






NATIONAL ENERGY & UTILITY AFFORDABILITY COALITION

# PROTECT LIHEAP IN 2020

## South Carolina By the Numbers

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| <p>Gross LIHEAP allocation to South Carolina in 2017</p> <p><b>\$35,692,535</b></p> <p>for utility payment assistance and home weatherization programs<sup>1</sup></p> | <p>South Carolina LIHEAP funding down</p> <p><b>32.55%</b></p> <p>from FY10 to FY17</p>               |
| <p><b>510,420</b></p> <p># of households eligible for LIHEAP in South Carolina<sup>2</sup></p>   | <p><b>51,055</b></p> <p># of low-income households that received LIHEAP in South Carolina in 2017</p> |
| <p>Only 10.00% of the total eligible population in South Carolina received LIHEAP in 2017</p>  |   |

**62.85%** of LIHEAP recipients in South Carolina have at least one vulnerable member:

-  elderly over 60 31.55%
-  disabled 32.73%
-  child under 6 17.65%

**Federal home heating/cooling assistance saves South Carolina lives.**

**NEUAC urges Congress to protect LIHEAP funding for FY20.**

[www.neuac.org](http://www.neuac.org)

## Why Protect LIHEAP Funding?

The Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) provides critical home heating and cooling help to millions of vulnerable American families. LIHEAP funding peaked when Congress appropriated \$5.1 billion for the program in FY09 and FY10. Since then, funding has fallen by more than one-third. Because of these cuts, one million fewer eligible households receive energy assistance, and average individual grants have been reduced.<sup>3</sup>

### **LIHEAP is not an entitlement.**

Unlike entitlement programs, LIHEAP is funded by the annual congressional appropriations process. While states set eligibility rates, federal law sets the income maximum at 150 percent of the federal poverty guideline, or 60 percent of a state's median income. For example, 150 percent of the FY17 poverty guideline for a family of three is \$30,630.<sup>4</sup> Most LIHEAP recipients earn much less than the maximum thresholds: the latest data show that a typical LIHEAP recipient household had a median income of 83.5 percent of the federal poverty guideline.<sup>5</sup>

### **The need for LIHEAP remains high.**

In 2015, the national poverty rate was 13.5 percent, and 43.1 million Americans lived in poverty. These numbers remain above pre-recession levels.<sup>6</sup>

### **LIHEAP prioritizes vulnerable households.**

More than 70 percent of LIHEAP recipient households had at least one vulnerable person - a senior aged 60 or older, a child aged 5 or under, or an individual with a disability.<sup>7</sup>

### **LIHEAP makes the difference.**

The Federal Reserve found that nearly half of American families would struggle to pay for an emergency expense costing \$400.<sup>8</sup> LIHEAP frequently meets those exact short-term emergencies and can be the difference between making ends meet or not.



#### Sources

1. FY10-16 Data, HHS; \*FY 17 reflects expected total annualized state funding as described by HHS in October 2016 <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/ocs/resource/liheap-dear-colleague-notice-on-release-of-approximately-309-billion-of-regular-block-grant-funding-fy-2017>
2. Eligible households developed using Fisher, Sheehan and Colton aggregation of 2012-2017 ACS data. <http://www.homeenergyaffordabilitygap.com/>
3. NEADA Purchasing Power Table
4. LIHEAP IM 2017-02 <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/ocs/resource/liheap-im-2017-02-fy-2017-hhs-federal-poverty-guidelines>
5. HHS FY2017 Budget Justification [https://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/olab/final\\_cj\\_2017\\_print.pdf](https://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/olab/final_cj_2017_print.pdf)
6. US Census Bureau: "Income and Poverty in the United States: 2015" <http://www.census.gov/content/dam/Census/library/publications/2016/demo/p60-256.pdf>
7. LIHEAP state reports
8. "Report on the Economic Well-Being of U.S. Households in 2015" <https://www.federalreserve.gov/2015-report-economic-well-being-us-households-201605.pdf>