

Secretary Robert F. Kennedy, Jr.
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
200 Independence Avenue, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20201

Dear Secretary Kennedy:

As lawmakers representing Maryland, Virginia, and the District of Columbia, we are reaching out to express concern about the termination of staff in a government office critical to keeping the heat on for vulnerable families around the region. The April 1st, 2025 lay-offs of the entire staff of the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) places the efficient disbursement of these life-saving funds at risk.

LIHEAP is one of the most critical components of the social safety net that is provided by the federal government and distributed by the states. The program provides funding and distribution support serving roughly 6.7 million households across the nation. The program has been supporting vulnerable households for over 40 years, ensuring millions of dollars of utility bill assistance is delivered to each and every state. Congress appropriated \$4.1 billion to the program in FY2024. Every state in the nation received between \$11 million and \$400 million of critical support for families. The current appropriation will be exhausted in September of this year, and major disruptions will occur if there remains no funding to administer the program.

The LIHEAP program ensures that households experiencing hardship are able to prevent utility shutoffs, retain assistance for heating and cooling bills, and gain access to critical repairs and replacements of heating, cooling, and water heating systems. The households served range from senior citizens on fixed incomes and urban dwellers with poorly weatherized homes, to disabled individuals who depend on continuous electric service to power essential health equipment and rural families who rely on heating support to survive cold winters. Of the households served by the program in 2024, 996,000 included a young child, 2.1 million included someone with a disability, and 2.4 million included a senior citizen.

Furthermore, in a time where many families are battling with the rising costs of energy and fuel due to grid mismanagement, utility rate abuse, and extreme weather-related supply chain disruptions, social safety nets such as LIHEAP are more important than ever for low-and-moderate income Americans.

We, the undersigned legislators, are calling for a reinstatement of the essential workers who staff the federal LIHEAP program and coordinate with state governments and the private sector to provide these critical resources. To disrupt the LIHEAP program would be to jeopardize the most vulnerable Americans and cause major disruptions to critical resources for our constituents. We are calling for you, the Secretary of Health and Human Services, to ensure the remaining \$378 million of your congressional appropriation to the program will be delivered to Americans with proper administrative support from a fully operational staff and to take action to ensure this vital program survives the staffing cuts wielded by the executive branch.

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D.C. Council, Ward 6

Councilmember Brianne Nadeau

D.C. Council, Ward 1

Councilmember Robert White

D.C. Council, At-Large Member

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