

Community Action Partnership of Oregon

**2008 Oregon Low-Income Energy Assistance Snapshot
- Executive Summary -**

January 28, 2008

Community Action Partnership of Oregon presents the 2008 Oregon Low-Income Energy Assistance Snapshot, a report on the status of low-income energy assistance programs in Oregon during the week of January 14 - 18, 2008.

Report Observations:

Low-income Oregonians face high energy prices and increasingly unaffordable energy bills. Many are forced to make dramatic life choices as they struggle to pay their bills.

In 2007 the Oregon Legislature passed, and Governor Kulongoski signed into law, a bill that increases the amount of bill payment assistance for low-income customers of Pacific Power and Portland General Electric by 50 percent per year and allows the fund to gradually increase over time.

The amount of funding Oregon receives from the federal LIHEAP program is roughly the same as in previous years.

Community Action agencies statewide report that funding for bill payment assistance still remains insufficient to meet the needs of low-income Oregon households.

Heating oil and propane prices have increased by about 30 percent from last year.

The number of Oregon households with income levels that would qualify for low-income assistance increased by 2.4 percent (an increase of 10,000 households) in the past year.

Current funding levels can **only serve about 24 percent (less than 1 in 4)** of the total number of Oregon households with income levels that would qualify them to receive bill payment assistance.

Over 9,000 households are on waiting lists for assistance and agencies reported receiving over **10,000 phone calls seeking assistance in one week**. This number is significantly understated since many agencies do not keep waiting lists.

Every day thousands of Oregonians contact their local agencies seeking energy assistance. **Many of these households either have a utility shutoff notice or are currently disconnected from utility service**. Many will receive no help.

This report includes stories of low-income families who are in need of assistance along with stories from local agencies telling of their struggle to keep their communities whole in the face of increasing need.

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Oregon Low-Income Energy Assistance Snapshot

January 28, 2008

**A look into the current status of low-income energy assistance programs at
Community Action Agencies throughout Oregon**

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2008 Oregon Low-Income Energy Assistance Snapshot

Status of Energy Assistance Programs at Community Action Agencies Throughout Oregon

- January 28, 2008 -

Introduction

This document reports the status of low-income bill payment assistance programs operated by local Community Action agencies throughout Oregon for the week of January 14 - 18, 2008. It is a survey of the need for energy assistance in Oregon and the efforts of Community Action agencies to address it.

The 2008 Oregon Energy Assistance Snapshot is presented in five sections.

- 1. Increase in Funding for the Oregon Energy Assistance Program (OEAP):** This section highlights the increase in funding for the OEAP program that passed the Oregon Legislature and was signed into law in 2007.
- 2. The Impact Energy Prices Have on Low-Income Households:** This section highlights the impact that high energy prices and unaffordable energy bills have on low-income Oregonians and the dramatic choices that these households face.
- 3. Sources of Energy Assistance Funding in Oregon:** This section highlights the major sources of bill payment assistance funding available to help Oregon households. Taken together, this assistance can effectively serve only about 1 in 4 Oregon households that are qualified for low-income bill assistance.
- 4. Looking into 2008 and Beyond:** This section provides a brief discussion of issues that will impact low-income Oregonians this year and into the future and additional discussion of the sources of energy assistance funding.
- 5. Snapshot 2008 by Oregon Counties and County Groups:** This section highlights information provided by the staff of Community Action agencies throughout Oregon concerning their program status as of the week of January 14 – 18, 2008. Many agencies have included human-interest stories to help provide insight into the reality that many low-income Oregonians currently face. These stories are displayed in highlighted boxes. This section is organized by the Oregon county, or groups of counties, that correspond to the area served by individual agencies. This report is not a statistical analysis, or an in-depth research report. There are differences in the information compiled and reported by individual agencies that make direct comparisons difficult. For example, some agencies maintain waiting lists of all eligible clients who seek assistance while other cease taking names when they have committed all of their funds. However, these differences do not mask the overall message of this Snapshot.

1. Increase in Funding for the Oregon Energy Assistance Program (OEAP)

The 2007 Oregon Legislature passed, and Governor Kulongoski signed into law, Oregon Senate Bill 461 that increased annual funding for the OEAP program by 50 percent and allows the funding to increase over time. The OEAP program is an essential bill payment assistance program that was established by Oregon Senate Bill 1149 in the 1999 Oregon Legislature. This program collected a total of \$10 million per year from customers of Portland General Electric and the Oregon customers of Pacific Power. Since its passage, this capped \$10 million dollar figure has undergone a significant reduction in effective purchasing power as electricity rates increased. Senate Bill 461 increases the base amount of collections to \$15 million in the first year and allows that amount to change each year in accordance with the percentage change in the number of residential customers and certain business kWh sales.

Community Action Partnership of Oregon, along with a broad coalition of supporters, worked throughout the 2007 Session to make this funding increase a reality. Our thanks go out to many, including, the Fair and Clean Energy Coalition (special thanks to Jeff Bissonette), Portland General Electric, Pacific Power, Oregon Housing and Community Services, the Public Utility Commission of Oregon and our sponsors and supporters in the Oregon Legislature including but not limited to; Senator Ryan Deckert, Senator Betsy Johnson, Senator Rick Metsger and Representative George Gilman.

This increase in funding will flow through most of Oregon's Community Action agencies as it impacts over 70 percent of the total number of residential electricity customers in Oregon. These agencies have augmented their program delivery capability in order to accommodate this increase in permanent, targeted, program funding. Many agencies outline the steps they have taken in their reports that follow in Section 5 of this Snapshot.

2. The Impact Energy Prices Have on Low-Income Households

Energy prices remain at historically high levels, and unfortunately are not expected to drop in the near future. Many experts agree that we will remain in a period of historically high, and increasing, energy prices for the foreseeable future. Price and rate increases for natural gas and fuel oil, and electricity, are part of the escalation of energy prices that for more than a decade has outpaced the increase in the purchasing power of low-income households. ¹ **Agencies report that the price of bulk fuels in their areas such as heating oil, stove oil, monitor oil and propane have increased by about 30 percent from last year.**

¹ The Impact of Forecasted Energy Price Increases on Low-Income Consumers, Joel F. Eisenberg, Oak Ridge National Laboratory, October 2005.

Low-income households feel heating expenditure increases most acutely. Tens of thousands of Oregonians do not have sufficient money to pay for the basic necessities of life, such as food, shelter, health care, childcare, transportation and utilities. Updated statistics from the 2000 Census ² show that 12.9 percent of Oregon's 3.7 million residents, or nearly 477 thousand people, were living with total annual incomes below the federal poverty level.

A recent study published by Fisher, Sheehan & Colton³ sheds light on the distribution of these families and the total home energy burdens they face. ⁴ According to this study, nearly 68,000 Oregon families live below 50 percent of the federal poverty level; over 40,000 live with annual incomes between 50 and 74 percent of the federal poverty level; and over 48,000 families live with annual income between 75 and 99 percent of the federal poverty level. This data illuminate the frightening reality faced by many low income Oregonians. A single person at 50 percent of the federal poverty level is living on an average monthly income of \$408. A family of four, also at 50 percent of the federal poverty level, lives on a total monthly income of \$833. ⁵

Maintaining the livability of a household's dwelling through the use of energy is one of the basic necessities of life. Low-income households pay a significantly higher percentage of their total household income for energy than other households. The Fisher, Sheehan & Colton study cited above present energy burden statistics for Oregon households that are living in poverty.

Oregon Households at Various Levels of the Federal Poverty Level and their Associated Home Energy Burdens⁶

<u>Poverty Level</u>	<u>Home Energy Burden</u>
Below 50 percent	36.4 percent
50 to 74 percent	14.6 percent
75 to 99 percent	10.4 percent
100 to 124 percent	8.1 percent
125 to 149 percent	6.6 percent

² US Census Bureau: State and County Quick Facts, January 2, 2008. Data Derived from Population Estimates, and the 2000 Census of Population and Housing.

³ Home Energy Affordability Gap: Oregon, Fisher, Sheehan & Colton, Belmont Massachusetts, April 2007.

⁴ Energy burden is the proportion of a household's total income that is consumed by energy costs.

⁵ Poverty Guidelines, 2007 Energy Assistance Programs Manual, Oregon Housing & Community Services

⁶ Home Energy Affordability Gap: Oregon, Fisher, Sheehan & Colton, Belmont Massachusetts, April 2007.

The following list outlines the many dramatic decisions and consequences faced by low-income households that are confronted with unaffordable energy bills.

