

Press Release

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Contact: Mark Wolfe, 202-320-9046
Cassandra Lovejoy, 202-333-5916**Statement in Response to the Administration's FY 2018 Budget Proposal**

The National Energy Assistance Directors' Association (NEADA), representing state administrators of the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP), strongly opposes the Administration's proposal to eliminate LIHEAP funding for FY 2018. The proposal will eliminate vital energy assistance to almost 6.1 million very poor households that rely on LIHEAP to pay their home heating and cooling bills.

The Administration's proposal shows a lack of understanding of the important role LIHEAP plays in keeping the heat on for millions of Americans. LIHEAP effectively and efficiently provides much needed energy assistance for the country's most vulnerable families. 70 percent of recipient households have at least one vulnerable and at-risk member who is elderly or disabled, or have a child under the age of six.

The average cost of home heating has remained unaffordable for millions of low-income households nationwide this winter with an average annual price of \$783. The average grant is about \$458 per year and is only available for about 20% of eligible households. According to the US Energy Information Administration, the average home heating cost this winter for those using propane was \$1,448, heating oil \$1,227, electricity \$902 and natural gas \$577.

LIHEAP's impact in many cases goes beyond providing bill payment assistance by playing a crucial role in maintaining family stability and improving health outcomes for vulnerable populations. It enables elderly citizens to live independently and ensures that young children have safe, warm homes to live in. Although the circumstances that lead each client to seek LIHEAP assistance are different, LIHEAP links these stories by enabling people to cope with difficult circumstances with dignity.

NEADA strongly urges Congress to reject the Administration's proposal and instead maintain funding for this vital program to ensure the country's most vulnerable families can heat and cool their homes in the coming year.

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The National Energy Assistance Directors' Association (NEADA) is the primary educational and policy organization for the state directors of the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP). LIHEAP is a federal program providing formula grants to states to help low-income families pay their heating and cooling bills.