

Illinois getting more than \$29 million in extra funds to help poor with heating bills
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Illinois will begin receiving more than \$29 million in additional funds to help eligible needy residents pay their heating bills this season.

The funds will be available through the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program.

U.S. Senator Dick Durbin, D-Illinois, said that the funds for Illinois are a portion of \$450 million in additional assistance Congress secured this month for fiscal year 2008 and released by the Department of Health and Human Services.

“Help is on the way for Illinois residents who are facing a terrible choice — heating or eating,” Durbin said. “Heating bills are up almost 12 percent in the Midwest this winter and Illinois LIHEAP officials tell me that without federal assistance, the remaining funds will not be sufficient to cover Illinois residents who have applied for payments. These desperately needed LIHEAP funds are being released just in time.”

LIHEAP is a federally-funded program that provides heating and cooling assistance to almost 5 million low-income households nationwide. That includes the working poor, those making the difficult transition from welfare to work, disabled persons, the elderly and families with young children.

Assistance comes in the form of block grants to state programs that help eligible households pay for home energy costs.