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Submitted by the National Energy and Utility Affordability Coalition (NEUAC)

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Prepared for the U.S. Senate Committee on Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies; Administration for Children and Families, Office of Community Services regarding the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP)

The [National Energy and Utility Affordability Coalition \(NEUAC\)](https://neuac.org/) is writing in support of the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) in Federal Fiscal Year (FY) 2026. NEUAC, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, is a broad-based coalition of diverse members dedicated to heightening awareness of the energy and utility affordability needs of vulnerable households, fostering public-private partnerships, and engaging in advocacy, education, and other activities to help address these needs. NEUAC's vision is for all people to have access to the energy and utility resources they need to live in a safe and healthy way. Headquartered in Washington, D.C., NEUAC works with our committed utility, tribal, governmental, and nonprofit members to advance our mission.

LIHEAP, established by the administration of President Ronald Regan in 1981, has protected the health and safety of vulnerable households for more than 40 years by helping residents maintain access to energy and fuel. It is critical that this cornerstone safety net program remain in place to address the ongoing and emergent needs for residential heating and cooling assistance in the United States.

LIHEAP is an efficient, targeted block grant that maximizes state and local control. It delivers crisis assistance by applying the benefit directly to utility bills, making it a highly effective and trustworthy expenditure of taxpayer dollars. In FY 2023, the program restored power or prevented disconnection 2.76 million times.ⁱ Congress' support will ensure that households with seniors, veterans, persons with disabilities, and economically vulnerable populations receive the critical assistance they need.

*Faces of LIHEAP*ⁱⁱ captures personal stories that highlight the program's impact at the household level. Below are a few of the significant outcomes documented in these accounts:

*The National Energy and Utility Affordability Coalition (NEUAC)
Regarding FY 2026 U.S. Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program Funding*

Colorado

Eric Lopez is a Marine Corps veteran who has worked in the construction management industry for 24 years. When he was laid off, he called upon LIHEAP to assist him with heating costs during the winter months. He went on to become a training manager for Veterans Green Jobs in Denver, Colorado.

Louisiana

When her car broke down, Lois Boles was faced with a difficult choice: fix her car or pay her electric bill. She applied for LIHEAP and received the help she needed to both remain connected to life-critical power and make the repairs needed to her vehicle, helping her remain employed and independent.

Maine

After raising five children together in Maine, Edith Roma lost her hard-working husband of more than 30 years. She found herself surviving month-to-month on a fixed income. Edith stressed the importance of LIHEAP as a resource for seniors like her when costs rise, but her income does not.

Mississippi

Shannon Thomas of Mississippi is an army veteran who was determined to get therapy for Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and return to higher education to earn a professional credential. Over time, he fell behind on his energy bill. LIHEAP provided the assistance he needed to get back on track and focus on his education and recovery.

Energy costs are not optional. Like the people documented above, many hardworking American families are faced with impossible choices between keeping the heat or electric on and affording groceries, medications, or rent. LIHEAP not only helps prevent these kinds of hardships, but also reduces the risk of health emergencies, helps seniors remain in their own homes, and promotes long-term financial stability.

LIHEAP drives down energy costs for consumers and puts American families first, providing support according to strict eligibility criteria and employing a network that values personal dignity, strong communities, and program integrity. Since 1981, LIHEAP has run efficiently and effectively with one of the lowest administration rates in the country while continuing to deliver services to nearly 6 million householdsⁱⁱⁱ.

Beyond providing bill assistance, LIHEAP supports weatherization and energy efficiency measures, helping reduce long-term energy use and utility costs. This makes the program not just a humanitarian imperative, but a wise economic investment that benefits both families and local economies.

NEUAC and the utility assistance network appreciate the late spring release of the remaining FY 2025 LIHEAP funds. However, the delay and uncertainty stemming from the elimination of key staff within the Division of Energy Assistance at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services created significant challenges in preparing for the summer cooling and placed added strain on the network. This was further exacerbated by the timing, as it coincided with the end of winter utility disconnection moratoria in many states—prompting a surge in arrearage management needs typically addressed by LIHEAP. The disruption underscores the critical need for timely communication and consistent federal oversight. To ensure LIHEAP continues to operate effectively and serve vulnerable households, a strong and stable federal program infrastructure is essential.

As the committee begins to compose the FY 2026 Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies Appropriations bill, NEUAC urges you to prioritize LIHEAP funding and ensure adequate staffing to deliver consistent and continuous energy assistance across the country, for tribal nations, and in U.S. territories. NEUAC respectfully requests this Committee continue to protect seniors, children, those with disabling medical conditions, and other vulnerable persons by maximizing FY 2026 LIHEAP appropriations at \$5.1 billion.

LIHEAP is the sole source of energy security for millions of households, ensures access to critical home heating and cooling, provides weatherization to improve home energy efficiency, addresses energy crises, and protects families in their own homes. Congress has many difficult funding decisions to make. NEUAC urges you to consider that ensuring energy security for all Americans is a responsibility we cannot afford to ignore.

ⁱ <https://liheap-fy23-data-dashboard-hhs-acf.hub.arcgis.com/>

ⁱⁱ <http://facesofliheap.com/>

ⁱⁱⁱ <https://liheapppm.acf.gov/datawarehouse>