



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Adriano Espaillat

As Winter Moves in, Senator Espaillat Reminds Residents of Heating Assistance for Low Income Families

ADRIANO ESPAILLAT October 26, 2011

| ISSUE: **AGING, FAMILIES, ENERGY, HEATING, CHILDREN**



Espaillat's office to help constituents with applications and follow up

As temperatures drop, Senator Adriano Espaillat (D – Manhattan/Bronx) is reminding residents about the availability of heating assistance for low income families. The Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) helps millions of low income households, particularly those with the lowest incomes that pay a high proportion of

household income for energy, in paying their energy bill.

“With more and more New Yorkers struggling to make ends meet, it’s important that residents know about heating assistance that’s available for them,” said Senator Adriano Espaillat. “Low-income families can greatly benefit from LIHEAP, in cases where they live on a fixed income and pay unaffordable energy costs. My office stands ready to assist residents who need help accessing this important program.”

Energy assistance is important for staying healthy at home, particularly for the elderly, people with disabilities or young children, as these persons are especially at risk for life threatening illness or death if their home is too cold in the winter. The numbers clearly indicate that LIHEAP is an effective and necessary program, as the average home heating expenditures for LIHEAP recipient households in 2009 was \$816, 36 percent higher than the average for low income households and about 29 percent higher than the average for all households. With an average benefit of \$450 per recipient, 1.3 million New York households last year received enough assistance to cut their heating costs in half.

Senator Espaillat said: “If you can’t afford to pay your home energy bill, you can face safety risks. Some people resort to unsafe methods to keep their homes warm, including the use of stoves and improperly vented portable heaters, which are fire and carbon monoxide hazards. We do not want to see people on the streets because they can’t afford to pay their heating bills.”

LIHEAP can provide assistance in several ways, including bill payment assistance, energy crisis assistance, and weatherization and energy-related home repairs. For more information about LIHEAP, visit the New York State office website at

<http://liheap.ncat.org/profiles/NY.htm>, and the federal website,

<http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/ocs/liheap/index.html>

For those without internet access, you can call the National Energy Assistance Referral (NEAR) project. NEAR is a free service providing information on where you can apply for LIHEAP. You can speak to someone at NEAR Monday through Friday, from 7 a.m.- 5 p.m. (Mountain Time). The toll-free phone number is 1-866-674-6327.

Lastly, Senator Espaillat's office can be reached at 212-544-0173 or by email at info@adrianoespallat.org.