- Hunger and malnutrition increase when people are forced to choose between heating and eating.
- Personal health suffers as people are not able to fill prescriptions, must skip or reduce their medications, or go without needed medical or dental care.
- The elderly, people with disabilities or medical conditions, and small children are put at risk of hypothermia.
- Health and safety is endangered by people using alternate heat or light sources such as kerosene heaters, candles, lanterns, fireplaces or charcoal briquettes.
- Evictions increase and more people become homeless. Many never regain their housing and children leave school.
- Loss of utility service contributes to children going into foster care, as living without utility service is considered neglect.
- People in subsidized housing risk losing their housing voucher if their power is shut off.

To qualify for bill payment assistance in Oregon a household's total income level must be at, or below, 60 percent of Oregon state median income (adjusted for family size). This level is approximately equal to 190 percent of the federal poverty level. It is estimated that approximately 429,000 Oregon households are at an income level that would qualify for low-income energy assistance. This figure represents an increase of about 2.4 percent, or 10,000 households over last year.⁷

Taken together, the total level of funding of the energy assistance programs available in Oregon (listed in the following section) can potentially provide an average annual benefit of \$275 (a small proportion of low income households total energy bills) for only about 24 percent of the total number of qualified households – a little less than one in four households. This proportion of Oregon's total eligible low-income population that can potentially be served is roughly proportionate to the figure reported in last year's Energy Snapshot. This is because of the welcome addition of new funding for the OEAP program that helped fill the gap for some Oregonians left by the exhaustion of the one-time Duke / El Paso settlement funds.

⁷ American Community Survey, 2006.

3. Sources of Energy Assistance Funding in Oregon

There are many sources of energy assistance funding available to serve low-income Oregonians. Each individual agency has a variety of these program sources they can call upon to serve clients depending upon the utility that serves that individual client and the availability of funds. These funding sources are referred to throughout this report.

- LIEAP – Federal energy assistance funds.
- OEAP – Energy assistance program for customers of Pacific Power and Portland General Electric.
- OLGA – Utility energy assistance program for customers of Northwest Natural.
- GAP – Northwest Natural program offering assistance from voluntary customer and company contributions.
- Oregon HEAT – Organization offering assistance from voluntary contributions from PacifiCorp and Portland General Electric (customer, employee, and corporate contributions), distribution of portions of various energy settlement funds, and independent fund raising.
- Duke / El Paso Settlement – Energy assistance funding from a legal settlement. (Note: these funds are virtually exhausted.)
- Williams Settlement – Energy assistance funding from a legal settlement. (Note: these funds are virtually exhausted.)
- LIRAP – Utility energy assistance program for customers of Avista Utilities.
- Project Share – Avista Utilities program offering assistance from voluntary customer and company contributions.
- Winter Help – Cascade Natural Gas program offering assistance from voluntary customer and company contributions.
- Oregon Low Income Bill Assistance (OLIBA) – Utility energy assistance for customers of Cascade Natural Gas.
- Winter Help – Low-income assistance funding is made available through a voluntary company-wide program to Idaho Power’s Oregon customers. (Note: this program and the CNG voluntary contribution program go by the same name but are different programs).
- Customer-Owned Utilities – Each of Oregon’s 37 customer-owned utilities provide some form of low-income assistance. The manner and source of funding of these programs differs by utility but generally falls into three categories: utility-funded programs, voluntary contribution programs, and utility-funded rate discount programs.

4. Looking into 2008 and Beyond

Even with the welcome increase in low-income energy assistance funding for the OEAP program, 2008 will prove to be a challenge for low-income Oregonians. The struggle to help low-income Oregonians cope with their energy burden continues.

- Oregon experienced relatively stable economic activity during 2007 with a slight increase in the unemployment rate recorded from 5.3% to 5.5% between November 2006 and November 2007. Oregon still lags the nation, and many of its neighboring states, in terms of the rate of unemployment.⁸ Employment numbers among various sectors of the Oregon economy fluctuated while total employment remaining relatively constant. Job losses in the government and trade, transportation and utilities sectors were offset with employment increases in educational & health services and professional & business services. All eyes are now on the construction sector for signs of how the slowdown in the national residential housing market will impact Oregon.⁹
- Oregon's future economic growth is widely expected to decrease as the US slips toward possible recession. Local economists are predicting a 50-50 chance of recession during 2008. Some contend that a recession has already begun.¹⁰ Energy prices will remain high and are expected to grow over time. Heating oil prices are already at a very high level and show little sign of becoming more affordable in the future.
- Low wage rates and incomes persist for low-income people in Oregon. The recent increase in Oregon's minimum wage (increasing 15 cents from \$7.80 to \$7.95 per hour effective January 1) is the smallest increase in three years.¹¹
- Oregon's population, along with the number of low-income households, continues to increase in the face of stubbornly high rates of unemployment.

The need remains for additional funding for low-income programs in Oregon. As noted below, the federal LIHEAP program remains, as far as Oregon is concerned, at a nearly status quo funding level. On a positive note, each energy utility in Oregon, whether they provide electricity or natural gas, and whether they are investor-owned or consumer-owned, collect funds for low-income bill assistance programs for their customers. These utility funds help supplement the funding Oregon receives from the Federal government.

⁸ United States Bureau of Labor Statistics, Civilian Labor Force and Unemployment by State.

⁹ Oregon's Employment Remains Stable, Oregon Employment Department, November 28, 2007.

¹⁰ Economy Suffers Bear of a Day, The Oregonian, January 23, 2008

¹¹ Oregon Minimum Wage Bumps Up 15 Cents in '08, The Oregonian, September 19, 2007.

- Federal LIHEAP Funding¹²

On December 26, President Bush signed a bill with FY 2008 appropriations for LIHEAP, at \$1.98 billion in block grants and \$590 million in emergency contingency funds. This base level of funding is roughly equivalent to the funding received from this program over the past few years. Of course, by remaining relatively constant this funding has lost ground in terms of the purchasing power of these energy assistance dollars when compared to the increased price of energy.

On January 16, 2008, the Administration released \$450 million of the LIHEAP emergency contingency funds to the states. Including the block grant allocation, this additional funding brings the total funding delivered to approximately \$2.22 billion this fiscal year. Approximately \$140 million remains available for unanticipated events in the LIHEAP emergency contingency funds. Of this \$450 million in emergency funding the state of Oregon will receive around \$1.867 million – or about 0.4 percent of the total.

Advocates are asking Congress and the Administration to increase LIHEAP appropriations at its fully authorized level of \$5.1 Billion. Also of significant benefit to low-income Oregonians would be for Congress to approve advanced appropriations for LIHEAP so that agencies can be assured of the amount of funding and the exact timing of its availability.

- Oregon's Investor-Owned Utility Programs

There are six investor-owned utilities that serve Oregon customers – Avista Utilities, Cascade Natural Gas, Idaho Power, Northwest Natural, Pacific Power and Portland General Electric. Each of these utilities provides funding for bill payment assistance programs.

Five of these utilities (Avista Utilities, Cascade Natural Gas, NW Natural, Pacific Power and Portland General) have programs that are directly funded by ratepayers. Customers of Pacific Power and Portland General Electric fund the OEAP program, which was discussed earlier in this report.

The OEAP program was established by the Oregon Legislature and is administered by Oregon Housing and Community Services and delivered by local community action agencies. A report on the OEAP program is now available on a quarterly basis that displays critical program metrics by agency.

¹² In the interest of clarity it should be noted that the **LIHEAP** program is a federal block grant program that provides the funding for the Oregon **LIHEAP** program.

The other investor-owned utilities with ratepayer-funded programs operate programs established in regulatory proceedings before the Oregon Public Utility Commission (OPUC). These programs are: Avista Utilities, Low Income Rate Assistance Program (LIRAP); Cascade Natural Gas, Oregon Low Income Bill Assistance (OLIBA); and NW Natural, Oregon Low Income Gas Assistance (OLGA). Each utility provides its own program administration and is overseen by the Oregon Public Utility Commission with the help of program advisory groups and are delivered by local agencies. Reports on the LIRAP, OLIBA and the OLGA programs containing critical program metrics are filed with the OPUC.

All six of Oregon's investor-owned utilities offer voluntary contribution programs that allow employees, customers, shareholders and the general public the opportunity to contribute funds to help their Oregon low-income customers stay current with their utility bills. Oregon HEAT (an independent Oregon-based fuel fund) administers the voluntary program payments for Pacific Power and Portland General Electric. The other four investor-owned utilities administer their own voluntary programs. These program funds are delivered through local community action agencies and other local social service agencies.

In the end, these funds are used to help pay the utility bills of low-income customers. Seventy to seventy-five percent of the total funds made available for bill payment assistance are returned to the utility in the form of energy payments. These payments, which the utility might not otherwise receive, help to reduce customer arrearages and lower utility costs related to service disconnection, reconnection, collections, and bad-debt write-off.

