

Holler from the Hollers: Demand LIHEAP funding and staff

Toolkit for Call-in Event, May 8, 2025

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Background

In early April, the entire federal staff for the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) was laid off as a result of indiscriminate cuts to staffing at the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). Now, the administration's proposed budget for fiscal year 2026 has revealed that the Trump Administration [may provide no funding for LIHEAP going forward, and could end the program](#).

LIHEAP is a broadly supported program and an essential source of support for a growing number of families in need. The program lowers energy costs for low-income families and gives people breathing room to minimize tradeoffs between their energy needs and food, stable housing and/or medicine. Crucially, LIHEAP enables residents to stay safe in their homes by weatherizing homes through window, door, and insulation upgrades so that energy bills remain manageable month-to-month.

- LIHEAP has helped more than 6 million low-income families ensure their homes are a safe temperature by distributing block grants to states for emergency bill assistance, small home energy repairs and residential weatherization.
- In fiscal year 2023, it funded the weatherization of more than 60,000 homes and prevented residential disconnections or restored power millions of times.¹
- The majority of households that receive LIHEAP assistance have at least one family member who is disabled, elderly or under the age of five.²

Rural communities already pay a disproportionate amount of their income towards electricity costs. In fact, the “energy burden” of rural communities is higher than the national average, and in some regions, **low-income rural households pay 15% or more of their income on utility bills**.³ This is well above the 6% energy burden level that researchers define as “high”.⁴

¹ <https://liheap-fy23-data-dashboard-hhs-acf.hub.arcgis.com/pages/quarterly-reportsfy23>

² <https://www.liheap.org/white-paper>

³ <https://www.aceee.org/sites/default/files/publications/researchreports/u1806.pdf>

⁴ <https://www.aceee.org/sites/default/files/energy-affordability.pdf>

Meanwhile, **elderly rural households** are especially vulnerable to high energy burden and negative health impacts from under and over heated homes.⁵ Because rural communities often lack sufficient access to utility or locally funded bill assistance and weatherization programs, LIHEAP is a critical resource for these areas.

What's Happening Now?

Now, the administration's proposed budget for fiscal year 2026 reveals that the Trump Administration [may provide no funding for LIHEAP going forward, and could end the program](#). While the remaining funds for LIHEAP in FY2025 have been distributed to states, federal staff have yet to be reinstated.

Recent staffing cuts and the possibility of the complete defunding of LIHEAP are extremely dangerous for the health and safety of low-income children, the elderly, and disabled Americans. **LIHEAP program staff must be reinstated at HHS immediately to prevent devastating and irreversible consequences and the program must be adequately funded in future years. Sign onto bi-partisan LIHEAP appropriations letter led by Sen. Reed (D-RI) and Sen. Murkowski (R-AK).**

Take Action!

1) Contact your members of Congress

- a) Find your members
 - i) Senators: <https://www.senate.gov/senators/senators-contact.htm>
 - ii) Representatives: <https://www.house.gov/representatives/find-your-representative>
(Most people have 2 senators and one congressional representative)
- b) **Call** your senators and House representative
Use the numbers you find at the link above, or call the congressional switchboard: **202-224-3121**

Sample Script

"My name is [] and I am your constituent from [TOWN]. I'm calling today to ask that you support renewed funding for the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program for fiscal year 2026 and that LIHEAP staff be reinstated immediately so that the program can operate efficiently. LIHEAP is a critical resource that assists more than 6 million low income households with paying high energy bills or receiving energy efficiency upgrades.

[Insert a personal experience with LIHEAP if you have one]

Cuts to this LIHEAP will result in real hardship and safety concerns for American families, especially if households lose power in states where there are no cutoff protections for extreme temperatures. Please sign onto bi-partisan LIHEAP appropriations letter led by Sen. Reed (D-RI) and Sen.

⁵ <https://www.aceee.org/sites/default/files/publications/researchreports/u1806.pdf>

Murkowski (R-AK).
Thank you.

Note, you may be asked to provide your home address to confirm you are a constituent. You may also request a response from your legislator on this issue.

c) **Write** to your senators and House representative

Use the contact us form on your lawmakers' websites through the links above.

Sample Email

"My name is [] and I am your constituent from [TOWN]. I'm calling today to express my **concern/outrage/worries** that the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program may not be funded for 2026, and that there are currently no federal staff for administering the program.

