



# Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP)

Presented by:

**Miranda Gray, Economic Services Deputy Commissioner**

**Richard Giddings, Heating and Utility Assistance Program Director**

# LIHEAP Funding & Benefit Stats Compilation 11/1/2024

SFY	LIHEAP Total (1)	LIHEAP Carry-Over (2)	State Funds	TOTAL FUNDS	Fuel Liability Households	Full Season Fuel Liability Avg. Benefit O/P/K	Nov-Apr Avg cost petrol/gal (3)	Purchase Power Gallons / %age (4)
2025	\$23,100,00	\$2,206,017	\$3,066,942	\$28,372,959	17,000	\$1,079	\$4.23	255/33%
2024	\$23,232,586	\$2,189,258	\$3,066,942	\$28,488,786	17,386	\$933	\$3.83	244/32%
special electric benefit of \$340 per household not included in average benefit								
2023	\$34,346,336	\$1,140,139	\$7,366,942	\$42,853,417	19,526	\$1,494	\$4.25	352/46%
includes additional \$4.3m in state funds; average benefit amount includes an additional \$625 payment to households 128% or less of FPL								
2022	\$47,361,943	\$2,000,000	\$3,066,942	\$52,428,885	18,728	\$1,893	\$3.37	516/68%
2021	\$15,746,232	\$7,073,509	\$3,066,942	\$25,886,683	18,015	\$1,096	\$2.24	489/64%
\$5m in CARES money included in carry-over numbers								
2020	\$18,257,418	\$1,467,240	\$3,066,942	\$22,791,600	18,725	\$798	\$2.60	307/ 40%
2019	\$17,546,576	\$945,866	\$2,899,704	\$21,392,146	19,768	\$715	\$2.57	278/ 36%

**(1) LIHEAP Totals for 2019 - 2025 are total federal block grant awarded during the respective fiscal years less the 15% transfer to Weatherization**

(2) The carry-over amounts are as of June 30 State Fiscal Year 2020 close-out plus pending fuel dealer refunds

(3) Heating Season "Blended price" for oil/propane/kerosene including MOR/DOR discounts

(4) Assumes average winter consumption of 764 gallons for a delivered petrol fuel (oil/propane/kerosene)

# How these funds are used in Vermont

## There are 5 Major components to VT Fuel Assistance Program

- They include Heating assistance, Crisis Fuel assistance, Weatherization, Furnace repair and replacement, Fuel Tank repair and replacement.
- Seasonal Fuel Benefit can be issued to households whose income is at or below 185% of the Federal Poverty Income Guidelines.
- Crisis Fuel is administered through our Community Action Agencies and their income guidelines go up to 200% of the Federal Poverty Income Guidelines.
- Below is the Gross monthly income guidelines for 2025-2026

Number in Household	185% FPL (SF, GMP, VGS)	200% Crisis
1	\$2,412	\$2,608
2	\$3,262	\$3,526
3	\$4,109	\$4,442
4	\$4,956	\$5,358
5	\$5,805	\$6,276
6	\$6,653	\$7,192
7	\$7,500	\$8,108
8	\$8,349	\$9,026
9	\$9,196	\$9,942
10	\$10,044	\$10,858

# LIHEAP 101

- This is a Block Grant that Vermont submits an application for every year. We hold a public hearing to gather feedback.
- Once the Federal Fiscal Year (FFY) begins it usually takes almost the full 30 days for the award letter to arrive. Since we do year-round eligibility, and if you have a heating liability and your household income is below 185%, you could qualify for a “Seasonal Fuel Benefit.” For FFY25 we served 16,296 Households, disbursing \$16,863,736 in Funds. The average benefit was \$1,035.
- We also served an additional 1,407 Heated Renters (those are households that have unsubsidized housing, but whose heat is included in their rent). The average benefit was \$221.
- In addition, we had 22,498 households that got a “Fixed Benefit” (\$21). These include roomers (691), Housing subsidy cases where heat is included in their rent (3,814) and our “Heat and Eat” Households (17,993).
- Combined we served 40,201 Households.

# LIHEAP 101 continued

Applications are processed year-round.

- **New income guidelines effective 3/1/25** are being used for eligibility determination.

