

## ***Energy Assistance Update***

### ***Volume 1, Number 08-1***

The Illinois Department of Healthcare and Family Services (HFS) administers the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) and the Illinois Home Weatherization Assistance Program (IHWAP). This new *Energy Assistance Update* is a vehicle to inform the general public, community-based organizations and key stakeholders about pertinent issues and programmatic initiatives to enhance service delivery and fulfill our mission. The mission of LIHEAP is to assist low-income households by offsetting the cost of home energy through direct financial assistance, energy counseling, outreach and education. IHWAP is designed to help low-income residents save fuel and money, while increasing the comfort of their homes.

#### **Heating Season Success**

The 2007 program year concluded on May 31, 2007 with a strong positive indication that the HFS Office of Energy Assistance and its network of thirty-five local administering agencies (LAA) achieved great strides in operating the program across the state. Through effective outreach strategies and increased use of our Web-based LIHEAP.Net intake system, nearly 327,000 households received bill payment assistance with a total of \$159 million. The weatherization program served about 7,900 units with a total funding of \$44.5 million.

#### **Summer Cooling Assistance**

A LIHEAP Summer Energy Assistance Program will be implemented this summer. A total amount of \$6 million in federal funding will be allocated to local agencies for the summer program. This program begins on July 9, 2007 and concludes on July 20, 2007 or when funds are exhausted. The LIHEAP Summer Energy Assistance Program is targeted to at-risk households, defined as seniors, persons with disabilities, families with children less than 36 months of age as of the date of application, and those with medical conditions that would be aggravated by extreme heat. To qualify, these at-risk households must have incomes equal to or less than 150 percent of the poverty level as defined in the 2007 HHS Poverty Guidelines. For more information about the summer program, visit: [www.keepcool.illinois.gov](http://www.keepcool.illinois.gov) or call 1-877-411-9276.

#### **Illinois Fan Club**

HFS contributed \$10,000 to the *Illinois Fan Club* in addition to another \$10,000 by the Office of the Lieutenant Governor. The project is the result of a partnership between the Illinois Community Action Association (ICAA), the Lt. Governor Patrick Quinn and the Illinois Department of Healthcare and Family Services. It is designed to provide relief to senior citizens and people with disabilities who need fans.

#### **Energy Assistance Call Center**

As part of on-going efforts to improve customer service, a new call center has been established for clients. It provides a convenient way to find out how to apply for assistance with a 24-hour access to the application look-up functionality, receiving an automated status of current application; access to Local Administering Agencies through the zip code locator; English and Spanish options; and energy conservation tips that will result in energy savings and utility bill reduction. The toll-free number to call is 1-877-411-9276.

### **Upcoming Conference**

The annual Illinois Weatherization Conference is planned for September 5 - 6, 2007 in Bloomingdale, Illinois at the Indian Lakes Conference Center. This conference follows on the heels of the 2007 annual LIHEAP Conference that was held in Springfield, with over 300 participants and fifty presenters and facilitators. It will be a challenge to match the enthusiasm and success of the LIHEAP conference. While the Weatherization Conference is technically oriented, there will be several workshops for non-technical staff and a session on a new program initiative on refrigerator replacement.

For more information about energy assistance program in Illinois, visit

[www.liheapillinois.com](http://www.liheapillinois.com) or  
[www.weatherizationillinois.com](http://www.weatherizationillinois.com)

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