

**PUBLIC OPINION  
NATIONAL SURVEY ON  
LOW INCOME HOME ENERGY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM  
"LIHEAP"**

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## INTRODUCTION AND METHODOLOGY

The information contained in this report is based on 800 in-depth telephone interviews conducted with heads of household throughout the United States. Household selection on this project was accomplished via a computer-generated pure unweighted (EPSEM) random digit dial (RDD) telephone sample which selects households on the basis of telephone prefix. This method was used because it ensures a randomly selected sample of area households proportionately allocated throughout the sample universe. This method also ensures that all listed and newly listed telephone households are included in the sample.

This survey employed a multi-stage sampling process. The first step was to stratify the sample by state according to the current population residing in each state. Telephone households were then selected within each state using the RDD methodology. A probability sample developed in this manner draws samples proportionately relative to a state's proportional distribution of the U.S. population. This strengthens the ability of the sample to be compared with Census data and other demographic information.

The questionnaire used in this study was designed by BRC in conjunction with The Campaign for Home Energy Assistance. After approval of the preliminary draft questionnaire, it was pre-tested with a randomly selected cross-section of 20 United States residents. The pre-test focused on the value and understandability of the questions, adequacy of response categories, questions for which probes were necessary, and the like.

All of the interviewing on this project was conducted between August 7 and August 20, 2002 at the Center's central location computer-assisted telephone interviewing (CATI) facility where each interviewer worked under the direct supervision of BRC supervisory personnel. Behavior Research Center uses the ACS-QUERY CATI system. The CATI system is a computer controlled interview that uses a tightly-integrated branching pattern to control cuing and display of contingent questions. This system allows for a more relaxed interview environment, while reducing the risks of coding error typically found with hard copy survey instruments. The system also performs internal consistency checks on survey variables and prompts interviewing staff to ask probe questions or clarify answers.

All of the interviewers who worked on this project were professional interviewers of the Center. Each had prior experience with BRC and received a thorough briefing on the particulars of this study. During the briefing, the interviewers were trained on: (a) the purpose of the study; (b) sampling procedures; (c) administration of the questions; and (d) other project-related factors. In addition, each interviewer completed a set of practice interviews to ensure that all procedures were understood and followed.

Interviewing on this study was conducted during an approximately equal cross-section of evening and weekend hours. This procedure was followed to ensure that all households were equally represented, regardless of work schedules. Further, during the interviewing segment of this study, up to four separate attempts, on different days and during different times of day, were made to contact each selected resident. Only after four unsuccessful attempts was a selected household substituted in the sample. Using this methodology, the full sample was completed, and partially completed interviews were not accepted nor counted toward fulfillment of the total sample quotas.

One hundred percent of the completed interviews were edited, and any containing errors of administration were pulled, the respondent re-called, and the errors corrected. In addition, 15 percent of each interviewer's work was randomly selected for validation to ensure its authenticity and correctness. No problems were encountered during this phase of interviewing quality control.

As the data collection segment of this study was being undertaken, completed interviews were turned over to BRC's in-house coding department. The coding department edited, validated and coded the interviews. Upon completion of coding, a series of validity and logic checks were run on the data to insure it was "clean" and representative of the sample universe.

When analyzing the results of this survey, it should be kept in mind that all surveys are subject to sampling error. Sampling error, stated simply, is the difference between the results obtained from a sample and those which would be obtained by surveying the entire population under consideration. The size of sampling error varies, to some extent, with the number of interviews completed and with the division of opinion on a particular question.

An estimate of the sampling error range for this study is provided in the following table. The sampling error presented in the table has been calculated at the confidence level most frequently used by social scientists, the 95 percent level. The sampling error figures shown in the table are average figures that represent the maximum error for the sample bases shown (i.e., for the survey findings where the division of opinion is approximately 50%/50%). Survey findings that show a one-sided distribution of opinion, such as 70%/30% or 90%/10%, are usually subject to slightly lower sampling tolerances than those shown in the table.

As may be seen in the table, the overall sampling error for this study is approximately +/- 3.5 percent when the sample is studied in total (i.e., all 800 cases). However, when subsets of the total sample are studied, the amount of sampling error increases based on the sample size within the subset.

Sample Size	Approximate Sampling Error At A 95% Confidence Level (Plus/Minus Percentage Of Sampling Tolerance)
800	3.5
700	3.8
600	4.1
500	4.5
400	5.0
300	5.8
200	7.1
100	10.1

## SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

### BACKGROUND

This study is based on a random sample of adult heads of household in the fifty states. A total of 800 interviews were completed via telephone between August 7 and August 20, 2002. The margin of error for the survey is estimated to be +/- 3.53 percent at a 95 percent confidence interval.

### HEATING AND COOLING METHODS

Home heating based on natural gas accounts for 49 percent of U.S. households included in this survey while 31 percent report the use of electricity for this purpose. Fuel oil is used in nine percent and the balance use wood, coal or are unheated.