[Insert a personal experience with LIHEAP if you have one]

LIHEAP is a critical resource that assists more than 6 million low-income households with paying high utility bills or receiving energy efficiency upgrades. The program has had long-standing support from the utility industry and from bipartisan members of Congress. Cuts to LIHEAP will result in real hardship and threats to safety for American families - possibly even death if households lose power in states where there are no cutoff protections for extreme heat or cold, often forcing American families to choose between energy and other essential resources such as food and medicine. LIHEAP should be fully funded in fiscal year 2026, and staff should be reinstated immediately. Please sign onto bi-partisan LIHEAP appropriations letter led by Sen. Reed (D-RI) and Sen. Murkowski (R-AK). Thank you.

2) Amplify on Social Media!

Graphics:

[Twitter/X & Bluesky](#)

[Instagram Story](#)

[Facebook](#)

[LinkedIn](#)

Sample Social Media Posts:

Facebook & LinkedIn:

 Demand LIHEAP funding and staffing now! Our communities can't wait. 

Many people struggle with high power bills that make it hard to stay safe and comfortable in the heat of summer or the cold of winter, or force choices between power and other essentials, like medicine.

The federal Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program helps qualifying households lower their energy costs through weatherization updates to windows, doors, and insulation and can provide limited bill assistance. LIHEAP supports more than six million households nationwide and has long-standing bipartisan support from Congress.

But Elon Musk's so-called Department of Government Efficiency has cut all the staff positions running the program, and the 2026 White House budget outline proposes cutting funding for LIHEAP entirely.

Today, I called my members of Congress to demand:

- ✓ Immediate reinstatement of federal LIHEAP staff
- ✓ Fully funded LIHEAP program for fiscal year 2026

🗣️ Join me in calling for safe and healthy households.

Use this toolkit:

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1yvc1IBTkHVfUOzNEgWNZJoJcv-RiAKdQ_-Uz9odAS-E/edit?usp=sharing

Twitter/X and Bluesky:

🔥 Demand #LIHEAP funding now! 🔥

I called Congress to demand:

- ✓ Immediate reinstatement of federal LIHEAP staff
- ✓ Fully fund LIHEAP for fiscal year 2026

Join me:

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1qCIBqTZiZ0sPdN4dAgv0McUj2SUJS_YimW3GwTZ5KQQ/edit?tab=t.0

Share social media posts and tag your senators and representatives, as well as Republican leadership in Congress.

Links for Appalachian Lawmakers

Office	Office Phone Number	X Handle
Rep. Morgan Griffith (VA-9)	202-225-3861	@RepMGriffith

Rep. Ben Cline (VA-6)	202-225-5431	@RepBenCline
Sen. Tim Kaine (VA)	202-224-4024	@SenTimKaine
Sen. Mark Warner (VA)	202-224-2023	@SenMarkWarner
Rep. Hal Rogers (KY-5)	202-225-4601	@RepHalRogers
Sen. Rand Paul (KY)	202-224-4343	@SenRandPaul
Sen. Mitch McConnell (KY)	202-224-2541	@SenMcconnell
Rep. Chuck Edwards (NC-11)	202-225-6401	@RepChuckEdwards
Rep. Virginia Foxx (NC-5)	202-225-2071	@VirginiaFoxx
Rep. Pat Harrigan (NC-10)	202-225-2576	@RepPatHarrigan
Rep. Tim Moore (NC-14)	202-225-5634	@RepTimMooreNC
Sen. Thom Tillis (NC)	202-224-6342	@SenThomTillis
Sen. Ted Budd (NC)	202-224-3154	@SenTedBuddNC
Rep. Diana Harshbarger (TN-1)	202-225-6356	@RepHarshbarger
Rep. Tim Burchett (TN-2)	202-225-5435	@RepTimBurchett
Rep. Chuck Fleischmann (TN-3)	202-225-3271	@RepChuck
Sen. Bill Hagerty (TN)	202-224-4944	@SenatorHagerty
Sen. Marsha Blackburn (TN)	202-224-3344	@MarshaBlackburn
Rep. Riley Moore (WV-2)	202-225-2711	@RepRileyMoore
Rep. Carol Miller (WV-1)	202-225-3452	@RepCarolMiller
Sen. Shelley Moore Capito (WV)	202-224-6472	@SenCapito
Sen. Jim Justice (WV)	202-224-3954	@JimJustice_WV