### **Two-step notification process:**

- First letter: Confirms eligibility upon approval.
- Second letter (November): Details benefit amount and the certified dealer receiving the payment.

Factors used to determine eligibility include:

- Do you pay for heat or is it included in rent?
- What type of housing do you live in? (Single Home, Mobile Home, Multi-family)
- How many bedrooms do you have in your home?
- What type of fuel do you use to heat your home?. (Wood, Pellets, Oil, Kerosene, Propane (gas), Natural Gas, Electricity and Coal.)
- Is the Housing subsidized?
- We then look at gross household income as well as the number of household members, and this determines your heat cost percentage. (Meaning those with the lowest income should get a larger benefit, and those with higher income should get a smaller benefit)

# Other information

- Other tidbits of interest.
  - 22% Own their home.
  - 50% Rent and pay for utilities separately.
  - 28% Rent and have utilities included in their rent.

Product heating types	
38% Oil	14% Kerosene
19% Propane	11% Natural Gas
5% Electricity	4% Pellets
8% Wood	3 households statewide Coal

- **Crisis Fuel.** In FFY24, the 5 Community Action Agencies were able to assist 2,989 households. Of that 2,497 (84%) had income at or below 150% FPL.
- **Furnace Repair and Replacement** - In FFY24, 423 households were served. This can include repairs to get it back up and running or complete replacement if the machine is unsafe and not operable.
- **Fuel Tank Repair and Replacement** - In FFY24, 157 households were served. This can include repairs to make sure they are safe or replacement if unsafe.
- **Weatherization Services** - In FFY24, 177 households received some services to weatherize their home.

*\*\*\*Important Note: there is some duplication here within these figures, as the furnace may need a repair and then once repaired, a Crisis Fuel assist might be a way for the household to get some product in their tank.*

# What's happening now

Fuel Team is wrapping up the 24-25 season and there are several additional things that we must do.

- **Refund & Consumption Reports**
  - **Certified Dealers** must submit reports on funds received for eligible households and how those funds were used. They report on:
    - Gallons purchased and cost during heating season (11/1/24 – 4/30/25)
    - Plus, Gallons Purchased and cost for Full-year (5/1/24 – 4/30/25) This information is used for our Federal reports.
- **Fuel Team now begins our "Audit Season" We look at:**
  - **Certified Fuel Dealers Audits**
    - Random selection from Refund & Consumption Reports.
    - Must provide client statements & delivery tickets.
    - Discount off Retail dealers → Must submit daily pricing sheet.
    - Margin over Rack dealers → Audited based on posted prices.
  - **Wood & Pellet Household Audits**
    - Households must provide receipts for purchased wood/pellets. Letter will be mailed to selected households.
  - **Crisis Fuel Program Audits**
    - 2 Crisis Fuel Programs are selected each year, which allows us to do a deeper dive into the work they are doing.
    - Cases are selected off the trackers. Once notified the Community Action Agencies provides application, all worksheets, and support documentation on why they found the household eligible.

# Fuel Assistance Federal Updates

## Changes at a National level:

- On March 27th, Health and Human Services announced the reduction of 10,000 additional Federal Employees and through reorganization will move from 28 divisions to 15. The Department of Energy Assistance was eliminated.
- The LIHEAP Program was **not eliminated**. Only Congress has the authority to do that. In Vermont, LIHEAP funding is Heating assistance, Crisis assistance, Weatherization, Furnace repair and replacement and Fuel tank repair and replacement, but in warmer climate states, it is cooling assistance. Historically LIHEAP has had bipartisan support, so although the Administration might be looking at repurposing dollars, Congress has supported LIHEAP for over 45+ years.
- FFY26 funding, we learned last week that President Trump's draft budget request for HHS was to eliminate LIHEAP. Although disappointed by this, it is not surprising, since he proposed this all four years of his last term. Ironically, LIHEAP received small increases each year. We have not heard any indication from Congress that they intend to eliminate the program.
- Vermont is committed to assisting Low Income Vermonter's get through the winter.

# Questions?

**If you have any questions, please feel free to reach out to DCF Deputy Commissioner Miranda Gray or LIHEAP Director Richard Giddings**