

# Connecticut Association For Community Action (CAFCA)

*Partnerships that work. Results that matter.*



## 2010 FEDERAL PUBLIC POLICY POSITION:

# **FUND THE LOW INCOME HOME ENERGY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM**

## ***What is the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP)?***

When America's low-income households pay a high proportion of household income for home energy, the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) is the federal program that assists them in meeting those often immediate home energy needs.

## ***What do LIHEAP Funds Accomplish in Connecticut?***

With LIHEAP as part of our holistic approach, Connecticut's Community Action Agencies (CAAs) provide comprehensive, coordinated services—leveraging private, local, state, and federal resources. We meet diverse local needs effectively because we are guided by and accountable to community leaders and service recipients. Among the many LIHEAP-related service synergies achieved in 2009, Connecticut's CAAs:

- ✓ Empowered nearly 15,000 low-income households to earn matching dollars to pay their heating costs;
- ✓ Helped more than 17,000 households reconcile outstanding issues with their fuel vendors; and
- ✓ Saved more than 95,000 households from losing their heat—or more.

## ***What's Wrong with the Status Quo?***

January data from Operation Fuel show that more than 56,000 households in Connecticut have home energy bills that are on average more than \$2,550 over what those households can afford. Statewide, the total of such bills exceeds affordability by about \$585 million. In February, the National Energy Assistance Directors' Association (NEADA) compared Connecticut's position with the state's position at the same time last year. The analysis showed that Connecticut's LIHEAP funding dropped nearly 20% while participation rates grew by 5%. Without timely supplemental LIHEAP funding, Connecticut cannot withstand this \$20.2 million cut and still meet the increased need.

## ***Connecticut Families Depend on LIHEAP!***

Low-income families are among our state's most vulnerable residents. They simply cannot absorb the same costs and hardships bearable to families of greater financial means. LIHEAP protects families, and saves the government from having to pay far greater social and fiscal costs in the future. At this time of extremely limited resources, LIHEAP is a proven, transparent safety net program deserving of additional support to meet today's increased need. At very least, Congress should provide level funding—\$5.1 billion—for LIHEAP, and hold hearings on possible negative impacts before instituting any changes to the program. In truth, the current need warrants supplemental funding.

***For more information, please visit [www.cafca.org](http://www.cafca.org) or call (860) 832-9438.***

***Thank you for funding LIHEAP!***

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Connecticut's twelve Community Action Agencies (CAAs) are the state's federally-designated anti-poverty agencies. We are foundational partners in Connecticut's Human Services Infrastructure and constitute a comprehensive, integrated human service delivery system. With services directly benefiting nearly 300,000 people annually, Connecticut's CAAs achieve positive results that change lives and strengthen communities.