

For Immediate Release
Date: January 28, 2014
Contact: Mark Wolfe/NEADA
Cell: 202-320-9046

State Energy Assistance Directors Call for the Release of \$490 Million of LIHEAP Funds to Help Poor Families Pay Rising Home Energy Bills

The National Energy Assistance Directors' Association (NEADA) representing the state directors of the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) today called on the Secretary of Health and Human Services to release remaining \$490 million in appropriated FY 2014 LIHEAP funds. The recently passed FY 2014 Consolidated Appropriations Spending Act provided \$3.424 billion for LIHEAP. Of this amount, \$2.9 billion was released on November 4, 2013, leaving approximately \$488.9 million that has not been released to help poor families pay their rapidly rising home heating bills, which have been made worse by the recent and prolonged cold snap hitting almost all parts of the country

According to Larry Dawson, Board Chair of NEADA,

In my state of Illinois, for example, the propane shortage has led to widespread rationing by dealers and some areas of the state have seen prices double in the last 48 hours. Despite recent increases to propane benefits, the buying power of LIHEAP Crisis funds is rapidly dwindling to the point where a fuel delivery for some households can no longer be guaranteed. In an effort to help people stretch their LIHEAP benefits, the state LIHEAP Office and our local community action agencies have been counseling clients to conserve and limit their propane usage as much as possible. Fuel conservation alone, however, cannot overcome a record string of subzero days and the harsh reality that more than half of this brutal winter season has yet to come.

Attached are the following documents:

1. Copy of the letter sent to HHS
2. Copy of a NEADA table analyzing data recently released by the Energy Information Administration. The data presents an alarming situation for families heating their homes this winter. On average, the cost of home heating is estimated to increase by 6.1% from \$847 to \$899. For those using propane, costs will increase by 19% from last year's level of \$1,503 to \$1,788, and for those using heating oil, costs are estimated to stay at last year's high level of about \$2,100.
3. A state-by-state table estimating the allocation of the remaining \$490 million in LIHEAP funds that NEADA has asked the Secretary of HHS to immediately release.