

NEADA

National Energy Assistance Directors' Association

January 6, 2016

The Honorable Sylvia Matthews Burwell
Secretary
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
200 Independence Avenue, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20201

Dear Secretary Burwell:

On behalf of the state directors of the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP), I am writing to urge you to release as soon as possible all remaining FY 2016 LIHEAP funds. The recently passed P.L.113-235, FY2015 Omnibus; Consolidated and Further Continuing Appropriations Act provided \$3.39 billion for LIHEAP of which about \$3.02 billion was released last year leaving approximately \$372 million that has not yet been released.

The remaining \$372 million in program funds could be used immediately by states to help poor families pay their continuing high home heating bills.

The average cost of home heating is expected to remain unaffordable for millions of low-income households across the country at an average annual price of \$779. While the price has come down from last year's very high level of \$880, overall the cost remains out of reach for the millions of households receiving LIHEAP assistance, with an average cost for those using propane at \$1,368, heating oil at \$1,282, electricity at \$920 and natural gas at \$560.

LIHEAP's impact in many cases goes beyond providing bill payment assistance by playing a crucial role in maintaining family stability. 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.

I appreciate your consideration of NEADA's request to release program funds. Our states are ready to deploy these funds to help some of the nation's poorest families pay their home energy bills.

Sincerely,

Susan Brown

Susan Brown
Chair, NEADA