

**NATIONAL ENERGY ASSISTANCE
DIRECTORS' ASSOCIATION**

**2011 NATIONAL ENERGY ASSISTANCE SURVEY
CONNECTICUT STUDY**

Final Summary Report
November 2011

The National Energy Assistance Directors' Association

The National Energy Assistance Directors' Association (NEADA) represents the state directors of the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP). NEADA is a nonprofit educational and policy organization based in Washington, DC. Its mission is to support the delivery of LIHEAP services by state agencies and programs.

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Jo-Ann Choate
Chairman

Mark Wolfe
Executive Director

NEADA
1232 31st NW
Washington, DC 20007
202-237-5199
www.neada.org

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Connecticut	Maine	North Carolina	Ohio
Delaware	Minnesota	New Mexico	Pennsylvania
Georgia			

Mark Wolfe
Executive Director
National Energy Assistance Directors' Association

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Executive Summary

This report presents findings from a survey of FY 2011 LIHEAP recipients in Connecticut and compares their characteristics and problems affording energy bills to LIHEAP recipients in the Northeast, and to a nationally representative sample of LIHEAP recipients across the United States. This study is part of a larger national study of LIHEAP recipients across the country. During the period of study, low-income households across the country faced a difficult economic climate and high energy costs.

LIHEAP Recipient Households

LIHEAP recipients in CT, like those throughout the country, are likely to have vulnerable household members. Eighty-six percent of LIHEAP recipients in CT have an elderly household member, a disabled household member, or a child in the home.

By definition, these households have very low incomes – 69 percent of the recipients in CT have annual household income of under \$20,000 and 47 percent have income below the poverty level.

Financial Situation

Like LIHEAP recipients across the country, recipients in CT were likely to say that their financial situation was worse than it had been the previous year. In the state as a whole, 49 percent of recipients who said it was more difficult to pay energy bills said that their financial situation had worsened. Recipients in District 1 (Hartford) were most likely to say that their situation had worsened. Fifty-nine percent of these recipients said that their financial situation had worsened, compared to 52 percent in District 5 (Waterbury/Danbury/New Britain), and 38 percent in Districts 2 (Groton/Norwich) and 3 (New Haven).

Energy Costs

LIHEAP recipients in CT reported high energy costs. Over sixty percent of these respondents said that their annual energy costs were more than \$2,000, compared to 53 percent in the Northeast and 45 percent in the U.S. However, due to their higher incomes, their energy burdens were not as high as the country's average.

LIHEAP has a big impact on CT LIHEAP recipients' energy burden. Only 10 percent of LIHEAP recipients in CT had an energy burden of five percent or less, prior to LIHEAP, but 35 percent had an energy burden of five percent or less after LIHEAP.

Responses to High Energy Costs

LIHEAP recipients in CT sometimes take detrimental actions to meet their energy needs.

- 23 percent said that they kept their home at a temperature that they felt was unsafe or unhealthy during the past year, and 32 percent in District 3 (New Haven) said that they did so.
- 19 percent said they left their home for part of the day because it was too hot or too cold.

- 26 percent said that they used their kitchen oven or stove for heat.

Inability to Pay Energy Bills

LIHEAP recipients experienced instances when they could not afford to pay their energy bills and suffered loss of service.

- 50 percent said that they skipped paying or paid less than their full energy bill during the past year.
- 36 percent said that they received a notice or threat to discontinue their electricity or heating fuel.
- 12 percent said that their electric or natural gas service was shut off. 20 percent in District 3 (New Haven) said that their service was shut off compared to 6 percent in District 2 (Groton/Norwich).
- 27 percent said that they were unable to use their main source of heat due to discontinued service or broken equipment. 31 percent of those in District 3 (New Haven) reported this problem, compared to 18 percent in District 4 (Bridgeport/Stamford/Norwalk).
- 18 percent said that they were unable to use air conditioning due to discontinued service or broken equipment. 22 percent in District 1 (Hartford) and 13 percent in District 2 (Groton/Norwich) reported this problem.

Housing and Financial Problems

LIHEAP recipients in CT face housing and financial problems as a result of unaffordable energy bills. Some of the problems faced in the past five years included the following.