- Oregon's Consumer-Owned Utility Programs

Each of Oregon's 37 consumer-owned utilities provides assistance to their low-income customers. Since each of these utilities are independently governed the form this assistance takes, and the relative funding levels, vary by utility. There are three forms of assistance utilized: utility funded programs (using funds provided by ratepayers), voluntary contribution programs (using funds provided on a voluntary basis) and rate discount programs that are funded as a part of utility operations.

While all of Oregon's consumer-owned utilities operate low-income programs there is a wide disparity in proportionate funding levels among them. Taken together, these 37 utilities provide \$3 million per year in funding for their low-income programs. However, between 50 to 60 percent of this total funding is accounted for each year by a single utility (the Eugene Water & Electric Board) that serves about 18 percent of the total Oregon COU customer base.¹³ We recognize that this disparity reflects differences stemming from decisions legitimately made at the local level.

¹³ Customer-Owned Utility Program Report, Oregon Housing and Community Services.

Community Action Partnership of Oregon and its individual member agencies would be most interested in working with their local consumer-owned utility to help increase low-income funding levels in a manner that would help narrow this disparity.

- Fuel Funds

Oregon HEAT, an associate member of Community Action Partnership of Oregon, is an independent nonprofit organization founded in 1989 to help low-income Oregonians become more energy self-reliant. Recently, Oregon HEAT announced the creation of an oil heat recycling program that can help ease low-income household's energy burdens and assist in recycling used petroleum products.

- Weatherization

Weatherizing the dwellings of low-income households is a direct and effective way to reduce overall energy burden. Community Action agencies throughout Oregon have over 25 years of experience in managing and implementing multiple weatherization programs that all have the same basic goal: to make each low-income dwelling more energy efficient, comfortable and safer for its inhabitants. Increased low-income weatherization efforts also help to reduce the households overall energy burden

- Self-Sufficiency

Self-sufficiency programs go beyond simply meeting the immediate needs of a household that requires bill payment assistance. These programs provide a more holistic process of integrated program service, energy education, case management, weatherization, and bill payment assistance with the goal of helping the client achieve self-sufficiency. Oregon is blessed with several such programs. Two of these programs are Oregon Housing and Community Service's "REACH / E2C2" program and the Lane County Human Service Commission and Eugene Water & Electric Board's "Energy Share Plus" program. Oregon HEAT's "Energy Smart" program concluded on December 31, 2006 and the results are currently being evaluated.

5. Snapshot 2008 by Oregon Counties and County Groups

Clackamas County

Clackamas County Energy Assistance Program Snapshot
2007-2008 Program Year
Week of January 14 -18, 2008

Fund Status and Program Activity

Low Income Energy Assistance Program (LIEAP)

Households Served: 1,697

Wait List: 336 Households

Funds Availability: All funds committed to existing applications and no-heat emergencies.

Oregon Energy Assistance Program (OEAP)

Households Served: 878

Wait List: 637 Households

Funds Availability: Existing funds will serve approximately 450 from wait list.

Oregon HEAT

Households Served: 237

Funds Availability: Out of Funds

Oregon HEAT/Williams Fund

Households Served: 5

Funds Availability: Out of Funds

Duke/El Paso Funds

Households Served: 5

Funds Availability: Out of Funds

Oregon Low-Income Gas Assistance (OLGA)

Households Served: 134

Wait List: 73 Households

Funds Availability: All funds spent out until next allocation.

Phone Calls Received January 14 – 18, 2008

Total Calls: 521
Power Already Shut Off: 48
No Heat Emergency/Furnace: 4
LIEAP Emergencies/No Heat: 8
Medical Emergencies: 21
Emergency PGE Shutoff Situations: 236
Emergency NWN Shutoff Situations: 37
Request to be put on LIEAP Wait List: 93
Other: 74 (status of payment, questions about program, etc.)

OEAP Increase

Clackamas County Social Services has a plan in place to accommodate the permanent 50% increase in OEAP funding.

- An additional FTE intake worker has been hired.
- As the 2008 Snapshot data above indicates, the Clackamas County Energy Assistance Program has a sufficient OEAP wait list in the winter months to easily accommodate this increase in permanent funding.
- CCSSD staff will perform OEAP outreach activities during the summer months. Targeted sites for presentations or distribution of printed materials include: State Department of Human Services, Clackamas County networking meetings including approximately 50 agency representatives, Coffee Talk including approximately 40 agency representatives, Head Start in Gladstone, Clackamas County Aging and Disability Services all-staff meeting, Educational Service District mail system for all County schools, and food box sites located throughout the County. The agency will also explore the potential for doing community-based intakes in some areas of the County. Clackamas County residents have sufficient need to use all of the additional money.

A young couple moved back to Oregon. She had just started a good job and, sadly, her husband fell and received a traumatic head injury. She ended up losing her new position when she needed to take time off to care for him. She is currently on unemployment and actively looking for work. Their energy bills have been high the past several months and they ended up with a large past-due balance. Clackamas County Energy Assistance helped them with a crisis OEAP payment to pay off their past due amount. The client also signed up to attend an Energy Education Workshop to find ways to reduce their energy costs.

Columbia, Clatsop, and Tillamook Counties

From January 14th to January 18th Community Action Team served 260 households. Approximately 177 households requested to be placed on our waiting list.

Community Action Team, Inc. (CAT) reports that while our energy assistance funding levels have remained constant the need for assistance in our area has significantly increased, driven in part by our local economy, high oil/propane costs and December 2007 storm related costs.

On October 1, 2007 we began to take names for our waiting list. A total of 1391 households have been assisted. Currently we have over six hundred households on our waiting lists, a list which continues to grow everyday. We do not anticipate being able to meet all of the needs of these remaining households.

CAT, Inc. reports the following funds status information:

- Sixty-three (63%) of our LIEAP funding has been spent while the remaining dollars have all been committed.
- OEAP – \$27,000
- GAP - \$5314
- OLGA – zero balance
- Duke El Paso – zero balance
- United Way – zero balance
- FEMA – zero balance
- Oregon Heat – zero balance
- Currently, the local cost of heating oil is running \$3.27 per gallon and propane is at \$3.63. Our local oil and propane vendors will not deliver without a 100-gallon minimum purchase.

Coos and Curry Counties

In Coos & Curry counties Oregon Coast Community Action (ORCCA) spent \$266,052 of the 606,392 allocated us for LIEAP and \$42,961 of the \$95,602 allocated us for OEA.

We have 440 households currently on our general waiting list and approximately 700 households still to serve on our senior and disabled mail out list.

During the week of January 14th through January 18th, we served 188 households in Coos & Curry counties. During this same time, we responded to 150 energy related calls.

Local Energy Costs

- Pellets
Last year, obtaining and paying for wood pellets seemed to be a pressing issue. Pellets reached \$4.00+ per bag. This year they seem to have remained close to last year's prices, now averaging \$4.39 a bag.
- Wood
Wood purchases are between \$125 and \$160 per cord, not appearing to have changed significantly from last year.
- Heating oil
Heating oil is higher this year than last year, averaging an increase of around 70 cents more per gallon. What we have seen over the last two years is what appears to be less willingness on the part of the vendor to allow customers to maintain large outstanding balances. This has posed a hardship on seniors and persons with fixed incomes.
- Propane
Propane is running around \$2.49 per gallon for small tank fills and as high as \$4.05 for larger tank fills. Reports indicate that bottle propane has gone up \$1.00 per gallon more than last year and has increased an estimated 87% for 100 gallon minimum fills.

Our local newspaper, The World Newspaper, contacted us last week regarding a question sent to them recently by a reader. They asked what responsibility Pacific Power had in keeping the power on for customers who face disconnects during cold weather. The response the World Newspaper reporter received from a Pacific Power representative was that Pacific Power contributed to a low income program for emergency situations that might arise and he was referred to our agency. In the course of responding to the reporter's questions, ORCCA was able to obtain information from the OPUS database that indicates a dramatic increase in the number of crisis situations we've responded to compared to this time last year.

Customer Status	LIEAP		OEAP		Overall Change
	LIEAP 07 12/06-1/24/07	LIEAP 08 12/07-1/24/08	OEAP 07 12/07-1/24/08	OEAP 08 12/07-1/24/08	
Past Due	4	22	3	1	229% increase
Regular	405	485	55	81	23% increase
Shutoff 0-24 hours	4	51	12	16	319% increase
Shutoff 1-5 days	12	41	9	12	152% increase
Shutoff Disconnected	3	10	2	2	140% increase

While the “regular” category appears more process related, the types of notices responded to seemed significant.

