

**Record Numbers of Households Seek Energy Assistance  
States Call for the Release of Emergency Funds and Supplemental Assistance  
February 22, 2010, 10:00 a.m.  
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National Press Club, Washington, DC**

State energy officials today released the results of their 2010 Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) Winter Application Survey. The key finding is that the numbers of households seeking energy assistance is set to reach record numbers for the third year in a row.

The total number of households served is projected at 8.8 million, up by almost 15 percent or 1.2 million from last year's record of 7.7 million. Record levels are being reported by states across all parts of the country. Applications are up by more than 20 percent in the following 17 states:

- 25% or greater: Mississippi (68%), Washington (42%), Michigan (38%), Nevada (34%), New Jersey (31%), West Virginia (28%), Colorado (26%) Kansas, New Hampshire and Wisconsin (25%)
- 20% to 24%: Montana (21%), California, Oregon, South Carolina, South Dakota, Texas and Rhode Island (20%).

To address the 1.2 million increase in applications, as well as the expected increase in utility arrearages and shut-offs as a result of the continuing high and sustained unemployment, states are calling on the Administration to release the remaining \$100 million emergency funds to help offset the rapid rise in applications. States are also calling on Congress to provide supplemental funding for FY 2010 of up to \$2.5 billion. This would increase the appropriations level to \$7.6 billion, the authorized funding level contained in H.R. 4554, Energy Assistance for American Families Act.

Jo-Ann Choate, Director of the Maine LIHEAP program and Chair of NEADA, stated that the additional funds will be used to provide a supplemental benefit that will provide at least 100 gallons of fuel to low income families to help Maine's low income experiencing economic hardships and sustained unemployment.

Jerry McKim, the LIHEAP Director for the State of Iowa added that, "the consequences of unaffordable energy are dire. In an effort to better afford their utility bills, many elderly households cut back on prescribed medicine and/or set their thermostats too low risking their already insecure health and families with young children sacrifice their children's nutritional needs. Disconnected households use unsafe methods of heating that increase the risk of carbon monoxide poisoning, and those who live by candlelight increase the likelihood of a house fire tragedy. This is more than an energy issue and needs to be acknowledged for what it is: a serious public health matter."

The National Energy Assistance Directors' Association (NEADA) represents the state LIHEAP directors. [www.neada.org](http://www.neada.org).

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