

Kansas Department of

Social and Rehabilitation Services

Gary Daniels, Secretary

Senate Committee on Utilities

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LIEAP Briefing

Integrated Service Delivery

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LIEAP Briefing

Mr. Chairman and members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to brief you on the Low Income Energy Assistance Program (LIEAP). My name is Bobbi Mariani, Director of Economic and Employment Services for the Department of Social and Rehabilitation Services. LIEAP is a Federal program administered by SRS that provides a one-time a year benefit to eligible low-income households to assist them in paying their heating bill.

Federal LIEAP Block Grant funds distributed through a national allocation formula provide the bulk of funding for this program. Emergency/Contingency funds released at the discretion of the President are also utilized. Since the program began in 1982, Federal funding nationwide has increased from \$1.8 billion to last year's \$2.18 billion level. Federal Block Grant funding for 2006 is \$1.98 billion with an additional appropriation of \$201 million in Emergency/Contingency funds. Kansas received \$16.7 million in Block Grant funding and almost \$1 million of the \$100 million in Emergency/Contingency funding released to date by the President. SRS transfers 15 percent of the Block Grant funds to the Kansas Housing Resources Corporation for their Weatherization Program. This year that transfer will be just over \$2.5 million. For 2007, Governor Sebelius has proposed an additional \$1 million in State funds to supplement the Federal funding.

The LIEAP program in Kansas provides a benefit to any Kansas household submitting an application from mid-January through the last business day of March who meets established eligibility criteria. The basic criteria include: 1) The heating utility has to be in the name of an adult household member, 2) The household must meet a self-payment requirement, 3) The combined gross income of the household must be at or below 130% of the Federal Poverty level, 4) The household must meet citizenship or lawful residency requirements and 5) The household must provide appropriate documentation with their application.

The attached table provides you with annual data specific to Kansas since 2001. During the period from 2001 - 2005, approved applications increased an average of 11.35 percent annually rising from 28,027 to 42,291. In the same period, the average benefit provided to a low-income Kansas household fell from \$467 to \$308 for an overall decline of just over 34 percent. This decline occurred at an average of 8.1 percent per year. The decline in average benefit can be directly tied to level funding of the Federal program while the demand by low-income Kansans has risen over the past few years.

I would like to thank the committee for this opportunity to provide this update on the LIEAP program and I am available to respond to questions.