

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: **[Enter Name  
Phone, etc.]**

**TODAY'S DATE**

**Budget Cuts Could Leave Many [County or Region] Residents in the Cold**

Federal budget cuts could slash the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP) by as much as 50 percent in 2012. This could cause many **[County or Region]** residents to struggle with their heating and utility bills.

HEAP is a federal block grant program that provides grants to states to help low-income families pay their heating and utility bills. The program, which was established in 1981, has historically helped an average of 4.5 to 5 million households throughout America each year, with the program experiencing record levels of approximately 9 million households recently. In 2010 (or most recent year data is available for), **[Number of Program Participants for Your Agency]** received assistance in **[County or Region]**.

“Funding for this valuable program is needed now more than ever in this difficult economic time,” explained **[Executive Director or Agency Spokesperson's Name, Title with Agency Name who administers the HEAP program in County or Region]**. “Also, many utility companies, including some in Ohio, are raising their rates to meet much needed infrastructure upgrades. This could leave even more families struggling to pay their utility bills.”

Despite this need, the President has proposed cutting HEAP funding in half, while the Senate and House have each proposed cuts of more than \$1 billion. These kind of cuts could mean 2 to 3 million American families would be denied much needed assistance **[If known, insert an estimate of how many HEAP applications could be denied from your area]**.

“These cuts could have a serious effect on many families in **[County or Region]**, leading to their utilities being shut off,” concluded **[Last Name of Executive Director or Agency Spokesperson]**. “We are working to maintain current funding levels, but we need the support of Congress and our community.”

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*Community Action changes people's lives, embodies the spirit of hope, improves communities, and makes America a better place to live. We care about the entire community, and we are dedicated to helping people help themselves and each other. Community Action Agencies work to alleviate poverty and empower low-income families in their communities. The **[Agency Name]** serves **[County or Region]** and assisted **[Number]** low-income residents in **[2010 or earliest year data is available for]**.*