- 38 percent said they did not make a full rent or mortgage payment.
- 5 percent were evicted from their home or apartment.
- 17 percent moved in with family or friends.

Medical and Health Problems

LIHEAP recipients in CT had medical and health problems during the previous five years as a result of their energy bills.

- 25 percent said that they went without food for at least one day. 33 percent in District 3 (New Haven) reported that they faced this problem.
- 29 percent said that they went without medical or dental care.
- 31 percent said that they did not take their prescription medication.
- 15 percent became sick and needed to go to the doctor or hospital because their home was too cold.

The rates of these problems were similar among LIHEAP recipients in the Northeast and in the U.S.

The survey provided documentation of the need for LIHEAP and the impact of LIHEAP on recipient households in CT. The survey also showed that many of these households continue to face difficulties meeting their energy needs and their other needs, due to the high cost of energy.

I. Introduction

The National Energy Assistance Directors' Association (NEADA), representing the state LIHEAP directors, received a grant through the Administration for Children and Families (ACF), U.S. Department of Health and Human Services to update the information about LIHEAP-recipient households that was collected in the 2003, 2005, 2008, and 2009 NEA Surveys. This survey documented changes in the affordability of energy bills, the need for LIHEAP, and the choices that low-income households make when faced with unaffordable energy bills. The 2011 NEA Survey selected a new sample of 2011 LIHEAP recipients to document changes in the need for LIHEAP and changes in the choices that low-income households make when faced with unaffordable energy bills. This report presents the findings from the 2011 NEA Survey for an increased CT sample and provides comparisons by district, and to the Northeast and to the U.S. as a whole. The survey and report were prepared for NEADA by APPRISE.

A. *Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP)*

The Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) is administered by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). The purpose of LIHEAP is “to assist low-income households, particularly those with the lowest incomes, that pay a high proportion of household income for home energy, primarily in meeting their immediate home energy needs.” The LIHEAP statute defines home energy as “a source of heating or cooling in residential dwellings.”¹

Federal dollars for LIHEAP are allocated by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services to the grantees (i.e., the 50 states, District of Columbia, 128 tribes and tribal organizations, and five insular areas) as a block grant. Program funds are distributed by a formula, which is weighted towards relative cold-weather conditions.

B. *2011 National Energy Assistance Survey*

The 2011 NEA Survey aimed to update the information about LIHEAP-recipient households that was collected in the 2003, 2005, 2008, and 2009 NEA Surveys. Stratified samples of 2011 LIHEAP recipients were selected to collect new information about the consequences of high energy bills for low-income households. The 2011 National Energy Assistance Survey collected the following information from LIHEAP-recipient households:

- Demographic, energy expenditure, and income information
- Healthy home behaviors
- History of LIHEAP participation
- Constructive actions taken to meet energy expenses

¹ The statutory intent of LIHEAP is to reduce home heating and cooling costs for low-income households. However, information on total residential energy costs is more accessible and more apparent to LIHEAP-recipient respondents. Moreover, any reduction in home heating and cooling costs leads to a direct reduction in total residential energy costs. Therefore, this report addresses total residential energy costs.

- Signs of unaffordable energy bills
- Health and safety consequences of unaffordable energy bills
- Effects of unaffordable energy bills on housing
- Changes in financial situation and affordability of home energy bills
- Impact and importance of LIHEAP benefits for recipient households

The 2011 Survey included the 13 states that were included in the 2009 Survey, and the larger sample of CT LIHEAP recipients, as a result of additional funding that was allocated for a special study in CT. This report presents on the findings for CT and districts within the state, and compares statistics to those for the Northeast and to the U.S. as a whole.

C. Organization of the Report

This report has four sections that follow this introduction.

- *Section II: Survey Methodology:* Presents the methodology and survey response rates.
- *Section III: LIHEAP Recipients:* Presents demographic and income information for LIHEAP-recipient households that completed the 2011 NEA Survey.
- *Section IV: Problems Faced Meeting Energy Needs:* Presents information about actions that LIHEAP-recipient households take to meet their energy needs, household necessities, and health and wellness in the face of significant financial constraints.
- *Section V: Conclusion:* Presents a summary of the key findings in this report.

