



Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-3217

April 14th, 2025

The Honorable Robert F. Kennedy Jr.
Secretary of Health and Human Services
Department of Health and Human Services
200 Independence Avenue SW
Washington, DC 20201

Dear Secretary Kennedy,

I am writing to express my concern regarding the reported layoffs of the team responsible for administering the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) within the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS).

As you know, the Office of Community Services within the Administration for Children and Families oversees LIHEAP, providing critical energy assistance to families nationwide. Recent reports indicate that the federal staff who manage LIHEAP have been removed, raising concerns about the program's continued functionality and the ability of states, territories, and tribal organizations to access and distribute this essential support.¹

LIHEAP plays a vital role in helping New York families manage their energy costs—from heating expenses in the winter to cooling costs in the summer. The program supports our most vulnerable populations, including seniors, individuals with disabilities, and households with young children under the age of six. In FY 2023, 24% of New Yorkers reported being unable to pay their energy bill at least once in a 12-month period. During FY 2023, LIHEAP also helped prevent over 100,000 utility disconnections in New York alone, highlighting this program's critical need.²

Although the approximately 20 to 24 LIHEAP staff members represent only a small portion of the broader HHS layoffs, their departure raises serious concerns about the program's capacity to operate effectively.³ In FY2023, LIHEAP staff within the Office of Community Services helped to administer \$600 Million in vital funds to New Yorkers — providing energy assistance to approximately 1.1 million households, including 492,572 households with seniors, 391,776 households with individuals with disabilities, and 182,696 households included a young child.⁴ Without dedicated federal staff supporting LIHEAP, the disbursement of funding to states and territories may be delayed or disrupted, jeopardizing the well-being of countless vulnerable families.

1. Haigh, Susan. "Trump Administration Fires Staff of Program That Helps Low-Income Households Pay for Heat." AP News, April 3, 2025. <https://apnews.com/article/heating-assistance-hhs-layoffs-kennedy-trump-91e466c458ac804b098be00867a92106>.
2. National Energy & Utility Affordability Coalition. "New York State Sheet 2025." March 2025. Accessed April 5, 2025. <https://neuac.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/03/New-York-State-Sheet-2025.pdf>.
3. Haigh, Susan. "Trump Administration Fires Staff of Program That Helps Low-Income Households Pay for Heat." AP News, April 3, 2025.
4. National Energy & Utility Affordability Coalition. "New York State Sheet 2025." March 2025.. <https://neuac.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/03/New-York-State-Sheet-2025.pdf>.

I respectfully urge you to ensure that the necessary personnel and resources remain in place to support LIHEAP's continued success. I appreciate your attention to this matter, and your ongoing commitment to helping American families meet their basic needs, and I look forward to your response.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Michael Lawler". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Michael" and last name "Lawler" clearly distinguishable.

Michael V. Lawler
Member of Congress