



# EcoWise

Your Environmental Resource

Focus on Residents

Volume 5, Issue 10 November 2007



## Energy Performance Contracts Create Resident Employment Opportunities

Energy Performance Contracting by Housing Agencies (HAs) reached nearly \$500 million dollars in FY 07, benefiting residents with tremendous energy savings. Many also realized the added bonus of gainful employment, as HAs across the United States are finding that the labor intensiveness of most energy improvement contracts provide valuable job opportunities for residents. While residents earn a paycheck, the HAs achieve their goal of fostering resident self-sufficiency, as established by Section 3 of the Housing Act of 1968.

One such example is in Cleveland, Ohio, where the Cuyahoga Metropolitan Housing Authority (CMHA) is in the midst of a \$33.6 million Energy Performance Contract for nearly 7,000 residential housing units. CMHA exceeded its original goal of providing residents with 25 percent of the contracting hours through August 2007 with resident workers logging more than 29 percent of the total project hours.



*CMHA residents installing a green roof*

Mark Novak, Director of CMHA's Energy Department, cites the Authority's concerted efforts across all CMHC sites as a prime contributor to the project's success. To reach the residents, CMHA required contractors to conduct "hiring halls" at each site to process applications and conduct interviews. By bringing the job applications to the residents, CMHA employed 80 resident workers from 24 different CMHA properties.

## Energy Star Seeks HA Nominations for Annual Reward Program

Energy Star products and programs often play a critical role in creative programs developed by Housing Agencies (HAs) to conserve scarce resources and finance energy conservation projects. How have you successfully used the Energy Star Program? Share your success story through the National Energy Star Recognition Program and you may be rewarded for demonstrating excellence in promoting energy efficiency in affordable housing. Both local and national awards will be presented. Local awards are available within each of the United States' ten federal regions. Each regional award winner will be considered for a National Energy Star Award given for excellence in affordable housing and honored at the annual Energy Star Awards ceremony held in Washington, DC. Check out examples of last year's winners in the Regional Spotlight section. To send in your story of success [click here](#) for an application and instructions. The application deadline is December 14, 2007.

### This Issue

- Resident Employment Opportunities
- Energy Star Annual Award Program
- LIHEAP Grants Can Help Residents
- Events and Training
- Regional Spotlight
- Resources
- Maintenance Corner



We want to hear from you! We are accepting nominations for projects to be highlighted in the EcoWise success stories. [Click here](#) to send us yours now

### Events and Training

[Utility Energy Services Contracting \(UESC\) Projects Workshop](#)  
November 27, 2007  
San Diego, CA

[EcoBuild](#)  
December 10-13 2007  
Washington, DC

[Clean Air through Energy Efficiency: Shaping Our Future Together](#)  
December 17th-18th  
San Antonio, TX

# LIHEAP Grants Can Help Residents Stay Warmer in Winter and Save Money on Energy Bills

This month's barrel prices clearly put the "rude" in crude oil. As oil prices soar to record highs, heating costs nationwide are expected to increase dramatically this winter. The temperature is projected to be four percent colder than last year and the gap between consumer utility allowances and the cost of heating homes is a constant balancing act between thermostat and checkbook.

This winter, an estimated 4.5 million low-income families will be searching for ways to pay their rising energy bills. One method residents use to cope with winter chills and energy bills is the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP). To help low-income consumers meet the projected rise in energy costs, Congress budgeted \$3.1 billion for LIHEAP in FY 07, a \$1 billion increase over FY06. The money is used to provide heat and energy grants to low income residents living in leased or Housing Agency (HA) owned properties, especially those with children or the elderly. The average household grant this year is expected to be \$314.

HAs across the country are finding ways to spread the word about LIHEAP. Brown County Housing Authority in Wisconsin educates residents using radio advertisements and print ads on the local transportation system. This past year, Brown County granted LIHEAP benefits to 4,500 households in both private and public housing.

Those HAs that do not grant LIHEAP benefits directly can encourage residents to apply for LIHEAP through independent, non-profit organizations and state agencies that act as LIHEAP grantees. The U.S. Office of Community Services has additional policy information on HA resident participation in LIHEAP ([click here](#) or check out the resource section for more information).

HAs familiar with their state or county's eligibility criteria can also help residents apply for LIHEAP benefits. To qualify, most programs look at an applicant's income level, household size, and geographic area, among other factors. Residents can complete an application and submit it to a LIHEAP grantee with supporting documents including their social security number, proof of income and household residence, and copies of recent utility bills. Once selected, the resident will be notified by the grantee and given information about the transfer of benefits.

Do you have some residents warming up to the idea of using LIHEAP? [Click here](#) or check the Resource section to find your State's LIHEAP program grantees. Encourage residents to apply now.

This year low-income households will receive an average of \$314 in heat and energy grants through LIHEAP

## Tips for Residents

## Regional Spotlight Energy Star Award Winners

### [Philadelphia, PA](#)

Over the next six years this HA will construct a total of 1,620 Energy Star certified homes, the first HA in Pennsylvania to build to the Energy Star standard.

### [Louisville, KY](#)

The Louisville Metro Housing Authority replaced Kentucky's oldest public housing complex with 689 new homes bearing the Energy Star label.

### [HUD Regional Winners](#)

Last year's Energy Star Awards (See pg.40) had a special category that recognized four regional winners for work demonstrating superior leadership in supporting specific ENERGY STAR actions in the HUD Energy Action Plan.

## Resources

[Program Policy on use of LIHEAP with HA Programs](#)  
Courtesy of LIHEAP Clearinghouse

[State and Tribal LIHEAP Offices](#)  
Locate the nearest LIHEAP grantee near you.

[Energy Star Awards Application](#)  
Apply now! Energy Star is looking for excellence in promoting energy efficiency in affordable housing.

## Maintenance Corner:

### Bundle up with Heat Savings: Energy Conservation Tips for Winter

Energy prices are going up as the temperature cools down. Residents can conserve heat in their homes and save money on their utility bills using these simple tips:

- Lower the water heater thermostats to the lowest level that meets your hot water needs. Each decrease of 10 degrees saves five percent on water heating costs.
- Reduce your thermostat to the lowest comfortable setting. You can save an average of 3% for every 1° that you lower the thermostat setting. For example, if you normally keep your thermostat set at 75° all the time, and you lower it by 3° to 72°, you will save about 9% (3x3%) on your heating bill. In other words, you will save about 9 cents for every dollar you spend on heating costs.
- Replace or clean furnace filters monthly or as recommended by the manufacturer.
- Clean warm-air registers, heat vents, baseboard heaters, and radiators frequently, and avoid them with furniture, carpeting, or drapes, thus trapping heat access to living spaces and potentially creating a fire hazard.
- Place heat-resistant radiator reflectors between exterior walls and radiators.

Email us with your Maintenance Corner questions at [pheccinfo@nelrod.com](mailto:pheccinfo@nelrod.com)

To unsubscribe from this mailing list, email [pheccinfo@nelrod.com](mailto:pheccinfo@nelrod.com) with "unsubscribe phecc" in the body of the message. Comments? Questions? [Email](#) the newsletter editor or call 1-800-955-2232.

This monthly e-mail update is brought to you by HUD's Public Housing Energy Conservation Clearinghouse (PHECC) featuring news and resources to help agencies manage energy and water costs.