II. Survey Methodology

This section describes the methodology for the 2011 NEA Survey.

A. Survey Implementation

A survey advance letter was sent to the sample of selected LIHEAP recipients from the 13 participating states. This letter announced the survey, notified potential respondents that they would be called to participate in the survey, explained the purpose of the survey, and gave potential respondents the option to call the phone center to complete the survey at their convenience.

Telephone interviews were conducted between May 2, 2011 and July 3, 2011. During this time period, 1,768 interviews were completed. Telephone interviews for Connecticut were conducted between May 20, 2011 and July 3, 2011. During this time, 495 interviews were completed.

B. Sample Selection and Response Rates

LIHEAP recipients were selected from each of the 13 states chosen to participate in the survey. Because of a special congressional earmark for Connecticut, a special study was conducted for Connecticut. Table II-1 displays the number of interviews completed by district in CT. The response rate ranged from 44 percent in District 1 to 52 percent in District 2.

Table II-1
Connecticut Number of Completed Interviews by District

Connecticut	Total Selected	Completed Interviews	Response Rate
District 1	270	95	44%
District 2	220	102	52%
District 3	270	93	45%
District 4	270	103	48%
District 5	260	102	50%
Total	1,290	495	48%

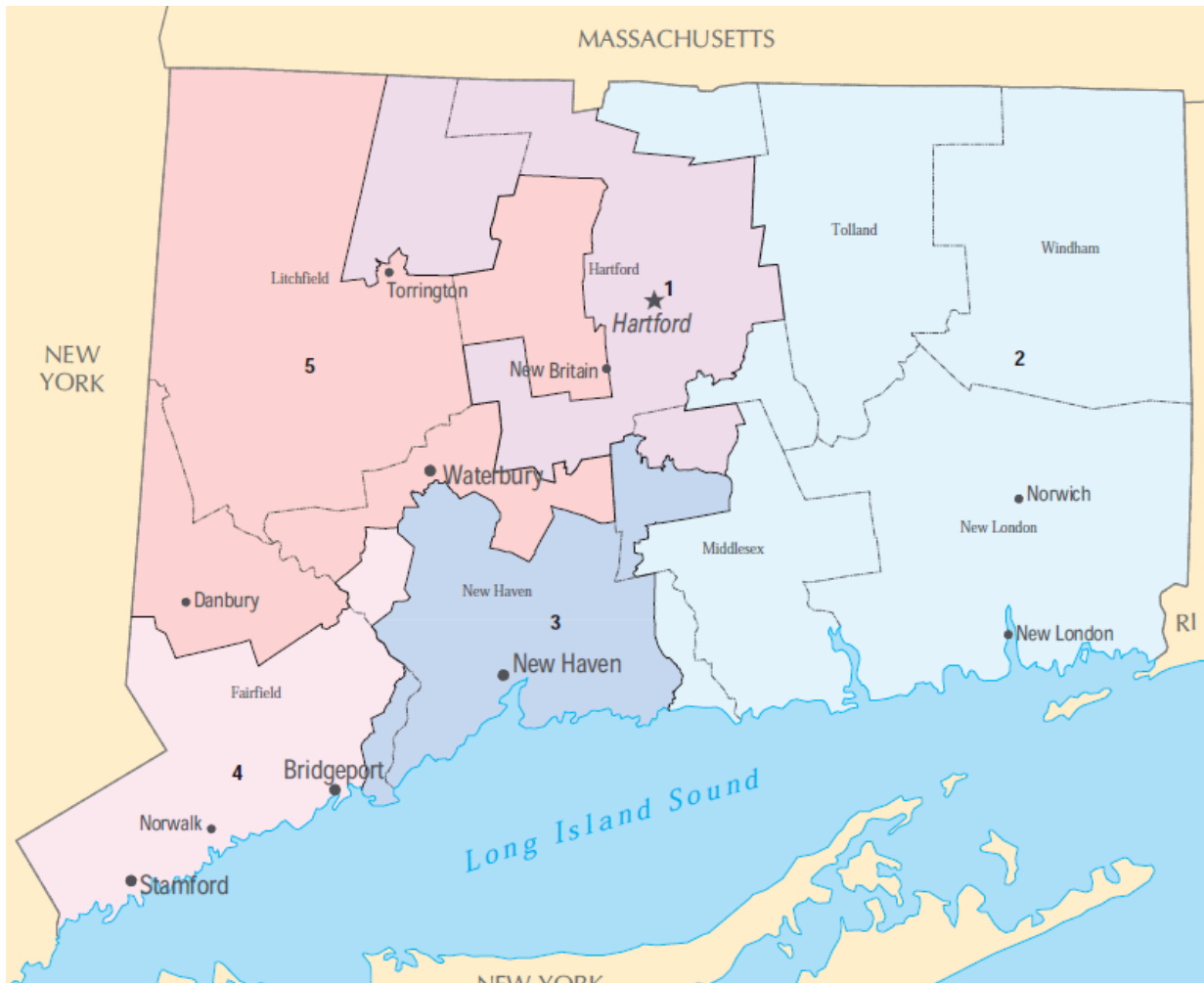
C. Districts

LIHEAP recipients in Connecticut were stratified into five districts for the sample selection and analysis. Table II-4 provides information on the major cities that are located in each of the districts. The largest cities in each district are highlighted.

**Table II-4
Major Cities in Each District**

District 1	District 2	District 3	District 4	District 5
Bristol	Groton	East Haven	Bridgeport	Bethel
East Hartford	New London	Middletown	Darien	Danbury
Hartford	Norwich	Milford	Norwalk	Meriden
Kensington	Southwood Acres	Naugatuck	Stamford	New Britain
Newington	Storrs	New Haven	Trumbull	Oakville
West Hartford	Thompsonville	North Haven	Westport	Torrington
Wethersfield		Shelton		Waterbury
