

LIHEAP Training

March 10 – 11, 2026

The True Reformer Building | 1200 U Street NW | Washington, DC 20009

Tuesday, March 10, 2026

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| 8:30 a.m. – 9:00 a.m. | Continental Breakfast |
| 9:00 a.m. – 9:30 a.m. | Introductions |
| 9:30 a.m. – 9:45 a.m. | Getting Situated – Orienting New Directors <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Flexibility of the LIHEAP Block Grant & Role of States• Introduction to LIHEAP: Day 1 Checklist• What Are the Assurances and Why Do They Matter? |
| 9:45 a.m. – 10:30 a.m. | Assurance 1: Uses of Funds
Overview, Panel of State Directors <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Sisavaii Tuala-Tamaalelagi (American Samoa)- Brian Sarensen (Washington)- Iris Pennington (Arkansas) |
| 10:30 a.m. – 10:45 a.m. | Break |
| 10:45 a.m. – 11:30 p.m. | Assurance 2: Eligibility
Overview, Panel of State Directors <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Rachel Schafer (North Dakota)- Bobbi Davis (Wisconsin)- Brian Whorl (Pennsylvania) |
| 11:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m. | Networking Lunch – Regional Group Discussions |
| 12:30 p.m. – 1:15 p.m. | Assurance 3: Outreach
Overview, State Outreach Show and Tell |
| 1:15 p.m. – 2:00 p.m. | Assurance 5: Benefits
Overview, Panel of State Directors <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Michael DeYoung (Texas)- Michael Schmitz (Minnesota)- Kristina Packard (Wyoming) |
| 2:00 p.m. – 4:30 p.m. | Roundtable Discussions |
| 4:30 p.m. – 4:45 p.m. | Wrap Up |

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Wednesday, March 11, 2026

8:30 a.m. – 9:00 a.m. **Continental Breakfast**

9:00 a.m. – 10:00 a.m. **Assurance 8: Renters**
Overview
Discussion

10:00 a.m. – 10:30 a.m. **Break**

10:30 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. **Assurances Roundup (4, 6, 9, 10-16)**

12:00 p.m. – 1:30 p.m. **Lunch**

12:30 p.m. – 1:00 p.m. **Lunch & Learn: Water Assistance**

Since the elimination of the pandemic-era federal water assistance program, advocates have continued to support the creation of a permanent water assistance program. States have also taken the lead in providing water assistance to their residents.

Moderator: Bobbi Davis, At Large Rep., NEADA Board (Wisc.)

Speaker: Larry Levine, Senior Attorney II, Environmental Health,
National Resources Defense Council

**** End of Training. NEADA Winter Meeting Begins After Lunch ****

Winter Meeting

March 11 – March 12, 2026

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Wednesday, March 11, 2026

1:30 p.m. – 1:45 p.m. Welcome and Introductions

1:45 p.m. – 2:30 p.m. The Affordability Crisis: Case Study from NYC

The [Robin Hood Poverty Tracker](#) follows the impact of poverty and material hardship in New York City over time by surveying residents every four months on their ability to afford basic needs. Mr. Wimer, Principal Investigator on the project, will share recent findings of the state of poverty in NYC.

Moderator: Tammy Sandy, Southern Regional Representative, NEADA Board (West Virginia)

Speaker: Christopher T. Wimer, Director, Center on Poverty and Social Policy, Columbia Univ.

2:30 p.m. – 3:45 p.m. Roundtable Discussions: Lessons from 2025

Opportunity for states to share the changes, innovations, and challenges they have experienced in the past year.

3:45 p.m. – 4:00 p.m. Break

4:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m. State of Play: Federal Programs and State Impacts

It has been a rocky year for many federal programs that states rely on to provide food, housing, and energy for their residents. This session will provide updates on the status of programs like SNAP and Medicaid and the impact changes to these programs are having on state budgets.

Moderator: Christine Taylor, Midwest Regional Representative, NEADA Board (Iowa)

Speaker: Sharon Parrott, President, Center on Budget and Policy Priorities

5:30 p.m. – 7:00 p.m. NEADA Reception: [Ted's Bulletin](#), 1818 14th St NW

Winter Meeting

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Thursday, March 12, 2026

8:15 a.m. – 9:00 a.m. Continental Breakfast

9:00 a.m. – 9:45 a.m. Congressional Panel on LIHEAP

Update from Hill staff on Congressional priorities for LIHEAP, 2027 federal budget outlook, and policy considerations.

Moderator: Mark Wolfe, Executive Director, NEADA

Speakers: Rachel Mitnick, Office of Senator Jack Reed (D–RI)

Owen Rosenberg, Office of Representative Andrew Garbarino (R–NY 02)

9:45 a.m. – 11:00 a.m. National Program Partners

LIHEAP works best when we coordinate with other programs with similar goals and populations. The organizations that represent Directors of those programs will provide updates on their policy priorities and outlook for the coming year.

Moderator: Cassandra Lovejoy, Managing & Policy Director, NEADA

Speakers: Cassie Powers, Chief of Staff, National Association of State Energy Officials

Cheryl Williams, Executive Director, National Association for State Community Service Programs

Danielle Sass-Byrnett, Senior Director, Center for Partnerships & Innovation, National Association of Regulatory Utility Commissioners

Denise Harlow, Chief Executive Officer, National Community Action Partnership

11:00 a.m. – 11:15 p.m. Break

11:15 a.m. – 12:15 p.m. Rising Energy Prices & LIHEAP

Moderator: Iris Pennington, Treasurer, NEADA Board (Arkansas)

Speakers: Tafari Torres, National Opinion Research Center at the University of Chicago

Mark Wolfe, Executive Director, NEADA

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Thursday, March 12, 2026 (Continued)

12:15 p.m. – 2:00 p.m. Working Lunch

12:30 p.m. – 2:00 p.m. Meeting with ACF LIHEAP Staff

Updates from the Administration for Children and Families on federal priorities for LIHEAP. States will have the opportunity to ask questions about program administration and recent policy changes.

Moderator: Thomas Hartnett-Russell, Chair, NEADA Board (Indiana)

Speakers: Janelle George, Acting Director, Office of Community Services (In Person)

Kate Thomas, Office of Community Services (Remote)

Mary Watts, Office of Community Services (Remote)

2:00 p.m. – 2:45 p.m. Update from the PMIWG

The LIHEAP Performance Measures Implementation Work Group (PMIWG) develops tools to help LIHEAP Directors improve their programs through data analysis and application. The work group will showcase their recent work and provide updates on activities for the coming year.

2:45 p.m. – 3:00 p.m. Break

3:00 p.m. – 3:45 p.m. Energy Affordability Caucus and the Energy Bill of Rights

As energy costs become more unaffordable for Americans, Congressional staff are finding ways to highlight the need and foster discussions about possible solutions.

Moderator: Brian Sarensen, Vice-Chair, NEADA Board (Washington)

Speaker: Anaïs Borja, Energy Policy Director, U.S. Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources

3:45 p.m. – 4:30 pm. Roundtable Discussions

4:30 p.m. Meeting Wrap Up