Oregon Energy Assistance Funding

Locally, ORCCA’s Energy Services Division has reviewed its staffing pattern and has 1FTE dedicated toward providing this assistance.

Client came in and needed wood. She is a senior and was unable to obtain firewood. Staff were able to locate a resource for her and gave her the contact person. She was so thrilled that we had gone so far to help her. She said God bless you and left. Two days later we received a phone call from her and she was very upset. She reported that she had left several messages with the resources we had given to her but she had not heard anything back. The customer had actually walked up her road searching for wood to heat her home but was unable to get very much. We were able to contact a local church to provide assistance and they were able to locate someone to help.

Deschutes, Crook and Jefferson Counties

NeighborImpact reports that during the week of January 14-18, we received 694 phone calls for energy assistance, 365 people walked into our offices seeking assistance (which means they likely had a shut-off notice), and we received 110 applications by mail. Additionally, we received 4 calls from clients for furnaces that had stopped working. We still have 1,544 clients on our waiting list that have not yet received applications.

We have enough LIEAP funds to serve approximately 455 clients and OEAP funds will serve 406 clients per quarter (812 through June). We have served 278 more clients than the same time last year, partly because we began serving seniors/disabled/households with children earlier than in previous years and partly because more folks are coming through the door. With additional OEAP funds, we have been able to open our Madras office for clients seeking energy assistance services on Saturdays. There are more new clients (people who are applying for assistance for the first time) than in years past due to increased unemployment status. Two of the “no heat” clients had been without a working furnace for over 2 weeks; one had been using space heaters for several months. They did not know about available services until they saw a media spot on local television (I have done 4 interviews in the past 2 months). We have not yet received the LIHEAP Contingency funds that were mentioned in the 1/16/08 press release from OHCS. Without additional funds, we will likely be unable to serve all who are seeking assistance this winter.

Here is a breakdown of funding and clients served for this 5-day period:

LIEAP

Households Served - 212
Funds Available - \$17,952
Applications in house waiting to be processed - 392

OEAP

Households Served - 127
Funds Available - \$93,096
OEAP Applications not yet entered into OPUS (36 at an average payment of \$300, or \$10,800)

OREGON HEAT

Households Served - 4
Funds Available - \$10,283

CASCADE NATURAL GAS

Households Served - 11
Funds Available - \$2,376

Oregon HEAT Williams Funds - \$0 Available

Duke El Paso Funds - \$0 Available

Douglas and Josephine Counties

At the Umpqua Community Action Network (UCAN) in Douglas County we had the following funds available at the beginning of the program season and currently have the following funds remaining.

- LIEAP received since 10-1-07, \$543,572
Amount remaining, \$339,540
- OEAP received since 10-1-07 \$144,359
Amount remaining \$89,967
- Oregon HEAT received since 10-1-07 \$16,708
Amount remaining \$5,048
- Duke El Paso received since 10-1-07 \$386
Amount remaining \$0
- Williams received since 10-1-07 \$493
Amount remaining \$493
- Project Share received since 7-1-07 \$8952
Amount remaining \$4369
- LIRAP received since 7-1-07 \$10,565
Amount remaining \$4727
- EFSP received since 7-1-07 \$8,389
Amount remaining \$0

We have 250 households scheduled for LIEAP appointments scheduled through March. We do not maintain waiting lists in Douglas County. In Douglas County we have hired a permanent part time emergency services intake worker to help out with the emergency appointments.

During the week of January 14 – 18, 2007 we recorded the following activity:

- Number on Emergency Hot Line Call list - 70 households
- Total calls for emergency assistance – 219 households
- Walk-in clients seeking emergency assistance – 30 households

Comparable bulk fuel prices in Douglas County:

- Heating oil - \$2.75 per gallon
- Propane - \$3.50 Per gallon
- Wood - \$175.00 to \$250.00 per cord

Wood Heat Program

For several years UCAN has operated a wood heat program in Douglas County. The program consists of receiving wood donations throughout the year and storing the wood so that it can be seasoned. Clients take a wood voucher to the transfer site in Glide on Fridays when the site is staffed with volunteers. Clients can receive around ½ cord of wood per visit 2 to 3 times per heating season.

In Josephine County, UCAN has served 906 households and has 1406 households pending on our waiting list as of today.

We have \$331,047 left in our LIEAP funds that we estimate to be able to help about **1273** households more. Two weeks ago we were turning people away because we had no emergency funds. We recently received OEAP funds and have \$87,595 remaining. We have LIRAP funds that we just received in the amount of \$3,654, and we have Project Share funds in the amount of \$474. Just for this week we have received 555 phone calls inquiring about or needing energy assistance, we had 159 walk-ins, and completed a total of 159 appointments for LIEAP and emergencies.

A single older mother came in with a \$1,111 bill. During the interview we found she is caring for her bedridden daughter with dementia who is hooked up to machines causing the electric bill to stay high. Client is also raising her teenage grandson since mother is unable to. We were able to do a shutoff payment avoiding them to be shut off and recommended her to go to other local agencies. We will also be helping them with OEAP funds on her next bill.

Grant, Baker, Union and Wallowa Counties

Community Connection of Northeast Oregon, Inc. (CCNO) reports the following information

LIEAP

To date we have served 2,724 clients and 1,444 households. Based on the current LIEAP allocation for Community Connection, we need additional funding to help the households that remain on our waiting list, which currently totals 251 households. The waiting list grows daily as we wait/hope for additional LIEAP funding. With the waiting lists, the households served to date and those already scheduled for intake we need another \$100,000 in funds. We should also note that the funding time lines affects how much funding we have at any given time, sometimes it appears we have penalty other times during the year we have to turn families away and refer them to other agencies.

The price of oil (\$3.379 a gallon) has households begging for larger allocation. However, as of right now we are unable to accommodate any households with additional payments because we still have families waiting for their initial allocations. The reality is that LIEAP is fuel blind and several of the local energy programs are not fuel blind, plus this funding can be used in all four counties in CCNO service territory which makes this source of funding even more important.

OEAP

Wallowa County recently received an increase in OEAP funding for Pacific Power households. Based on this allocation Community Connection will be advertising on the local radio station, sending a flyer to the Department of Human resources in Wallowa County. With this funding we have served 115 clients and 44 households

Oregon HEAT & Oregon HEAT Williams

Wallowa County received \$1,360 a one-time allocation from Oregon HEAT and a one-time allocation of \$114 of Oregon HEAT Williams funds. Any funds are very much appreciated and will be used for Pacific Power costumers.

Cascade Natural Gas

Cascade Natural Gas is on a monthly allocation basis; at this point in time we have \$3,541.95 remaining. CNG funds are not fuel blind and can only be used in Baker County. To date we have served 46 clients and 11 households.

LIRAP

The Avista/LIRAP program is on a monthly allocation basis, at this point in time we have \$15.87 remaining. LIRAP is not a fuel blind program and can only be used in Union County. LIRAP. To date we have served 75 clients and 25 households.

Project Share

Avista Utilities also funds this program monthly; at this point in time we have \$2,256.33 remaining. Project Share is a fuel blind program and can only be used in Union County. Currently we have served 107 clients and 32 households.

Columbia Power

This program is called Project Helping Hands and is funded once a year by Columbia Power utilities. CCNO has \$831.70 remaining and we have served 12 clients and 5 households.

Oregon Trail Electric Cooperative

We receive a yearly allocation from OTEC that is fuel blind and can only be used in Union, Baker and Grant counties. As of right now we are out of funding. We served 416 clients and 173 households with the previous funding.

Harney and Malheur Counties

Harney County covers 10,226 square miles with a population of about 7,600 people. The Burns-Hines area has a population of just fewer than 5,000 people leaving the remaining population scattered over a vast area. In order to reach more of the rural community residents our energy assistance representatives traveled to several locations throughout the county to set up local sites in an effort to encourage more of the distant residents to avail themselves of the energy assistance program. The closest site was at Riley, Oregon located 28 miles from Burns and the most distant site was set up at Fields, Oregon located 115 miles from Burns. We hope to continue to offer this service at the beginning of each Energy Assistance year.

At the Harney County Senior & Community Services Center the demand for all types of assistance continues to increase. The economy in Harney County has taken another adverse turn with the permanent closure of the Louisiana Pacific lumber mill. Combined with the recent layoffs at the motorcoach plant, around 300 families have been unexpectedly placed in a position of not being able to meet the financial obligations of daily living.

The steep rise in the cost of heating fuels has placed an almost unrealistic burden on these families, as well as the senior population that live on fixed incomes. Because the options for heating choices are severely limited in Harney County and the LIEAP funding is our sole source for assistance for fossil fuels, a large number of families are left in a negative position when trying to heat their households during our nearly 9 month heating season.