Winsted		Stratford		
Windsor Locks		West Haven		

The map below displays the geographic divisions for the district level analysis.



III. LIHEAP Recipient Households

This section provides findings on the demographic characteristics of LIHEAP recipient households. We compare findings in the state of CT, the five CT districts, the Northeast, and the United States.

Table III-1 displays the percentage of LIHEAP households with vulnerable members. The table shows that 34 percent of LIHEAP households in CT have a senior member and 37 percent have a disabled member. Forty-six percent of households have a child aged 18 or younger.

**Table III-1
Vulnerable Groups**

	CT	CT Districts					Northeast	U.S.
		1	2	3	4	5		
Number of Respondents	495	95	102	93	103	102	841	1,768
Senior	34%	34%	37%	33%	28%	35%	53%	40%
Disabled	37%	30%	35%	43%	30%	44%	40%	42%
Child ≤18	46%	44%	47%	48%	54%	41%	38%	41%
Child ≤5	20%	21%	20%	17%	22%	19%	18%	21%

Table III-2 displays annual household income. The table shows that LIHEAP recipients in CT are less likely than LIHEAP recipients overall to have income below \$10,000. Mean household income is \$16,571 for LIHEAP recipients in CT, compared to \$14,910 for all LIHEAP recipients in the Northeast and about \$14,427 for all LIHEAP recipients in the U.S.

**Table III-2
Annual Income**

	CT	CT Districts					Northeast	U.S.
		1	2	3	4	5		
Number of Respondents	495	95	102	93	103	102	841	1,768
Less than \$ 10,000	28%	27%	26%	30%	30%	26%	32%	36%
\$ 10,001 - \$ 20,000	41%	42%	34%	39%	34%	49%	41%	41%
\$ 20,001 - \$ 30,000	19%	22%	20%	18%	17%	18%	16%	16%
\$ 30,001 - \$ 40,000	7%	6%	11%	10%	9%	5%	5%	5%
More than \$ 40,000	5%	3%	9%	4%	9%	2%	2%	2%
Mean Income	\$16,571	\$15,915	\$19,270	\$16,705	\$17,442	\$15,198	\$14,910	\$14,427

Table III-3 displays data on poverty level of LIHEAP recipients in CT. The table shows that 47 percent of LIHEAP recipients in CT have income at or below the poverty level, compared to 58

percent in the Northeast and 61 percent in the U.S. Twenty-eight percent of LIHEAP recipients in CT have income above 150 percent of poverty in CT compared to 13 percent in the Northeast and 11 percent in the U.S.

