



## MAYOR'S OFFICE OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS

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Hi,

We are seeking your help. As you may be aware, this year the State is proposing to significantly cut the program- LIHEAP the low income home energy assistance program-- that helps seniors and low and moderate income families pay their heating bills.

This is not a state budget issue. All of the money, including the overhead for the program, comes from the federal government in a block grant. Last year the Federal Government allocated 1.7 billion for LIHEAP – this year it is almost 30% more—2.41 billion. While the ultimate amount Pennsylvania will receive is not yet set, we will at the very least get more than last year’s 142 million. This chart shows just how bad the proposed plan will be if adopted:

	Last Year	Proposed For This Year
Cash grants	\$300 minimum	\$100 minimum
Crisis grants	\$800 maximum	\$300 maximum
Available funds	\$1.7 billion	\$2.4 billion
Cash application period	Nov. 3 – April 3	Dec. 1 – Jan. 3
Crisis application period	Nov. 3 – April 3	Jan. 4 – March 15

In past years, both programs opened on the first business day in November and closed in early to late April. Families who were shut off could use both programs to have their service restored. And families that developed problems during the winter could apply for both program

This year only LIHEAP will open and not until December 1st, after the beginning of the heating season. And only the LIHEAP part will be open. This is a devastating change because in the past families could apply for LIHEAP and LIHEAP Crisis at the same time and could use the grants to restore service before winter began.

If the proposal is allowed to be adopted as proposed the following –will happen:

- ▶ Thousands of families will not have the money they need to get their utility service re connected before the start of the heating system.
- ▶ Many of the newly unemployed, not familiar with the LIHEAP program will miss the early deadlines and shortened application period and not receive the help to which they are entitled.
- ▶ The reduced benefits will leave 10’s of thousands of families without enough help, leading to spring shut offs.
- ▶ Because thousands of seniors and families will not be able to pay their bills because of the lower grants, utilities will attempt to raise rates

It is my hope that you can join us on a state wide conference call this Tuesday at 2:30 pm to organize a press conference and other events. The call in number is: 717-901-0620 (no code is needed)

Needless to say, we are struggling through difficult economic times with thousands of people losing jobs. Now is not the time to close the safety net.

Thank You,  
Lance Haver  
Director Consumer Affairs  
City of Philadelphia