Harney County has two vendors for heating fuels. During the week of our snapshot their prices and delivery requirements were as follows:

Vendor 1 -	Stove Oil	\$3.48 per gallon	75 gallon minimum
	Furnace Oil	\$3.15 per gallon	75 gallon minimum
	Propane	\$2.60 per gallon	75 gallon minimum
	Propane	\$2.85 per gallon	75 gallon minimum
Vendor 2 -	Stove Oil	\$3.37 per gallon	75 gallon minimum
	Furnace Oil	\$3.17 per gallon	75 gallon minimum
	Strait Oil	\$3.08 per gallon	75 gallon minimum

Although, during the week of our snapshot the prices came down, the high cost of heating fuels continue to affect many people who are unable to afford even the minimum delivery and unless individuals have a standing history with the vendors for ordering their fuel and then paying upon receiving a statement in the mail, the vendors have chosen not to extend credit.

One of the most obvious problems we are experiencing is with subsidized households. In order to qualify for this housing, clients are largely in the bottom 50% of the poverty bracket. Subsidized households are finding it especially difficult because their heating assistance is not enough to pay for the minimum delivery. Because the LIEAP formula reduces subsidized household payments by half, we are failing the most needy population. Many households must choose between food and prescription medications or heat.

Due to the extremely low temperatures during our survey period, a large number of households that received energy help earlier in the program year have already used their assistance and requested crisis assistance payments. We processed a large number of these during the week and will continue to do so as long as our funding lasts.

The statistics on the people that contacted our agency during the week of the snapshot are as follows:

- 184 calls or visits requesting energy assistance
- 141 households were served
- 225 individuals were in these households
- 121 households with 172 clients received crisis assistance
- 13 were under 75% of poverty
- 25 were 75% - 100% of poverty
- 26 were 101% - 125% of poverty
- 24 were 125% - 150% of poverty
- 33 were over 150% of poverty
- \$24,200 were allotted for crisis payments
- 20 households with 53 clients received standard assistance
- 12 were under 75% of poverty
- 0 were 75% - 100% of poverty
- 4 were 101% - 125% of poverty
- 3 was 126% - 150% of poverty
- 1 was over 150% of poverty
- \$5,870 were allotted for standard payments

According to OPUS¹⁴ we spent \$30,070 of our LIEAP funding during the survey period and have \$22,417 left which we expect to spend by the end of the month. The average payment for energy assistance clients was \$213 and will not pay for even one month of heat. Considering the 7-9 months that is necessary to heat homes in our climate, one can't help but wonder how these people will make it through the winter with no more heating assistance available to them.

¹⁴ OPUS is a computerized tracking system built and maintained by Oregon Housing and Community Services to track critical program metrics of these vital social service programs.

Due to the cold temperatures in Harney County we will have no difficulty using the remaining funding. In reality, we could easily spend any additional funding in Crisis and Special payments in an effort to keep families warm.

In Malheur County, during the week of January 14th – January 18th Malheur Council on Aging & Community Services (MCOA) received 71 phone calls regarding energy assistance. Out of 82 scheduled appointments for energy assistance 51 clients showed up for their appointments and received help. We served 6 clients seeking emergency assistance. We are currently booked for energy assistance appointments through January 29th and still taking appointments. We are expecting to receive calls from clients who are at risk of disconnection once the Idaho Power disconnection moratorium is over on March 1st.

Currently in Malheur County the price of bulk fuels are:

- Above ground diesel - \$3.46 per gallon
- Underground diesel is between \$3.14 – \$3.25 per gallon
- Monitor oil is between \$3.46 – \$3.95 per gallon
- Propane is \$2.60 – \$2.65 per gallon
- Pellets vary between \$5.00-\$5.79 a bag or \$259 per ton
- Wood is about \$200.00 a cord

Most oil vendors have a 100-gallon minimum delivery requirement. We have been getting a lot of calls from clients who are unable to meet the minimum delivery requirement and have little or no fuel on hand.

Listed below is the available funding for each of the programs available at MCOA for energy assistance and emergency assistance.

- Low Income Energy Assistance (LIEAP) \$125,065
- OLIBA - \$2714 available to Cascade Natural Gas customers for deposits and bill assistance.
- Winter Help - \$565 available bill assistance for Cascade Natural Gas Customers with disconnection notices.
- Project Share - \$776 available bill assistance to Idaho Power customers with disconnection notices and some oil clients.

A while back a young lady was working out in a field a got her arm caught in a swather. There was no one around and she was stuck so she tried to cut her own arm off with a pocket knife. Luckily someone found her. She still has no use of her arm and might not regain any use in it at all. She is only receiving \$521 a month from Worker's Compensation and is supposed to receive \$300 in child support but she hasn't seen any of that money. She applied for food stamps but was turned down. She is trying to raise twin boys that are 11 years old and a 4 year-old boy as well. She has no help from anyone and she is falling behind on her bills and this month she knows that she is going to be at least \$200 short for her rent. She was very grateful that we were able to help her with \$340 for her oil.

Jackson County

ACCESS, Inc. reports the following information with regards to our current available funding, local demand for our services, and the service capacity of our energy assistance programs. The need for our services continues to increase as the price of energy escalates. Unfortunately our low-income households are the ones that experience the most devastating blow of increasing energy cost due to a limited or fixed income. The following provides a snapshot for our agency the week of January 14-18, 2008.

We currently have funding remaining in four of our energy assistance programs. The following table breaks out the available funding; the number of potential households served and fuel type.

Available Energy Assistance Program Funding at ACCESS, Inc.

LIEAP	\$	143,761	479	Fuel Blind/Any
OEAP	\$	149,031	497	Electric/Pacific Power
LIRAP	\$	9,812	33	Natural Gas/Avista
Project Share	\$	5,062	17	Natural Gas/Avista
Total	\$	307,666	1026	

Currently it appears as if we have ample funding to serve a significant number of households. It should be kept in mind that all agencies received in the beginning of January a new quarterly allocation of OEAP funds. This new quarterly allocation includes the 50% increase, which will hopefully extend our services through the entire quarter. Prior to the increase the demand for OEAP funding was such that our quarterly allocation would last us roughly 45 calendar days. In addition, the above table does not account for those households on the waitlist. As of the week ending January 18, 2008 we had over 1612 households on our waitlist. From the table above one can see that we have enough funding to cover 63% of our waitlist. Also worth noting is the number of phone calls and walk-ins we experienced the week of January 14-18, 2008. During this week we had 297 walk-ins and 885 phone calls.

Illustrative Bulk Fuel Prices in Jackson County

Propane

- Blue Star Gas \$2.84 per gallon (up to 20 gallons)
 \$2.79 per gallon (21 gallons plus)
 \$3.50 per gallon (100 gallons plus for home delivery)

- Ferrellgas, Inc. \$2.50 per gallon at dock
 \$3.50-3.85 per gallon for home delivery
 \$5.99 Hazardous material charge

- Midway Country Store \$2.75 per gallon

- Ruch Country Store \$3.25 per gallon

- Suburban Propane \$2.809 per gallon (at dock)
 \$4.08 per gallon (delivery)

- Cypress Grove RV \$2.45 per gallon

- Shady Trails \$2.65 per gallon

Oil/Pellets

- Grange Cooperative \$3.119 per gallon (100 gallons plus delivered furnace oil)
 \$3.309 per gallon (100 gallons plus delivered stove oil)

- Hays Oil Company \$2.89 gallons

- Mayfield Oil \$3.10 per gallon (100 gallons plus delivered furnace oil)
 \$3.38 per gallon (100 gallons plus delivered stove oil)

- Medford Fuel \$3.159 per gallon (100 gallons plus delivered furnace oil)
 \$3.359 per gallon (100 gallons plus delivered/stove oil)
- Grange Cooperative \$4.99 per 40 pound bag of pellets
- Medford Ice \$0.80 per 5# Presto logs

Briefly mentioned above was the OEAP funding increase. In anticipation of this increase our agency has undergone significant infrastructure and staffing changes. We recently replaced an antiquated phone terminal/hub increasing our phone line capacity by 50% as well as our Internet capacity. In addition we have added 4 intake cubicles and increased our intake staff from two to four. In order to increase efficiency and provide the assistance as quick as possible we have began using a scheduling software that allows us to view, schedule, and/or send messages for multiple intake workers. We also plan to increase our outreach capabilities providing services in rural communities throughout Jackson County. We feel that the additional funding will only allow us to keep current with the current demand. We hope this information helps in our quest for additional funding.