**Table III-3
Poverty Level**

	CT	CT Districts					Northeast	U.S.
		1	2	3	4	5		
Number of Respondents	495	95	102	93	103	102	841	1,768
0%-50%	20%	21%	18%	28%	22%	14%	19%	19%
51%-100%	27%	28%	21%	21%	26%	35%	39%	42%
101%-125%	13%	12%	12%	11%	10%	16%	17%	15%
126%-150%	11%	11%	14%	13%	15%	7%	12%	13%
>150%	28%	27%	35%	28%	28%	27%	13%	11%

Table III-4 displays information on unemployment during the past year. The table shows that 38 percent of LIHEAP recipients said that someone in the household had been unemployed at some point in the past year. This varied from 32 percent in District 2 to 43 percent in District 1.

**Table III-4
Unemployed During the Year**

	CT	CT Districts					Northeast	U.S.
		1	2	3	4	5		
Number of Respondents	495	95	102	93	103	102	841	1,768
Yes	38%	43%	32%	34%	41%	36%	31%	35%
No	59%	54%	65%	62%	55%	61%	64%	62%
Don't Know / Refused	3%	3%	3%	4%	4%	3%	5%	3%

IV. Problems Meeting Energy Needs

This section examines the financial challenges and difficult choices made by the LIHEAP recipients to manage their total residential energy costs.

A. Increased Utility Bills and Increased Need

Respondents were asked to report their total residential energy costs for the past year. Table IV-1 shows that 61 percent said that their costs were more than \$2,000. This is higher than the 53 percent in the Northeast and 45 percent in the U.S. who said that their energy costs were more than \$2,000.

Table IV-1
Annual Total Residential Energy Costs

	CT	CT Districts					Northeast	U.S.
		1	2	3	4	5		
Number of Respondents	495	95	102	93	103	102	841	1,768
Less than \$ 500	1%	1%	0%	0%	1%	0%	1%	2%
\$ 501 - \$ 1,000	4%	3%	5%	5%	3%	3%	3%	8%
\$ 1,001 - \$ 1,500	8%	11%	8%	5%	3%	7%	6%	10%
\$ 1,501 - \$ 2,000	8%	4%	4%	10%	10%	11%	8%	12%
Over \$ 2,000	61%	57%	66%	71%	64%	55%	53%	45%
Don't Know / Refused	20%	23%	17%	9%	19%	25%	29%	22%

Table IV-2A displays the percent of income that households spent on energy, prior to taking account of the LIHEAP benefits that they received. The table shows that 19 percent of LIHEAP recipients in CT had a pre-LIHEAP energy burden of more than 20 percent. This compares to 16 percent in the Northeast and 22 percent in the U.S.

Table IV-2A
Total Residential Energy Burden
Pre-LIHEAP Burden

	CT	CT Districts					Northeast	U.S.
		1	2	3	4	5		
Number of Respondents	372	71	81	79	73	68	543	1,275
0-5%	10%	9%	17%	8%	17%	4%	8%	9%
6%-10%	33%	33%	38%	34%	29%	28%	33%	32%
11-15%	23%	26%	16%	21%	21%	29%	26%	23%
16-20%	15%	10%	14%	14%	21%	20%	17%	13%

	CT	CT Districts					Northeast	U.S.
		1	2	3	4	5		
Number of Respondents	372	71	81	79	73	68	543	1,275
21-25%	7%	8%	6%	7%	6%	6%	11%	9%
>25%	12%	13%	10%	16%	6%	12%	5%	13%

Table IV-2B displays the post-LIHEAP energy burden. The table shows that only 6 percent of LIHEAP recipients in CT had a post-LIHEAP energy burden of more than 20 percent and 35 percent had a post-LIHEAP energy burden of five percent or less. This compares to 29 percent of LIHEAP recipients in the Northeast and 26 percent of LIHEAP recipients in the U.S. who had a post-LIHEAP energy burden of five percent or less.

