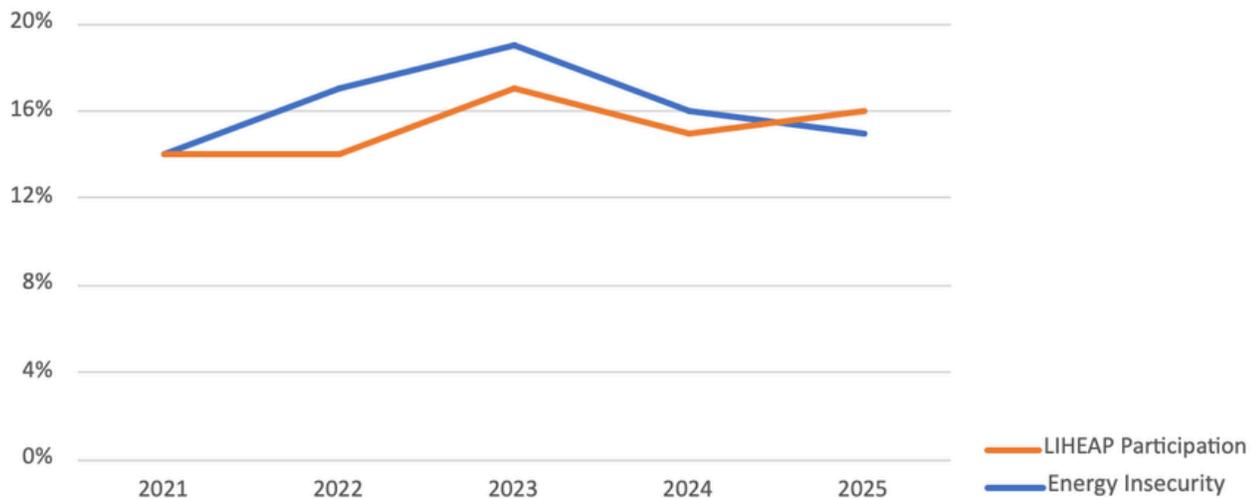


PERSISTENT ENERGY INSECURITY AMONG FAMILIES WITH YOUNG CHILDREN

ENERGY INSECURITY PREVALENCE AND LIHEAP PARTICIPATION, 2021–2025



Energy insecurity is a **persistent nationwide challenge** that adversely affects the health and well-being of children and families. Among families with young children accessing health care in 4 U.S. cities (Boston, MA; Minneapolis, MN; Philadelphia, PA; Little Rock, AR), energy insecurity peaked in 2023, affecting **nearly 1 in 5 families** (19%).

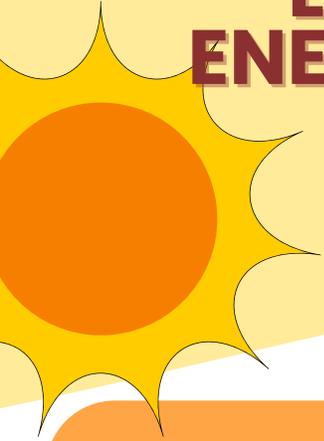
Energy insecurity is measured as households who have experienced at least one of the following in the previous year:

- A threatened or actual utility shut-off or refused delivery of heating fuel
- An unheated or uncooled day because of inability to pay utility bills
- Use of a cooking stove as a source of heat

ENERGY INSECURITY HARMS FAMILIES

Energy insecurity is associated with poor health outcomes for children. Research shows children in energy insecure households are more likely to:

- Be food insecure
- Be in fair or poor health
- Be at risk for developmental delays
- Have ever been hospitalized since birth
- Have moved two or more times in the past year



LOW INCOME HEATING AND ENERGY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM: A PRESCRIPTION FOR ENERGY INSECURITY

HEALTH BENEFITS OF LIHEAP

Compared to eligible non-participants, children in families that received LIHEAP were:

- Less likely to be at risk for growth problems
- More likely to have **healthier weights** for their age
- **Less likely to need to be hospitalized** when seeking care for acute medical problems
- More likely to be **housing secure**

17%

of households in the U.S. participating in LIHEAP have at least one young child.

In FY2024, LIHEAP served 5.8 million households across the U.S. including **almost 1 million low-income households with children** under 5 years old, a population that is uniquely vulnerable to economic instability and health and growth consequences of energy insecurity.

However, **only 1 in 5 income-eligible households participate** in LIHEAP due to chronic underfunding – a trend reflected in the Children’s HealthWatch dataset of likely income-eligible families with young children.

Energy prices have increased **faster than the rate of inflation** since 2022, with the national average electricity price increasing by 13% from 2022 to 2025. In the face of rising energy costs, it is more important than ever to **ensure LIHEAP is adequately funded** to meet need and meaningfully assist all eligible households.

POLICY RECOMMENDATION

Maximize LIHEAP appropriations at \$5.1 billion to improve program access year-round and support the health and well-being of young children and their families.

