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## HHS Releases \$490 Million in Emergency Funding to States for Energy Assistance for Low-Income Families

In response to the growing demands on states and families for much needed relief, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) Secretary Kathleen Sebelius announced today the release of \$490 million in contingency funding to help eligible low-income homeowners and renters meet home energy costs. These Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) contingency funds will provide states, territories, tribes and the District of Columbia with additional assistance to pay heating and electricity costs.

"During these tight economic times, states and communities across the country have seen increased demand on key services, such as energy assistance for low-income families. And the record cold snap in places that traditionally don't see weather as cold as it has been this year has put even more pressure on families in these states," said HHS Secretary Sebelius. "The energy subsidies we are releasing today will help more families afford heat and avert difficult choices too many Americans face between paying for heat and paying for other essentials like food and medicine," Sebelius said.

LIHEAP helps eligible families pay for home heating, cooling, and other energy costs, as well as helping to weatherize eligible families' homes. In recent years, more than six million low-income households across the country receive assistance under LIHEAP.

The contingency funds released today are in addition to basic LIHEAP funding states receive automatically. HHS released \$2.6 billion in October and \$1.2 billion last week in regular block grant funds. Today's \$490 million release is from a \$590 million LIHEAP contingency fund leaving \$100 million available for unanticipated events in the contingency fund.

In total, Congress appropriated \$5.1 billion for LIHEAP in fiscal year 2010. "We have made a decision to release a substantial portion of available funding now to help children, seniors, and families struggling to make ends meet," said Carmen R. Nazario, HHS assistant secretary for children and families. "At a time when unemployment is unacceptably high, this assistance can provide a real helping hand to families hardest hit by the recession."

For a complete list of state allocations of the funds released today go to: [http://www.acf.hhs.gov/news/press/2010/liheap\\_2010\\_490m.html](http://www.acf.hhs.gov/news/press/2010/liheap_2010_490m.html)

Individuals interested in applying for energy assistance should contact their local/state LIHEAP agency. For more information, go to <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/ocs/liheap/>

or <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/ocs/liheap/brochure/brochure.html> .

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Note: All HHS press releases, fact sheets and other press materials are available at <http://www.hhs.gov/news>.