Table IV-2B
Total Residential Energy Burden
Post-LIHEAP Burden

	CT	CT Districts					Northeast	U.S.
		1	2	3	4	5		
Number of Respondents	372	71	81	79	73	68	543	1,275
0-5%	35%	40%	30%	42%	33%	26%	29%	26%
6%-10%	38%	35%	41%	30%	41%	45%	39%	32%
11-15%	15%	12%	10%	15%	20%	19%	19%	20%
16-20%	6%	7%	12%	5%	0%	5%	8%	9%
21-25%	2%	2%	5%	3%	2%	0%	3%	5%
>25%	4%	3%	4%	5%	5%	5%	1%	8%

Respondents were asked to compare the difficulty of paying their energy bill to the previous year. Table IV-3 shows that 31 percent said they were the same, 51 percent said that they were more difficult to pay, and 12 percent said that they were less difficult to pay.

Table IV-3
Change in Difficulty in Paying Energy Bills

	CT	CT Districts					Northeast	U.S.
		1	2	3	4	5		
Number of Respondents	495	95	102	93	103	102	841	1,768
More Difficult	51%	47%	53%	54%	50%	54%	55%	52%
Same	31%	32%	32%	34%	29%	29%	29%	31%
Less Difficult	12%	16%	9%	9%	17%	11%	11%	12%
Don't Know / Refused	5%	5%	7%	4%	5%	6%	6%	5%

Table IV-4 shows that of those who said that their energy bills were more difficult to pay, 49 percent said it was due to a worsened financial situation, 43 percent said it was because the energy bill was higher, and four percent said it was because other bills were higher. Respondents in CT were more likely than respondents in the Northeast to say that their bills were more difficult to pay because of a worsened economic situation.

Table IV-4
Reasons for Increased Difficulty in Paying Energy Bills

	CT	CT Districts					Northeast	U.S.
		1	2	3	4	5		
Number of Respondents	252	45	53	48	51	55	446	940
Lower Income / Lost Job / Worse Economic Situation	49%	59%	38%	38%	49%	52%	39%	48%
Increased Energy Bill	43%	39%	46%	59%	35%	37%	51%	42%
Increased Other Bills	4%	0%	11%	0%	9%	5%	6%	6%
Increased Medical Expenses	<1%	0%	0%	0%	2%	0%	1%	2%
Cold Winter	1%	2%	0%	2%	0%	0%	1%	1%
No/Less Energy Assistance	1%	0%	2%	0%	2%	0%	2%	1%
Increased Rent	2%	0%	0%	2%	0%	6%	<1%	<1%
Other	<1%	0%	2%	0%	0%	0%	0%	<1%
Don't Know/Refused	1%	0%	2%	0%	2%	0%	1%	1%

B. Signs of the Problem

Respondents were asked whether they reduced expenses for household necessities due to not having enough money to pay their energy bill during the past year. Table IV-5 shows that 77 percent said that they reduced expenses for household necessities because they did not have enough money for their energy bills at least one month in the past year. Fifty percent did so almost every month.

Table IV-5
Reduced Expenses for Household Necessities Due to Not Having Enough Money for the Energy Bill During the Past Year

	CT	CT Districts					Northeast	U.S.
		1	2	3	4	5		
Number of Respondents	495	95	102	93	103	102	841	1,768
Almost Every Month	50%	49%	58%	40%	56%	49%	43%	37%
Some Months	20%	21%	15%	25%	22%	18%	24%	26%
1 or 2 Months	7%	7%	7%	10%	2%	8%	6%	9%
Never / No	21%	18%	19%	24%	19%	25%	25%	25%
Don't Know / Refused	2%	6%	1%	1%	1%	1%	3%	2%

C. Responses to the Problem

This section examines some of the actions that households took to meet their energy needs. Table IV-6 provides the following results.

- 27 percent said that they closed off part of their home. LIHEAP recipients in CT were less likely than those in the U.S. overall to say that they took this action.
- 23 percent said that they kept their home at a temperature that they felt was unsafe or unhealthy in the past year.
- 19 percent said that they left their home for part of the day because it was too hot or too cold in the past year.
- 26 percent said that they used their kitchen stove or oven to provide heat in the past year. This compares to 36 percent of LIHEAP recipients in the Northeast and 33 percent of LIHEAP recipients in the U.S. overall.