Seventy-nine percent cool their homes with electric-driven methods, mostly central (56%) or window (23%) air conditioning. Another 30 percent rely on open windows and fans for cooling.

### PERCEIVED CHANGES IN ENERGY COSTS

Today, 71 percent of Americans believe the cost of energy they use to heat or cool their homes is higher today than just five years ago. This is up from the 62 percent reading collected in August 1999. Only three percent think these costs have diminished.

### PERCEPTIONS ON DIFFICULTY LOW INCOME FAMILIES HAVE MEETING THEIR ENERGY COSTS

Seventy-eight percent of Americans surveyed in this study believe it is more difficult than five years ago for low income families to pay for their energy bills. This is a historic high and compares to 67 percent in 1999.

Attitudes on this issue are directly correlated to family income. As income rises, the proportion stating it is "more difficult" eases off but even among the most affluent, 74 percent believe rising energy costs are more difficult for low income families to manage.

By ratios of roughly 78 to 14, Americans believe the government should provide funding for low income families and low income senior citizens. This figure is stable compared to 1999.

### PUBLIC AWARENESS OF LIHEAP LOW BUT GROWING

General awareness of the federally funded Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) totals 26 percent. This is up from 25 percent in 1999 and 20 percent in 1998. Additionally, when subsequently read a description of LIHEAP, aided recall of the program registers at 34 percent, compared to 32 percent in 1999.

### 89% FAVOR LIHEAP PROGRAMS TO MEET ENERGY BILLS OF LOW INCOME FAMILIES AND THE ELDERLY DURING SEVERE WEATHER

Eighty-nine percent of Americans favor the LIHEAP program, while six percent oppose it and the balance (5%) have no opinion. Support has grown five points over 1999.

### BY 72% TO 9%, PUBLIC FAVORS EXPANDED LIHEAP FUNDING

Thirty-one percent favor "substantial" increased funding for LIHEAP. Four in ten favor "moderate" funding increases and six percent favor the status quo. Overall, support for increased funding rose from 68 to 72 percent between 1999 and today. Reduced funding is supported by only nine percent, including five percent who favor no funding whatsoever.

### LIHEAP SEEN AS A VALUABLE TOOL IN WELFARE TO WORK TRANSITION

Nine of ten Americans believe LIHEAP can be valuable in helping former welfare recipients with jobs stay off welfare and remain in the work force. Over half (52%) agree it is "very helpful." Ninety-four percent see assistance in cold winter months as important and 57 percent say the same of hot weather assistance.

### PUBLIC REACTION TO LIHEAP POSITIVE STATEMENTS

Three positive statements in favor of LIHEAP funding draw broad agreement from respondents and cross-pressure LIHEAP opponents strongly:

87 percent agree that energy prices will continue to increase so LIHEAP is needed so long as there is a chance of severe weather threatening the lives of poor and elderly people.

81 percent agree that because two-thirds of LIHEAP funds help families with incomes of under \$8,000 per year, it is helping those who need it most.

Finally, 88 percent agree that poor and elderly people should not have to choose between buying fuel or buying food.

Additionally, each has a powerful impact on individuals who initially expressed opposition to the idea of federal funding of this type. In fact, four of ten, or more, agree with the pro-LIHEAP argument.

Another set of pro-LIHEAP assertions yield high levels of agreement from the American public, but at a somewhat lower level than the three previously discussed.

- ! One argues that "it makes more sense for the government to pay the heating bill of low income and elderly people during severe weather than it is to pay for their hospitalization or housing if they became ill or forced from their homes."

Seven in ten Americans agree with this logic (of these, 41 percent initially opposed LIHEAP funding).

- ! Another argues that elected officials from "mild climate states should support LIHEAP even if it does not affect voters in the state of the elected official; 76 percent agree.

- ! The third argument finds that 77 percent agree LIHEAP should be high on the list of social programs to keep because it effectively meets an important human need.

- ! Seven in ten further agree that life saving programs such as LIHEAP are important and should not be reduced in the name of an income tax cut.

- ! Setting aside LIHEAP funding in the name of the federal defense budget is rejected by 72 percent and supported by only 16 percent.

**DETAILED FINDINGS**

HEATING METHODS

As was seen in 1999, half of Americans use natural gas to heat their homes, while roughly three in ten rely on electrical energy. Fuel oil is used by nine percent. Fifty-nine percent also use supplemental methods, mostly space heaters (electric 21%, kerosene 8%, wood stove 12%). Fireplaces are used in 22 percent of homes for supplemental heating. Finally, as was the case in 1998 and 1999, fully nine percent admit that they use kitchen appliances such as range tops and ovens to warm themselves during cold weather.

*"First, I'm going to read a list of various fuels people use to heat their homes. Please tell me which one of the fuels, if any, is the primary heating source for your home."*

	U.S. TOTAL	
	August 2002	August 1999
<u>PRIMARY</u>		
Natural gas	49%	48%
Electricity	31	32
Fuel oil	9	11
Wood/Pellets	5	3
Coal	*	*
Misc. other <sup>2</sup>	3	2
Home unheated	2	3
Not sure	2	1

\* Equals less than one-half of one percent.

