

NEADA

NATIONAL ENERGY ASSISTANCE DIRECTORS' ASSOCIATION

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

October 22, 2024

Dear Secretary Becerra :

On behalf of the National Energy Assistance Directors Association (NEADA), representing the state directors of the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP), I am writing to urge you to release program funds for FY 2025 at 90 percent of the FY 2024 program level as soon as possible to ensure state LIHEAP offices can help low income households keep their heat on this winter.

LIHEAP is a seasonal program. Providing 90 percent of the funds at the beginning of the fiscal year is vital to the program's effectiveness. Therefore, NEADA is requesting that program funds be released no later than October 30, 2024. This will allow states to provide funds to local administering agencies to hire staff to start and plan winter heating programs and be ready to help some of the nation's most vulnerable households to maintain access to electric and gas service.

This year we are particularly worried that the tumult of the election will delay the passage of full year funding for LIHEAP. It is of utmost urgency that the funds are released as soon as possible so that assistance is available to help millions of households pay their energy bills in the coming months.

The average cost of home heating has remained unaffordable for millions of low-income households. According to NEADA's most recent analysis, prices for home heating this winter on average are estimated to increase by about 10.5% from last year's winter heating season due to expected colder winter weather in the Northeast and Midwest states from \$889 to \$982.

I appreciate your consideration of NEADA's request to release 90 percent of program funds no later than October 30, 2024. Our states are ready to deploy these funds to help some of the nation's poorest families pay their home energy bills.

Sincerely,



Thomas Hartnett-Russell
Chair, NEADA