



NATIONAL ENERGY ASSISTANCE DIRECTORS ASSOCIATION

March 20, 2026

The Honorable Robert F. Kennedy, Jr
Secretary
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
200 Independence Avenue, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20201

Dear Secretary Kennedy:

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 as soon as possible remaining funds available from the FY 2026 Full Year Continuing Resolution and Extensions Act.

Specifically, we are requesting that all remaining funds (\$422 million) of the full appropriation be released no later than April 10, 2026, giving states only 173 days to deploy these critical funds before the end of the federal fiscal year on September 30, 2026. NEADA is concerned that any further delay in the release of appropriated funds will make it difficult for states to cover the needs of poor families facing shut-off of vital utility services as a result of the expiration of winter shut-off moratoriums, or to meet staffing and planning requirements to start up summer cooling programs.

The release of the remaining appropriated funds that have already been approved by your agency would provide well overdue support for state programs. These funds would be used immediately to help some of the nation's most vulnerable households maintain access to electric and gas service, to cover outstanding bills relating to unexpected delivered fuels emergencies and to allow states to begin planning their summer cooling programs.

The average cost of home heating has remained unaffordable for millions of low-income households this winter. NEADA has estimated that the average annual price of [winter heating of \\$1,011](#), representing an increase of 11 percent or almost \$100 over the comparable cost of home heating during the winter heating season of 2024-25. The average home heating cost this winter for those using propane was \$1,339, heating oil \$1,587, electricity \$1,241 and natural gas \$712. LIHEAP assistance is only sufficient to reach about one of five eligible households and 70 percent of recipient households have at least one vulnerable and at-risk member who is elderly, disabled or have a child under the age of six.

The average low-income household spends about [9.9 percent of family](#) income on energy bills about four times the rate for non-low-income households. In fact, one out of six American families are currently behind on their home energy bills and the total amount these families owe their utilities is approximately \$25 billion. In addition, [37.4 percent](#) of families earning less than \$50,000 a year reported in a recent Census survey that they were unable to pay an energy bill at least once in the past 12 months.

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 vary, LIHEAP enables 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,

Mark Wolfe
Executive Director