**Table IV-6
Responses to the Problem**

	CT	CT Districts					Northeast	U.S.
		1	2	3	4	5		
Number of Respondents	495	95	102	93	103	102	841	1,768
Closed off Part of Home	27%	23%	36%	25%	24%	28%	37%	39%
Kept Home at Unsafe Temperature	23%	26%	13%	32%	25%	23%	25%	23%
Left Home for Part of the Day	19%	19%	13%	27%	17%	18%	22%	21%
Used Kitchen Stove/Oven for Heat	26%	31%	27%	25%	25%	21%	36%	33%

D. Inability to Pay Energy Bills

Respondents were asked several questions about inability to pay their energy bills. Table IV-7 displays the results from this analysis.

- 50 percent said that they skipped a payment in the past year.
- 36 percent said that they received a notice or threat to disconnect or discontinue their electricity or home heating fuel during the past year.
- 9 percent said that their electric service had been shut off, five percent said that their gas service had been shut off, and 12 percent had at least one of the two services shut off.
- 27 percent that they were unable to use their heat during the past year because their heating equipment was broken and they could not afford to fix it, they were unable to pay for a fuel delivery, or their gas or electric service had been discontinued.

- 18 percent said that they could not use their air conditioning at some point during the past year because it was broken or their electric service had been discontinued.

Table IV-7
Inability to Pay Energy Bills

	CT	CT Districts					Northeast	U.S.
		1	2	3	4	5		
Number of Respondents	495	95	102	93	103	102	841	1,768
Skipped Paying Home Energy Bill	50%	51%	44%	62%	61%	42%	47%	49%
Received Disconnect Notice	36%	34%	30%	46%	46%	29%	37%	37%
Electric Service Shut Off	9%	10%	5%	16%	15%	5%	8%	9%
Gas Service Shut Off	5%	6%	2%	6%	9%	5%	5%	6%
Electric or Gas Shut Off	12%	13%	6%	20%	16%	7%	10%	11%
Unable to Use Main Source of Heat	27%	27%	30%	31%	18%	24%	26%	24%
Unable to Use Air Conditioner	18%	22%	13%	17%	18%	16%	15%	17%

E. Housing Problems

This section examines the housing problems that LIHEAP recipients faced due to unaffordable energy bills during the past five years. Table IV-8 shows the following results.

- 38 percent said they did not make their full rent or mortgage payment. LIHEAP recipients in CT were more likely than those in the Northeast to say that they skipped a mortgage payment.
- 5 percent were evicted from their home or apartment. This ranged from one percent in District 5 to 12 percent in District 3.
- 4 percent had a foreclosure on their mortgage.
- 17 percent moved in with friends or family.
- 5 percent moved into a shelter or were homeless. This ranged from two percent in District 2 and 5 to 10 percent in District 3.

**Table IV-8
Housing Problems
Due to Energy Bills in the Past Five Years**

	CT	CT Districts					Northeast	U.S.
		1	2	3	4	5		
Number of Respondents	495	95	102	93	103	102	841	1,768
Did Not Make Rent or Mortgage Payment	38%	42%	35%	48%	38%	30%	30%	31%
Evicted From Home or Apartment	5%	5%	6%	12%	6%	1%	5%	6%
Had a Foreclosure on Mortgage	4%	3%	7%	5%	3%	3%	4%	4%
Moved in with Friends or Family	17%	16%	13%	22%	16%	16%	11%	14%
Moved into a Shelter or Was Homeless	5%	6%	2%	10%	8%	2%	2%	4%

F. Medical and Health Problems

Respondents were asked about medical and health problems that they faced in the past five years due to unaffordable energy bills. Table IV-9 displays the following results.

- 25 percent reported that they went without food.
- 29 percent reported that they went without medical or dental care.
- 31 percent reported that they did not take a prescription.
- 22 percent said that they became sick because their home was too cold, and 15 percent said that they needed to go to the doctor or hospital due to this illness.
- 5 percent said that they became sick because their home was too hot and four percent needed to go to the doctor or hospital due to the illness.

