

Sponsors: Washington Public Utility Districts Association; Colorado Association of Municipal Utilities; Illinois Municipal Electric Agency; Pennsylvania Municipal Electric Association; NMPP Energy, New York Association of Public Power

In Support of the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program

1 Energy expenses, including electric power utility costs, can be a substantial burden for any household, but
2 lower income households are especially vulnerable. According to the Department of Energy, energy costs
3 are three times greater (as a share of income) for lower income households than for others.

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5 These costs can leave households with limited resources facing extremely difficult choices. According to
6 the U.S. Census Bureau, of families with annual incomes of less than \$35,000, more than half reported
7 they had reduced or gone without medicine or food at least once in the previous 12 months to pay an
8 energy bill.

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10 As community-owned, cost-based utilities, public power utilities strive to keep electric power reliable and
11 affordable. Most also devote substantial additional resources to providing relief to customers in need,
12 including through programs run by the utility and by connecting customers to additional resources.

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14 The Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) is the nation’s keystone energy assistance
15 program, providing federally funded assistance to reduce the costs associated with home energy bills,
16 energy crises, weatherization, and minor energy-related home repairs. In 2021 alone, LIHEAP provided
17 assistance to 5.4 million households. Of those households, 71 percent had at least one vulnerable member,
18 including someone over the age of 60, someone who is disabled, or a child under the age of six years.

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20 While states have flexibility in setting LIHEAP eligibility criteria, federal statute limits household income
21 for recipients to a maximum of 150 percent of the federal poverty guideline, or 60 percent of the state
22 median income. For example, 150 percent of the fiscal year 2023 poverty guideline for a family of three is
23 \$34,545. Most LIHEAP recipients earn much less: data show that 82 percent of households served by
24 LIHEAP had an annual household income of less than \$20,000.

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26 Congress has authorized up to \$5.1 billion to be appropriated for LIHEAP annually. Actual
27 appropriations, though, have been far less, closer to \$3 billion for fiscal years 2012 through 2019. Even
28 with the program on track to receive \$4 billion for fiscal year 2024, it will likely service a fraction of the
29 households that – under the federal limit – could be eligible.

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31 **NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED:** That the American Public Power (APPA) supports the Low
32 Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) as a critical lifeline to vulnerable utility customers;
33 and
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35 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:** That APPA calls on the Congress to adequately fund LIHEAP, up to
36 the \$5.1 billion authorized to be appropriated for the program.

Adopted at the Legislative & Resolutions Committee Meeting

February 27, 2024

Sunsets in March 2032