Klamath and Lake Counties

The Klamath Basin Senior Citizens Council (KSBCC) sends out approximately 1600 applications to seniors and disabled clients in October. The doors are open to the general public December 1st. KSBCC sees about 35-40 clients a day not including walk-ins for shut offs. Due to extreme cold weather this year and high heating bills, the center is open Monday thru Friday. There is enough funding left to cover the already scheduled appointments and OEAP funds for electric shut offs. Fortunately, we do not have a wait list at this time.

With the extreme cold weather, the demand is greater as the grants are not lasting the clients as long as they used to. Often, after we help someone with assistance, they are calling back, needing more help because their oil is gone again, or their electric bill is so high. The phones never stop ringing with desperate customers needing assistance. It is very heartbreaking knowing that some clients are cold or turning down their heat below warm temperatures so they make it through the winter months. We are also seeing more senior citizens calling back for more help this year, which does not happen during milder winters.

One of the biggest problems we have faced this year is that we are so booked with clients months in advance and do not have enough staff (intake workers) that we can not always get everyone in as soon as we would like. Judy Crist, program manager says, "We are very grateful to be able to have the Energy Assistance Program in our community and hope that the program always continues so we can help people keep warm."

The Lake County Senior Center program is similar to the Klamath in that the LIEAP is open to seniors, folks with disabilities and households with children under six on October 1st. Doors are open to the general public December 1st. Many energy consumers in Lake County heat with oil and wood. There is one distributor of oil in Lake County and most folks receiving assistance are on a C.O.D. basis. Minimum delivery is 50 gallons, which means \$140 or more is needed in cash at the time of delivery. Unfortunately, some consumers cannot afford to pay for the oil, or pay for it and not be able to pay their remaining bills or have enough food.

Many homes use wood heat and it is not always easy or affordable to heat the entire house with a wood stove. LCSC has implemented a plan called "One Warm Room", which encourages folks to try and keep one room warm and comfortable in extreme cold weather, when they cannot afford to heat their entire house.

We receive about 25 to 30 calls a week and about 30 to 40 applications for energy assistance. As in some smaller communities, there is one staff person working the energy assistance program in Lake County. Many applications are handled by mail since some households may be as far as 100 miles away (one way). Often clients cannot afford to travel in for an appointment and with one staff person it is not feasible for that person to be out of the office. Lake County serves their clients in the most convenient and economical way possible. We are fortunate not to have a waiting list at this time.

Lane County

The Lane County Human Services Commission reports the following information:

LIEAP

Based on the current funding level of LIEAP in Lane County, the number of households on the Lane County LIEAP waiting list, the numbers served to-date and the number to be served with the funds still available, Lane County needs another \$500,000 of LIEAP program funding to serve everyone seeking LIEAP assistance.

At this time Lane County has 2,000 who will not receive LIEAP assistance unless we receive additional LIEAP funding. More households are calling in everyday seeking LIEAP assistance, so the number of unserved households will increase until we stop taking new phone calls for the waiting list.

OEAP

Lane County recently received a significantly increased OEAP allocation. Based on this allocation, I have notified the Lane County Human Services Commission social service network of the availability of OEAP funding. Prior to the recent large OEAP allocation, Lane County was down to less than \$4,000 in OEAP funds available.

OLGA

Lane County has \$5,575 available in the OLGA program. This is less than 20% of the total OLGA allocation in Lane County to-date.

EWEB Customer Care

Lane County coordinates the generously funded EWEB Customer Care program (ECC). This program has monthly allocations. Currently, all ECC agency providers have booked out their January allocations and new callers must call back in February. This has been the trend with the ECC program and we predict it will continue through the winter months.

Linn / Benton / Lincoln Counties

At Community Services Consortium (CSC) we began our senior mail-out process in November, serving approximately 1,900 households. We planned on opening to the general public on December 3rd with 2,184 Federal LIEAP appointments available.

Mother Nature started December with a bang. The National Weather Service issued its first-ever hurricane force wind warning for the coastal waters from Cape Shoalwater, Washington, south to Florence, Oregon. Two storms struck Oregon with a one-two punch on December 2nd and 3rd bringing wind gusts of more than 100mph, whipping up 45-foot waves that slammed into the coast. Thousands of homes were without power. About 12,000 people were without power in Lincoln City alone. As the storm moved inland, high winds and minor flooding rolled into the valley and heavy snows hit the Cascade Range. Landline and cellular phone service remained out for several days.

LIEAP opened to the general public in the middle of the storms. Despite road closures, downed power lines and no phone service, people made their way into their local offices to sign up for a LIEAP appointment.

- In Newport, 70 people braved the storm and walked into the office that morning.
- Corvallis saw 87 people in the office during the first hour that day.
- In Lebanon, people began lining up at 4:40 in the morning. Approximately 250 people came into the office that morning to request an appointment rather than try to get through on the phone.
- Albany had 60 people in line at 8am.

All 1,638 available appointments in the valley were gone in 13 business hours. Despite the hurricane winds, Lincoln County was out of appointments within 24 business hours. Due to the high volume of phone calls CSC receives, this is the third year our offices have instituted the "Energy Assistance Hot Line". People can call us 24 hours a day, 7 days a week to find out our current funding status by utility.

On January 7th, we were able to release an additional 482 appointments across the three county area. Linn County was out of appointments in two days, Benton County was out in three days and Lincoln County was out in five days.

We are currently unable to help those that heat with oil, propane or wood – and customers of Consumer Power. Using private fuel funds, households who are at risk of shut-off and are a utility customer of Northwest Natural, Central Lincoln PUD and PacifiCorp can be seen on a walk-in basis.

CSC's four regional offices tracked incoming utility requests from December 24th through January 4th. Of the 1,138 households requesting assistance during the two-week holiday period, we were unable to schedule any Federal LIEAP appointments. Using our private fuel funds, we were able to serve 199 households in need. Of the 1,138 households requesting assistance, 685 were scheduled for disconnect by their utility and another 46 households had already been disconnected for the holidays.

For the week of January 7th through the 11th, for the 1,020 households requesting assistance, CSC was able to release 482 Federal LIEAP appointments. All were gone within five days, plus an additional 240 private fuel fund appointments. 414 households calling in were scheduled for disconnect or were already disconnected.

Last year, under the Federal Low Income Energy Assistance Program:

- 41% of the households served had a shutoff notice, were currently shutoff or had received a past due notice;
- 63% of the households served are at or below 100% of the Federal Poverty guidelines (i.e. household of 4 making less than \$25,813/year);
- 40% of the households served are at or below 75% of the Federal Poverty guidelines (i.e. household of 4 making less than \$15,488/year);
- 32% of the households served have a senior in residence in it;
- 28% of the households served have children in ages 5 and under;
- 56% of the households served have children age 11 and under;
- 41% of the households served have a disabled individual in residence; and
- 29% own their homes.

A 53 year old woman diagnosed with multiple medical issues including heart disease is in the process of applying for Social Security. Her only income is from the cans she collects along the highway. Her heart and asthma medicine was most recently provided by the free clinic. About to receive a disconnect notice on her electric bill, she applied for energy assistance where it was discovered that her furnace was not working. She had put blankets up over her windows and was heating with a small space heater. CSC provided energy assistance,

enrolled her in the energy education case management program that is also coordinating weatherization services.

A single mother with two children ages 3 and 5 had escaped a life of domestic violence to secure a better future for her boys. She is currently working part-time and going to school to finish her training. With help from energy assistance the power will stay on. As a result of her hard work, she has recently received a scholastic award that will aid her in reaching her goals and becoming self-sufficient.

An 88 year old man lives on a small fixed income that barely covers his meager month to month expenses. Energy assistance enables him to make it through the winter heating season. In the summer, he grows a small garden. Once a month he walks the three miles to the energy assistance office to show staff his energy bill and share the berries and vegetables he has harvested.

Marion and Polk Counties

Mid-Willamette Valley Community Action Agency (MWVCAA) has the following funding sources and dollars available for direct client payments during the 2007/2008 heating season:

- LIEAP – Federal energy assistance funds - \$1,181,797
- OEAP – State energy assistance programs for customers of PGE and Pacific Power
- PGE - \$507,740 (one-half annual allocation) and Pacific Power \$85,057 (one-half annual allocation)
- OLGA – Utility energy assistance program for customers of Northwest Natural - \$92,958
- GAP – Northwest Natural program offering assistance from voluntary customer and Company contributions - \$26,000
- Oregon HEAT – Programs offering assistance from voluntary contributions of PGE and Pacific Power customers, company contributions, and independent fund raising.
- PGE – \$14,185, Pacific Power - \$8,435 and Oil - \$49
- Williams Settlement – Energy assistance funds available from a legal settlement.
- Oregon HEAT: PGE - \$592, Oregon HEAT: Pacific Power - \$186
- Duke El Paso – Energy assistance funds from a legal settlement.
- Oregon HEAT - \$628

Total finding available, \$1,889,627.

