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# WINTER HEATING COSTS PROJECTED TO JUMP 8.7 PERCENT, DEEPENING THE NATION'S ENERGY AFFORDABILITY CRISIS

**WASHINGTON, D.C.** U.S. households are projected to spend an average of $1,030 to heat their homes this winter, an increase of $82, or 8.7 percent, over last year, according to a new analysis by the National Energy Assistance Directors Association (NEADA). The projected increase is more than 2.5 times the rate of inflation.

The outlook would be worse without the warmer temperatures expected in much of the country because of El Niño. Even with that relief, families that heat with electricity are projected to pay 9.0 percent more, natural gas customers 5.8 percent more, and propane customers 8.7 percent more. Households that rely on heating oil face the sharpest increase: 31.3 percent, largely because the war in Iran has pushed global oil prices higher.

*"This is a warning that too many families are entering winter with no room left in their budgets," said Mark Wolfe, executive director of NEADA. They have already experienced record high summer cooling costs and now they are facing home heating costs that are rising more than twice the rate of inflation."*

NEADA is urging Congress to increase funding for the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program from $4 billion to $7 billion. The additional funding is needed before winter bills arrive, not after families have accumulated debt or lost service. LIHEAP currently reaches only a fraction of eligible households.

The danger is especially immediate for heating oil customers, most of whom live in the Northeast. Crude oil was trading at approximately $72 per barrel before the conflict and later moved toward $100 as fears grew about disruptions to supplies and shipping through the Strait of Hormuz. Those higher costs are already moving through wholesale heating oil markets and could result in far higher household bills this winter.

In 2024, utilities disconnected electric service approximately 13.4 million times and natural gas service approximately 1.7 million times for nonpayment. More than 275 electric and natural gas utilities have increased rates, received approval for increases or proposed increases since 2025, with potential added costs to customers exceeding $101 billion through 2028.

*"Congress cannot wait for the first cold snap," Wolfe said. "LIHEAP funding should be increased now. Energy is not a luxury. We can modernize the grid and meet growing demand without pushing families into crisis, but affordability has to be a key element of those decisions."*

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*The National Energy Assistance Directors Association represents the state directors of the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program. NEADA works to ensure that vulnerable households can afford essential home energy services.*