



LOW INCOME HOME ENERGY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (LIHEAP)

LIHEAP helps low-income households and seniors with their energy bills, providing vital assistance during the cold winter months. LIHEAP households are among the most vulnerable in the country. According to the National Energy Assistance Director's Association (NEADA), nearly 90 percent of LIHEAP recipients have at least one household member who is a child, elderly or disabled. For these households, LIHEAP funding has been a lifeline during challenging economic times.

PMAA member companies market over 95 percent of the heating oil sold in the United States. Heating oil marketers have a unique relationship with their customers and communities that electric and natural gas utilities cannot provide. Heating oil dealers are mostly small, second and third generation family-owned businesses who provide both fuel supply and service for heating oil equipment for millions of customers nation-wide. Thus, they are on the front lines every day in the winter to make sure their customers stay warm, whether that means having available fuel, or equipment that works.

Congress limits LIHEAP eligibility to households earning no more than 150 percent of the federal poverty level or 60 percent of the state median income. For reference, the FY17 federal poverty guideline for a family of three was \$30,240. Most LIHEAP recipients fall well below either threshold and many applicants are turned away each year due to insufficient program funds.

In 2017, the national poverty rate was 12.7 percent and 40.6 million Americans lived in poverty, according to U.S. Census data. There's no question that the need for LIHEAP persists. The Federal Reserve reports that nearly half of American families would struggle to pay emergency expenses of just \$400.

FY 2019 LIHEAP FUNDING IN THE PRESIDENT'S BUDGET

The President's FY 2019 budget proposal eliminates LIHEAP as well as the Weatherization Assistance Program (WAP). In recent years, the LIHEAP program has provided more than \$3 billion annually to states in support of their fuel assistance programs, with a current budget of \$3.39 billion. Both programs are vital in serving low income consumers of home heating fuel, with LIHEAP helping consumers with fuel funds and the WAP helping with acquiring more efficient equipment. Although, passage of the President's budget is not likely, it is important to remind Congress how important LIHEAP is to low income Americans as well as small businesses. PMAA is a member of the National Energy and Utility Affordability Coalition (NEUAC) and has been aggressively fighting to save LIHEAP.

"THE ASK" *Committees: House and Senate Appropriations Committees; All lawmakers*

We urge all members (especially members of the Appropriations Committees) to support full funding for LIHEAP and for WAP.

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