**Table IV-9
Medical and Health Problems Due to Energy Bills
In the Past Five Years**

	CT	CT Districts					Northeast	U.S.
		1	2	3	4	5		
Number of Respondents	495	95	102	93	103	102	841	1,768
Went Without Food	25%	24%	20%	33%	26%	24%	22%	24%
Went Without Medical or Dental Care	29%	32%	27%	23%	32%	30%	30%	37%
Did not Take Prescription	31%	34%	26%	33%	28%	29%	30%	34%

	CT	CT Districts					Northeast	U.S.
		1	2	3	4	5		
Number of Respondents	495	95	102	93	103	102	841	1,768
Became Sick Because Home too Cold	22%	25%	16%	25%	19%	21%	19%	19%
Needed to Go to the Doctor or Hospital	15%	15%	9%	16%	10%	19%	12%	13%
Became Sick Because Home too Hot	5%	4%	4%	9%	5%	6%	5%	6%
Needed to Go to the Doctor or Hospital	4%	2%	2%	5%	4%	5%	3%	3%

V. Conclusion

This report presents findings from a survey of FY 2011 LIHEAP recipients in Connecticut and compares their characteristics and energy affordability problems to LIHEAP recipients in the Northeast, and to a nationally representative sample of LIHEAP recipients across the United States.

LIHEAP Recipient Households

LIHEAP recipients in CT, like those throughout the U.S., are likely to have vulnerable household members. Eighty-six percent of LIHEAP recipients in CT have an elderly household member, a disabled household member, or a child in the home.

Twenty percent of LIHEAP recipients in CT have income below 50 percent of the poverty level, similar to the 19 percent of households in the Northeast and in the U.S. that are below 50 percent of the poverty level. Twenty-eight percent of LIHEAP recipients in CT have income above 150 percent of the poverty level, compared to 13 percent in the Northeast and 11 percent in the U.S.

Energy Costs

LIHEAP recipients in CT reported high energy costs. Over sixty percent of these respondents said that their annual energy costs were more than \$2,000, compared to 53 percent in the Northeast and 45 percent in the U.S.

LIHEAP has a big impact on CT LIHEAP recipients' energy burden. Only 10 percent of LIHEAP recipients in CT had an energy burden of five percent or less, prior to LIHEAP, but 35 percent had an energy burden of five percent or less after LIHEAP.

Responses to High Energy Costs

LIHEAP recipients in CT sometimes take detrimental actions to meet their energy needs.

- 23 percent said that they kept their home at a temperature that they felt was unsafe or unhealthy during the past year.
- 19 percent said they left their home for part of the day because it was too hot or too cold.
- 26 percent said that they used their kitchen oven or stove for heat.

LIHEAP recipients in CT are less likely to take these actions than LIHEAP recipients in the Northeast and in the U.S.

Inability to Pay Energy Bills

LIHEAP recipients experience times when they cannot afford to pay their energy bills and suffer loss of service.

- 50 percent said that they skipped paying or paid less than their full energy bill during the past year.
- 36 percent said that they received a notice or threat to discontinue their electricity or heating fuel.
- 12 percent said that their electric or natural gas service was shut off.

- 27 percent said that they were unable to use their main heating fuel due to discontinued service or broken equipment.
- 18 percent said that they were unable to use air conditioning due to discontinued service or broken equipment.

Housing and Financial Problems

LIHEAP recipients in CT face housing and financial problems as a result of unaffordable energy bills. Problems faced in the past five years include the following.

- 38 percent said they missed a full rent or mortgage payment.
- 5 percent were evicted from their home or apartment.
- 17 percent moved in with family or friends.

Medical and Health Problems

LIHEAP recipients in CT had medical and health problems during the previous five years as a result of their energy bills.

- 25 percent said that they went without food for at least one day.
- 29 percent said that they went without medical or dental care.
- 31 percent said that they did not take their prescription medication.
- 15 percent became sick and needed to go to the doctor or hospital because their home was too cold.

This survey provided evidence of the impact of LIHEAP on recipient households in CT. However, the survey also showed that many of these households continue to face difficulties meeting their energy needs and their other needs, due to the high cost of energy.