



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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**CARES Act Funding to Supplement
Low Income Household Energy Assistance Program**

NORTH LITTLE ROCK—Today, Governor Asa Hutchinson announced that a supplemental portion of the Arkansas Department of Energy and Environment’s Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) will begin Monday, July 27. The new aspect of the program is being supported by \$8.2 million from the federal Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act.

The CARES Act funding will be deployed within LIHEAP through two allocations. \$6.97 million is being allocated to support a Supplemental Crisis program. \$1.23 million will support an Air Conditioning program. Both programs will be available until funds are fully expended or until funds expire on September 30, 2021. These programs will assist low-income households that have accumulated larger than normal past-due balances on their electric and natural gas bills or have depleted their supply of winter fuel (such as propane or wood) as a result of loss of income tied to COVID-19. It will also help relieve current pressures on utilities whose customers have accrued larger than normal overdue bills during a period when utilities have temporarily suspended utility disconnections. Another positive outcome of the programs will be ensuring that low-income, elderly, and disabled people will have the benefit of air conditioning in their homes. Many such individuals typically rely on cooling centers during the summer and early fall, and such cooling centers may not currently be available because of safety restrictions on public gatherings.

“We are proud to be able to offer these additional resources during these unprecedented circumstances,” said Becky Keogh, Secretary of the Arkansas Department of Energy and Environment. “These supplemental programs will have a direct impact on the safety, health, and quality of life for low-income Arkansans.”

LIHEAP is a block grant program administered by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), Office of Community Services (OCS) within the Administration for Children and Families (ACF). It is designed to lower the energy burden for low-income individuals, who pay a high proportion of household income for home energy costs, by paying benefits for home energy bills. LIHEAP assists households with heating costs during the winter season and cooling costs during the summer season. LIHEAP is administered in Arkansas by the Department of Energy and Environment’s Division of Environmental Quality, Arkansas Energy Office.

LIHEAP in Arkansas is operated by a network of 15 Community Action Agencies (CAAs), which serves all 75 counties. CAAs receive other funding as well and operate multiple programs that assist low-income households.

For information about eligibility requirements and how to apply for funding, visit www.adeq.state.ar.us/energy.

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