fuel Funds Network

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Dear Member: As this summer comes to an end, we find that many of the people we serve are facing a two-pronged dilemma. In many instances, people are still trying to pay off their winter heating bills before the onset of colder weather, while also paying high electricity bills generated during the summer's heat waves.

This situation has resulted in increased demand for assistance at a time when summer cooling programs are closing and heating assistance programs have not begun. We need to know if you are experiencing this problem in your area and how you are dealing with it.

This information is important to us as we prepare to continue to lobby the Congress for increased LIHEAP funds for the coming fiscal year and urge the President to release the remaining LIHEAP contingency funds.

Please call, write, or email us to let us know the situation in your area.

State and Local Government Actions

- An estimated 37,000 households in Ohio have received help with paying their electric bills through the state's Summer Crisis Program so far this year, and the number is expected to increase as bills incurred during the recent heat wave arrive.

According to the Ohio Department of Development, the number of families receiving aid represent a 76 percent increase over last summer when about 21,000 households received assistance. The Summer Crisis Program, which ends August 31, provides onetime payments of up to \$200, a free air conditioner or maintenance on a home central air conditioning system.

- In Texas, the Department of Housing and Community Affairs reported that LIHEAP funding for this year was only enough to provide aid to six percent of the 1.32 million families eligible for assistance. The state received \$82 million from the federal government for energy assistance. Last year the federal program provided grants to 7.2 percent of the eligible Texas households.

- Vermont Governor James Douglas has proposed using \$13 million in state funds to supplement federal energy assistance funds for the coming winter. According to the governor's office, the state funds would bring the total energy assistance funds available in the state to \$24 million.

The state's LIHEAP allotment is expected to be about \$11 million this coming fiscal year, according to the governor's office and the additional funding would come from \$9 million in unused LIHEAP funds from last winter and \$4 million in surplus funds from the state's general fund.

Last winter, fears over escalating fuel costs and concerns over funding for the federal energy assistance program led Gov. Douglas to add \$ 8 million in state funds to the LIHEAP program. An extremely mild Vermont winter left nearly \$9 million of the energy assistance funds unused.

In explaining the need for the additional funds for this winter, the governor's office cited the "Home Energy Affordability Gap" study prepared by former NFFN board member Roger Colton.

- Voters in Denver, CO, have approved a new franchise agreement with Xcel Energy that will funnel \$500,000 annually into an energy efficiency program operated by Energy Outreach Colorado.

Under the terms of the new franchise agreement, a exemption to a portion of the three percent franchise fee charged to all consumers has been eliminated. The funds generated through the elimination of that fee, an estimated \$2 million per year, will be used for energy assistance.

Seventy five percent of the \$2 million will go to supplement the cash assistance grants provided by the county through the Low Income Energy Assistance Program and the remaining \$500,000 will go to Energy Outreach Colorado for its program to increase energy efficiency at non-profit facilities that aid the poor. Jennifer Gremmert of Energy Outreach Colorado described the agreement as "innovative" and said she hoped other jurisdictions in the state would emulate the agreement.

Utility Actions

- The Cleco Corporation collected and distributed more than 1,400 fans to 20 non-profit agencies across its Louisiana service area in July. The fans were collected during the utility's 6th annual fan drive and were used to help needy citizens cope with the high temperatures during the summer.
- At the height of the California heat wave, Southern California Edison funded 20 Cool Centers in their service territory, primarily in areas with extreme heat. The cool centers were located primarily community-based agencies where low-

income and customers with special-needs could visit in lieu of cooling their own homes, in an attempt to alleviate their home electrical usage. The cool centers also provided a place for the target population to learn about low-income and energy efficiency programs, energy conservation, and other available community programs.

Conferences and Events

- Environmental activist Robert F. Kennedy Jr. will be the keynote speaker at the 2006 Midwest Energy Solutions Conference in Chicago September 27th and 28th. The conference will be held at the Crown Plaza Chicago O'Hare hotel. More information on the conference is available at the following website – www.mwalliance.org/energypros/activities/conference/2006/
- The Office of the People's Counsel in Washington, DC is sponsoring a citywide Energy Expo on September 16th from 10 am to 2 pm at the Emery Recreation Center. The Expo will feature workshops and demonstrations from exhibitors such as Home Depot, the DC Energy Office, and the US Department of Energy.

Television Programming of Note

- The Public Broadcast System (PBS) will be airing a new documentary at the end of this month entitled "Waging A Living" that puts a human face on the growing economic squeeze that forces millions of full-time working Americans into the ranks of the poor. The program chronicles the everyday challenges of four low-income wage earners in jobs that do not pay enough for the basics of decent living. Check the following website for more information about the program and the dates and times it will be shown in your area – www.pbs.org/pov/pov2006/wagingaliving/

Resources

- The Coalition for Human Needs has added a new resource page, devoted to information about the status of the poor ten years after the enactment of TANF legislation and one year after hurricane Katrina. The page contains links to articles, reports, websites and events dealing with TANF and the aftermath of hurricane Katrina. The web address for the page is <http://www.chn.org/povertyinfo.html>.