We mailed LIEAP applications to 2,400 Senior and/or Disabled clients. 1,369 of those applications have been processed thus far. On December 1, 2006 we opened LIEAP to the general public. We have scheduled 2,535 LIEAP appointments through March 31, 2007. **Between the clients already processed and those with appointments through March all of our LIEAP funds are committed.**

For the last two weeks, we have averaged 40 walk-in clients per week whose power is already off. Our OEAP allocation enables us to serve approximately 82 households per week. We are currently providing OEAP assistance to clients that called requesting help during the second week of January. We estimate that 760 are on this waiting list. For the week January 14-18, 2008 we averaged 80 calls for bill payment assistance per day.

We have exhausted or encumbered most of our smaller allocations. We hope to be able to take unspent LIEAP administration and program delivery funds and convert them to direct client payments but cannot do that until all LIEAP mailouts are processed and all currently scheduled appointments are completed.

Multnomah County

MULTNOMAH COUNTY
2008 ENERGY ASSISTANCE SNAPSHOT
January 14-18, 2008

DEMAND EXCEEDS RESOURCES AND CAPACITY

- Multnomah County has committed over \$1.7 million of LIEAP funds, serving over 5000 households since the start of the heating season on October 1, 2007.
- Over 3,400 senior households served with LIEAP funding to date.
- Multnomah County has less than 12% of the allocated LIEAP funds remaining, with over two (2) months of winter left.
- Agencies received over 6,000 phone calls, or walk-ins requesting energy assistance during the week.
- Human Solutions, an East County contract agency received 1,206 phone calls during the week requesting service, while they were only able to assist 340 households.
- The Salvation Army, one of the smaller contract offices, is receiving 20-40 requests for help per day. This past week they received 359 calls for service.
- One agency, Portland Impact, had 256 scheduled appointments and served an additional 46 walk-ins during the week. They received an additional 2829 calls on their energy line and were able to return 445 of them.

- Based on information from several contract agencies the types of calls broke down in the following manner:
 - No Power/No Heat/ Shut-off 28%
 - Medical emergencies 10%
 - Shut-off notices PGE 20%
 - Shut-off notices NWNG 15%
 - Shut-off notices PPL 17%
 - Other 10%

HIGH COST OF OIL HEAT

There has been a substantial increase in the cost of heating oil this season, with cost increases fluctuating between 15 to 25%, depending on the whims of the international costs of oil. Because of these costs, there has been a steady increase in our cost per household for oil heat. This average cost is nearing the maximum allowed under the LIEAP program.

The average payment per Oil Household:

- 2005: \$528.48
- 2006: \$636.09
- 2007: \$676.80
- 2008: \$742.56

Since October 1, 2007 Multnomah County has served over 500 households with oil heat. This has an impact on our ability to help low-income households (HH) in two ways: (1) the more spent on each HH leaves less help available for others, and (2) By spending this larger amount to meet a HH's primary heat, it does not leave funds for assistance with electricity. This means more reliance on the Oregon Energy Assistance Program (OEAP).

SENIOR LIVING IN THE COLD

Alice, an 81-year-old woman, living in her own home alone, stayed in bed all the time, just to stay warm. She had oil heat, but no oil. Her doctor was concerned about her health and living conditions and called the Multnomah County Energy Assistance office for help. This woman had a tremendous physician, who even offered to get some oil if we could not help. We faxed the application material to the doctor's office and they took it to their patient. When it was complete, a member of our staff met their staff person at a park-and-ride on the way to work the next morning and brought the application in for processing. Oil was delivered to her home the same day.

STATE-COUNTY-UTILITY PARTNERSHIP KEEP LIGHTS & HEAT ON

Cities and utility boundaries cross over County lines and Community Action Agency service areas. When a low-income family finds themselves in need whom do they turn to? In this case a single mother with children lived in an adjoining County but had PGE for their electric utility. The Community Action Agency serving that area did not have a contract with this utility. PGE contacted the State for assistance in helping this family. The State asked Multnomah County to help and we were glad to do it. This young single mother with children, not only relied on electricity for her heat, but also for her lights, hot water, cooking, and to power a pump for her water. To lose this service would be devastating to this family. County staff met with this mother, completed the application process and kept her power on.

HELP FOR EXTENDED FAMILY

A 52-year-old grandmother took in her 7 grandchildren when her daughter was incarcerated. The children ranged in age from a few months to 10 years old. She lived on a fixed income and the bills were over-whelming. She had never received energy assistance before, but the Salvation Army was able to keep her heat on.

A FAMILY RE-UNITED

A father had his lights shut off in his apartment, where he lived with four children and his wife. The father sent the children to different houses so they can be in a place to stay warm, with people who are not family members, but just friends. The baby stayed with the parents. The wife wants to leave him because he could not find a job and they were behind in all the bills. He came to El Programa Hispano (Catholic Charities) to see if we could help him, but all the appointments for the week were booked. However, the intake person asks him to come back with all the documents and wait to see if a client with an appointment didn't show up. The intake person was trying to see the clients as fast as she could, in order to make time for him just in case all the appointment would show up. Around 3:00 P.M. finally they were available to see him and turn his electricity back on. The man came back the next day with his family and thanked us for the help provided and for helping him to reunite his family.

SENIOR IN POORLY INSULATED MOBILE HOME

A 72-year-old man came into Human Solutions, one of our contract offices in East Multnomah County. He had a disconnection notice pending for his electrical service. He lives in a mobile home, which is not well insulated, and with windows that do not close all the way. Because of the poor insulation and winter conditions, his electric bill is very high and with a limited fixed income, he has been unable to pay it. We were able to help him avoid disconnection and pay the entire balance of the bill since he would surely have another disconnect if things didn't get repaired with his home. We referred him to the winter weatherization program for home repairs and gave him plastic for the windows until the windows are fixed. As he was out to his car with his weatherization supplies, he began to cry because he was so touched with everything we were able to do.

Umatilla, Morrow, Wheeler and Gilliam Counties

CAP of East Central Oregon (CAPECO) had obligated all of the Low Income Energy Assistance Program (LIEAP) funds received from Oregon Housing and Community Services. Our staff has maintained a waiting list by community and by county and there are 524 households on the list. CAPECO received 95 telephone requests and 25 in office requests for payment assistance during the week of January 14-18 of which 15 were in crisis situations such that assistance was needed to either prevent or reconnect service.

To date CAPECO has provided assistance to 1770 households equating to \$522,615 payment assistance from the LIEAP program. Additionally, 174 households were provided \$48,183 in payment assistance from other energy assistance funds. It is evident that the need is greater than the funding available for the service. Due to this fact, our agency does not advertise the availability of funds but rather informs local social service agencies and our energy vendors of our office locations and their respective phone numbers to relay to households indicating a need for help with their energy bill. Unfortunately the program demand is so great that the agency does not want to build up a households' expectation only to tell them there are no funds available.

Our intake staff has indicated a 12-15 percent increase in households who have applied for the program for the first time. Many of these households have indicated they always have been able to stretch their resources but this year with the increase in the cost of living they have come up against tough times. A local manufacturing plant laid off 75 workers who had family wage jobs plus the reduction in farm worker employment has contributed to the increase in first time assistance seekers.

A senior lady in Condon, Oregon came in for her appointment. She had recently filled her oil tank in preparation of the onset of winter. She presented a \$720 bill from the energy vendor that was more than her monthly income and she indicated that during the winter she usually needs four or five fill ups. Unfortunately, she is not alone in this situation as many households are struggling to retain their housing and pay for the extreme heating expense of their home.

Heating cost and the electricity bill was a financial burden for a late, middle age woman who sought assistance. She had recently been laid off of work and her partial oil tank fill up amounted to \$302 and she was past due on her electric at \$328 (it included her monthly charge of \$105). The agency was able to make her current by utilizing two different funding streams but with the lack of work and minimal unemployment assistance she realized that she will likely fall behind again. She commented, "I wonder if life is worth it anymore". Her expression reflects the lack of hope many of the households have who are seeking assistance.

Wasco, Hood River, and Sherman Counties

At Mid-Columbia CAC all of our energy assistance funding including both LIEAP and OEAP has been committed to clients with existing appointments. We have a small amount of OLGA funding available and some Oregon HEAT money. Our other utility funds out of money.

