

## **DEADLINE LOOMS FOR FEDERAL HOME HEATING BILL ASSISTANCE FUNDS AT CENTRAL AREA MOTIVATION PROGRAM**

Seattle, Washington—August 2, 2011—Low-income Seattle residents struggling to keep up with their home heating bills may qualify for financial assistance. Applications to the Energy Assistance Program at Central Area Motivation Program are being accepted until August 31, 2011.

For many Seattle households in crisis, deciding between paying their rent and paying their utility bill is a difficult choice. Central Area Motivation Program (CAMP) can help—funds are still available through its Energy Assistance Program. Income eligible Seattle residents can apply for federally funded Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) benefits to help offset the cost of home heating until the end of August.

"It is no secret that many people are facing financial hardship," said Andrea Caupain, Executive Director of CAMP, "However, our Energy Assistance Program is one of our community's critical resources that can provide relief. Eligible Seattle residents who can't pay their heating or electric bill can still get the help they need."

CAMP's Energy Assistance Program provides over \$3 Million annually to income-eligible households needing energy bill assistance based on the household's income. Applicants do not have to have their utilities disconnected for nonpayment or even be behind on their bill to apply.

Last year, CAMP served more than 8,500 households with federal LIHEAP and Puget Sound Energy (PSE) HELP program funds. With recent reports from the Census Bureau stating the percentage of Americans in poverty reached a 15-year high during 2009, CAMP has served a record number of households this season, many of which are also applying for other social assistance programs. For some residents the financial pinch has continually worsened -- the cost of home heating oil increased roughly 12 percent between 2010 and 2011.

"There has been a flood of people from all walks of life applying for utility assistance this year," said Leon Garnett, Program Director at CAMP. "But we know there are even more out there who need help paying their Seattle City Light bill or Puget Sound Energy bill. Our goal is to help as many as we can before funding runs out."

CAMP's Energy Assistance Program provides assistance for families or individuals living in Seattle apartments or homes, whether they are renters or owners. Applicants must be at or below 125% of the federal poverty level to qualify for LIHEAP (A monthly income of \$2298 after taxes for a family of four), and at or below 150% of the federal poverty level and a customer of Puget Sound Energy to qualify for Puget Sound Energy HELP. Financial assistance to Seattle City Light, Puget Sound Energy, or local oil providers range from \$25 to \$1,000 depending on income, housing type, household size, and energy consumption. Heating system repairs and replacements, as well as chimney cleaning and replacement of broken windows are available to qualified homeowners, as funding permits. To apply, Seattle residents should call the Energy Assistance Hotline at 800-348-7144 or visit [www.campseattle.org](http://www.campseattle.org) for more information on qualifying income levels and program hours.

**About Central Area Motivation Program:** For more than 45 years, CAMP has provided essential human services to meet the needs of Seattle's low-income residents. CAMP is one of Washington's oldest and most respected community organizations, with programs and services helping more than 20,000 people annually through food, housing, and education programs. CAMP's programs provide immediate financial relief to their clients, with special attention given

to emergency situations such as power shutoff and eviction. For more information, visit [www.campseattle.org](http://www.campseattle.org).

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