

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

April 10, 2025

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

Dear Secretary Kennedy:

We write to express significant concern with your decision to fire Health and Human Services employees working to support the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP). Created by Congress in 1981, LIHEAP is the federal government's foremost program for helping low-income individuals afford their electricity bills, serving roughly 5.9 million households every year.¹ Without the necessary staff in place to facilitate the LIHEAP program and distribute this vital funding, people in our state of Arizona and throughout the country will face higher utility costs and may be forced to go without life-saving cooling measures.

In Arizona, temperatures are already climbing – setting the stage for yet another record-breaking year of extreme heat. Phoenix has already reached 99 degrees, 10 to 20 degrees above average for this time of year.² With record-breaking temperatures becoming more frequent, access to LIHEAP funding can mean the difference between life and death, particularly for seniors and individuals with preexisting health conditions. Eliminating the staff responsible for administering this program will have devastating public health consequences and will increase the risk of heat-related illnesses and fatalities.

The elimination of LIHEAP staff threatens the existence of this critical, congressionally authorized program and creates immediate disruptions in assistance for those most in need. Congress appropriated \$4.1 billion for LIHEAP for fiscal year (FY) 2025 and has continued to recognize the importance of this program. These employees played a vital role in processing applications, ensuring timely distribution of funds, and helping vulnerable households access the resources necessary to keep their homes safe and livable. Leaving this program unstaffed is unacceptable and endangers the lives of countless Americans.

To understand how the Department's actions will impact the distribution of LIHEAP funding, we request responses to the following questions be provided no later than April 18, 2025:

1. As of January 20, 2025, how many HHS employees were assigned to support and administer LIHEAP?
2. What is the basis for the termination of HHS employees assigned to administer LIHEAP?
3. How will the administration of the program be impacted by the termination of HHS employees assigned to LIHEAP?

¹ <https://acf.gov/ocs/fact-sheet/liheap-fact-sheet>

² <https://www.azcentral.com/story/news/local/phoenix-weather/2025/03/25/phoenix-reaches-99-degrees/82657392007/>

4. How will the administration ensure that LIHEAP-eligible households receive the energy assistance they were promised and need to properly cool and heat their homes?
5. Which agency within HHS is currently overseeing the LIHEAP program? How many employees are actively working on the LIHEAP program?
6. Out of the \$4.1 billion Congress appropriated to LIHEAP for FY25, how much funding has already been disbursed to states? How much funding has not been disbursed?
 - a. By what date does HHS plan to disburse the outstanding FY25 LIHEAP funding?

We ask for your clarification on how these workforce reductions have been targeted, what assessment has HHS conducted, and what considerations the administration made in making these decisions that will impact millions of households. We look forward to your prompt response and attention to this critical matter.

Sincerely,



Mark Kelly
United States Senator



Ruben Gallego
United States Senator



Greg Stanton
Member of Congress



Yassamin Ansari
Member of Congress