We have a 265 households on our waiting list but we have no funding to help them with. With the recent cold spells we've experienced we expect to see current heating bills on the rise and calls to our offices to increase dramatically. During the week of January 14 – 18 we received 35 calls from households with shutoff notices. In the first two days of the following week we received 15 calls from households who had already had their service disconnected.

We believe we will start to see more households in trouble with heating bills now that the holiday season over and the cold weather is beginning to settle in.

Washington County

At Community Action during this week we received more than 1,400 requests for assistance at our offices in Hillsboro and Beaverton. We assisted approximately 356 families with payments; 42 of those families (12%) had already had their electricity or gas shutoff. More than 47% of these households had 5-day disconnection notices that represent an increase of 7% over last year.

To date, we have spent out 90% of the LIEAP funds which have been received, serving 1,845 households. We expect to have these funds expended by the end of January and are awaiting the final portion of our allocation which will likely carry us only into the middle of February. After that the only funds available for non-PGE customers until next fall will be OLGA and GAP for natural gas customers.

Outside of LIEAP, we have no other funds for those who heat with oil, propane, or wood, or are customers of the non-regulated utilities administered by the City of Forest Grove and West Oregon Electric Co-op. Our OEAP allocation for this quarter will probably be spent out before the end of February, even though we received an increase of 50% in dollars available to clients because of legislation passed in 2007. This will leave no dollars available for PGE customers, which are 90% of our county residents, until our April 1 allocation.

Since October we have served more than 2,300 households with OEAP. Our scheduled appointments are booked through January, but each day additional people come to our agency that have no heat or are pending disconnection within 24 hours and need to be “fit in” and helped immediately as emergency situations.

After March 1 we expect that we will only have a small amount of LIEAP Crisis dollars, OLGA money to serve approximately 25 households per month and Oregon HEAT dollars to serve 100 households through the end of the grant, which will most likely be the end of March. This could force us to turn away people seeking assistance, with virtually no other resources in the county for them.

This year we are seeing an increase of at least 7% in households with 5-day shutoff notices and even more people with very large arrearages. It is not unusual to see bills higher than \$1000. This is partially due to recent rate increases in both our regulated utilities and also a recent 4% increase in City of Forest Grove rates.

Like last year, we are finding that many seniors did not use their heat until they had received our help. This creates serious health and safety issues, but their fixed incomes are providing less and less for them and seniors choose to turn off their heat and/or hot water in order to pay for other essentials such as rent and medication.

The economic situation in Washington County has definitely deteriorated since last year for the people we serve. We are seeing more people who are applying for energy assistance for the first time, many of whom are unemployed and no longer receiving unemployment benefits. Living wage jobs are increasingly difficult to find, and now even the lowest paying jobs are rapidly filled. Clients have reported that in order to get temporary labor jobs it has become necessary to line up in front of the labor offices as early as 4 or 5 a.m. because of the number of workers competing for the relatively few jobs.

When people do find jobs, they are often commuting very long distances to work. With the increase in gasoline prices, working people more and more have to make choices between the basic necessities of food, shelter, or medical needs if they expect to keep working.

Construction slowdowns and nursery, landscaping and vineyard layoffs are frequent, leaving workers with little money for rent, heat and food. Energy Assistance workers report they are receiving calls daily looking for resources to help with mortgage payments, and at intake workers are each seeing 1-2 households per day who are facing foreclosure.

Many apartment dwellers are now being required to pay for water and sewer in addition to rent; these had previously been included in the monthly rental payment. Monthly rental payments have also increased with workers reporting an average increase of \$50 per month.

With the recent severe cold weather, we expect to be flooded with requests for assistance in the coming months.

John and Mary, a couple in their late 40's are facing financial ruin. John suffered a heart attack, was hospitalized and required heart surgery with no medical insurance. When John got out of the hospital they found that their gas had been turned off. Then Mary lost her job as a bookkeeper while caring for John, who also lost his job. Since Mary had "worked her way up" as a bookkeeper, she found she was no longer considered qualified for other bookkeeping positions because of her lack of a degree. We assisted this family with LIEAP dollars to restore their gas and used OEAP to prevent a disconnection while advising them to get a medical certificate to help prevent future disconnections. We also provided referrals to Mary to help her with her education and through collaboration with their medical case manager, worked to find other resources to help meet their basic needs.

Juan and Maria, who have 3 small children, depended on Juan's landscaping job for their income, but due to floods and bad weather Juan only was able to work sporadically. Their electricity had been shutoff and with OEAP, we were able to have it restored. Our agency's Child Care Resource and Referral Program helps provide training and education to people so they can become certified as child care providers. We referred Maria to the program and she is currently attending classes, expecting to be certified within 6 months. This will provide a more stable, long-term income for the family.

Yamhill County

The following information comes from Yamhill County Community Action Partnership (YCAP) in Yamhill County. Due to heavy demand, applications received after December 13th were placed on a waiting list. Recently, 150 application packets went out to individuals from that list in anticipation of the final (25%) 2008 allocation and contingency funds. Currently, 188 referrals remain on the waiting list with referrals added daily.

The following categories make up the waiting list as of January 18, 2008:

- Total Households -188
- Senior Households - 23
- Disabled Households - 32
- Households with children under six years of age - 58

It is understood by residents that the need is great and resources are limited or unavailable. Over 75% of OEAP customers served by YCAP have been faced with disconnects. An additional 8% were already disconnected prior to application date. The disconnect number has increased by 16% over last year. Of the people seeking assistance from OLG (Oregon Low-Income Gas Assistance), 45% are faced with disconnects and an additional 41% had been disconnected.

Energy Assistance Information by Program ¹⁵

LIEAP – Households are currently placed on the waiting list

- 968 households have been served through 1-18-08
- 596 households were served during the pre-screening period for senior and disabled applicants
- 206 were single parent households
- 9 were two parent households

OEAP (PGE Customers) - No appointments available until the last week of January

- 123 households have been served through 1-18-08
- 48 were single parent households
- 4 were two parent households
- Limited appointments (40-45) available on monthly basis

OLGA (Northwest Natural Gas) – Households are currently placed on waiting list

- 22 households have been served through 1-18-08
- 11 were single parent households
- Monthly allocation serves between 5-8 households

¹⁵ Above numbers reflect YTD totals beginning 10-01-08 through 1-18-08.

GAP (Northwest Natural Gas)

- Annual allocation of \$4,000 with maximum payment of \$150
- Recently received allocation with anticipated assistance to 25–30 households

Two parent household with a disabled veteran on limited income. The spouse is unable to work due to care responsibilities for the partner. Oil, the primary heat source, created a complication due to cost and minimum delivery required by oil vendor. Without oil, the household utilized electric to heat home resulting in higher than average electric bills, further hindering their ability to purchase oil. OEAP provided adequate funds to prevent electric shut-off allowing LIEAP to assist with delivery and purchase of fuel oil. Customers are currently paying between \$3.01 – \$3.03/gallon for furnace oil for the minimum delivery of 100 gallons. YCAP has provided heating oil assistance to 10 households. Six of those needed a crisis payment to meet minimum delivery and/or anticipated winter usage.

A single person is living on a fixed income of SSI & SSD. Rental unit has oil as primary heat source. Landlord purchased heating oil due to client's lack of resources but required reimbursement. Client could no longer afford to pay landlord back and decided to heat with portable electric heaters. Agency staff provided a home visit to determine confirmation of eligibility and if health/safety concerns would warrant assistance with this situation. LIEAP provided regular & crisis assistance in order to fill the tank with heating oil. The assistance of heating oil will offer this household a warm and safe environment with using resources cost effectively.

A single parent with limited income applied for LIEAP for the first time. Not knowing what resources were available, PGE, a partnering utility, referred this individual to YCAP. The customer made payment arrangements in order to allow time for LIEAP assistance to be approved. The LIEAP assistance covered current charges on the account and left an additional balance to assist with next month's bill.

A client, new to YCAP, came in during the pre-screening period in November in which LIEAP was not available to general public customers. This family of 5, with 3 young children, recently experienced their two wage household reduced to one income. YCAP provided assistance from OLGA (Oregon Low-Income Gas Assistance) to continue natural gas service until LIEAP started in December. LIEAP provided additional funds that will assist with both their natural gas and electric bill.

A senior citizen new to YCAP recently experienced the loss of a partner and income. Left with limited resources, this individual had to put closure to the financial details and found it necessary to apply for assistance. LIEAP provided assistance towards the electric bill.

A single parent with young child recently experienced abandonment from partner that provided the only source of income to the household. The customer was served with funds from OEAP back in October to prevent shutoff & leave a small credit on the account during this transition. Although this household did not receive LIEAP assistance at the time, it will be necessary in the near future if circumstances have not changed.