

Building the case for LIHEAP:

Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program

Protect the vulnerable, address humanitarian needs for energy and fuel access

Energy burden has become a central driver of affordability in America

- Low-income households spent on average 17.8% of their income on energy alone in 2022, almost four times the national average.¹
- More than 1/3 of Americans (34.3%) have reported cutting back on or skipping necessary expenses at least once between December 2023 and December 2024 to pay for their energy bills.²
- Between December 2023 and December 2024, 23.4% have been unable to pay part or all of their energy bill.²
- Households with children who reported cutting back on or skipping necessary expenses increased from 38.7% to 41.5% during the same reporting period.²
- According to the Bipartisan Policy Center and Consumer Price Index data, electricity prices rose 5.1% between September 2024 and September 2025, which was higher proportionately compared to the overall 3% inflation rate for goods and services.³

Energy access is crucial for household safety

- Between 2022 and 2024, 22% of households reported having kept their homes at unsafe temperatures as a way to save money. In that same time period, 43% of households reported experiencing at least one form of energy insecurity.⁴
- The average limited-income household's energy burden is three times that of other households.⁵
- Nearly 27% of Americans report they reduced or forwent basic expenses such as food and medicine so they could pay their energy bill.⁶
- One in six people report an inability to pay the full amount of their energy bill at least once in the preceding 12 months.⁶
- LIHEAP restored power or prevented disconnection 3,652,672 times in FY 2024.⁷

LIHEAP plays a vital role in protecting families

- 57,000 children were lifted out of poverty because of energy assistance in 2024.⁸
- 78,000 people age 65 or older were lifted out of poverty because of energy assistance in 2024.⁸
- In FY 2024, 49,793 homes were weatherized with LIHEAP funds, improving the health, safety, and affordability for those households.⁹
- Three out of 10 households receiving LIHEAP reported using their kitchen stove to heat their home at least once in the year preceding assistance.¹⁰ LIHEAP helps families avoid dangerous heating practices in winter.
- One in four households receiving LIHEAP reported that they could not afford to address the non-functioning furnace or cooling system in their homes.¹⁰ LIHEAP helps repair and replace broken systems, keeping homes safe and energy efficient.
- The need for year-round LIHEAP offerings is growing, especially the need for cooling assistance. Extreme heat caused more deaths in 2024 than any other weather event, including floods, hurricanes, and tornadoes.¹¹ LIHEAP protects people from extreme heat in their homes. **LIHEAP saves lives.**

Overcoming energy insecurity requires consistent efforts

- The rising costs of energy, fuel, and other resources have contributed to an affordability crisis in America. Ongoing support is necessary to continue to address the consequences of energy insecurity.
- Year-round programming that includes both heating and cooling assistance is becoming increasingly necessary.
- Crisis presents a persistent and insidious state of emergency for LIHEAP families. Consistent and comprehensive funding ensures families maintain a safe home environment year-round.

LIHEAP Overview

Support LIHEAP to ensure health and safety in American homes

The Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) is one of the most critical components of the social safety net. The program provides heating and cooling assistance to households experiencing economic or medical crises, or otherwise vulnerable to unsafe indoor temperatures.

LIHEAP is an exceptionally efficient and targeted program, with state block grants flowing to local agencies to eligible households on a short-term basis to prevent utility disconnections or provide assistance with the cost of heating and cooling homes.

The National Energy & Utility Affordability Coalition (NEUAC) along with our dedicated partners strongly urge Congress to provide adequate funding for LIHEAP in Fiscal Year 2026 (FY26) in order to protect access to energy and fuel for families struggling with kitchen table budgets that are increasingly difficult to balance.

LIHEAP addresses the affordability crisis

Affordability is fundamental to keeping utilities connected and homes stable for families. When essential services like heat and electricity are affordable, families remain safe, healthy, and focused on work, school, and caregiving rather than impossible tradeoffs between utilities and other basic needs. Ensuring affordability strengthens communities, supports economic stability, and allows utilities to fulfill their core mission of providing reliable, essential service to every household.

Current events support the need for LIHEAP

LIHEAP provides access to utility assistance during both deadly heat domes and winter freezes. In FY 2024, winter crisis assistance served nearly 700,000 households, while summer crisis assistance served nearly 100,000 households. **LIHEAP needs more funds to address life-critical cooling assistance.** Unusually hot summer temperatures have become more common across the contiguous 48 states in recent decades. As a result, the risk of heat-related deaths and illness is expected to increase.

Our request to you...

Please protect seniors, children, those with disabilities and other vulnerable persons by maximizing FY 2027 LIHEAP appropriations at \$5.1 billion.

LIHEAP provides 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.

Sources

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