<sup>2</sup> Mostly propane

*ANext I would like to read through a list of some supplemental methods people sometimes use to keep their home and themselves warm during cold weather. As I read each one, please tell me if you ever use this method in your home.A*

	U.S. TOTAL	
	August 2002	August 1999
<u>SUPPLEMENTARY METHODS</u>		
Electric space heater	21%	25%
Fireplace	22	25
Wood stove	12	12
Kitchen oven/range top	9	9
Kerosene space heater	8	8
Misc. other	1	1
None	41	36

Energy sources used for home heating vary substantially by region. While natural gas is dominant when one looks at the U.S. as a whole, electric heating methods are widely relied upon in the following regions: West, Mountain, W.S. Central, E.S. Central and the South Atlantic. Fuel oil is also widely used in the Mid Atlantic and New England regions.

*"I'm going to read a list of various fuels people use to heat their homes. Please tell me which one of the fuels, if any, is the primary heating source for your home."*

	PRIMARY HOME ENERGY USED FOR HEATING					
	Natural Gas	Electricity	Fuel Oil	Wood	Misc. Other	Un- Heated
(National: 2002)	(49%)	(31%)	(9%)	(5%)	(3%)	(2%)
West	51	30	1	8	1	5
Mountain	61	24	2	3	6	3
W.N. Central	60	17	4	9	8	2
W.S. Central	39	50	1	6	4	0
E.N. Central	73	15	3	1	6	2
E.S. Central	36	54	2	8	0	0
Mid Atlantic	48	17	27	2	3	1
South Atlantic	32	52	6	5	3	0
New England	32	9	50	2	3	0

Note: Table reads across for each region. Results adding to less than 100% are due to respondents who reported being unsure of their primary heating source for their home.

Use of supplemental methods to heat the home is registered in 59 percent of households and also varies by region. Space heaters and fireplaces are the most common supplemental methods, although wood burning stoves rise in popularity in the Mountain states and particularly in New England.

*"Next I would like to read through a list of some supplemental methods people sometimes use to keep their home and themselves warm during cold weather. As I read each one, please tell me if you ever use this method in your home."*

SUPPLEMENTAL HOME HEATING METHODS

	<u>SPACE HEATERS</u>		Wood Stove	Fire- place	Kitchen Appliance s	Other	None
	Electric	Kerosene					
(National: 2002)	(25%)	(8%)	(12%)	(25%)	(9%)	(1%)	(41%)
West	24	3	13	24	5	0	38
Mountain	31	9	12	22	0	3	36
W.N. Central	21	8	10	14	7	2	49
W.S. Central	27	1	8	37	16	1	29
E.N. Central	18	9	13	13	5	1	51
E.S. Central	10	8	7	31	15	3	31
Mid Atlantic	20	7	8	22	10	0	45
South Atlantic	21	14	15	20	10	0	42
New England	20	6	21	23	13	0	34

Note: Table reads across for each region. Results adding to less than 100% are due to respondents who reported being unsure of supplemental method used to heat their home.

## COOLING METHODS

Central air conditioning is the most widely used method for cooling the home during summer months. In this survey, only three percent of Americans report they have no cooling methods but 26 percent admit they rely on open windows and fans for cooling. Electricity is the dominant fuel used for cooling equipment.

- ! In general, ceiling fans seem to have risen in popularity since 1999, now being reported by 36 percent of respondents as a cooling method for their home.

*"During the summer, which, if any, of the following do you use to keep your home cool?" "Next I will read you a list of various fuels used to cool homes. Please tell me which one, if any, is the primary energy source for cooling your home."*

<u>METHOD</u>	<u>U.S. TOTAL</u>	
	<u>August 2002</u>	<u>August 1999</u>
Central air conditioning	56%	56%
Ceiling fan	36	29
Window/Floor/Table fan	26	30
Window air conditioner	23	22
Evaporative cooler	3	4
None	3	2
 <u>PRIMARY ENERGY USED FOR HOME COOLING</u>		
Electricity	84	84
Natural gas	6	6
No cooling	9	8
Not sure	1	2

As with home heating, cooling methods vary widely by region. As can be seen in the next table, central air conditioning reaches 62 percent or higher in the W.N. Central, W.S. Central, E.S. Central and South Atlantic regions. Evaporative cooling spikes to 25 percent in the Mountain states. Air movers such as ceiling fans are also widely used, especially in New England where air conditioning is the least common.

HOME COOLING METHODS

	<u>AIR CONDITIONING</u>		Evap- orative	Ceiling Fans	Other Fans	None
	Central	Window				
(National: 2002)	(56%)	(23%)	(3%)	(36%)	(26%)	(3%)
West	34	14	6	34	37	11
Mountain	25	13	25	32	29	6
W.N. Central	62	26	2	44	20	2
W.S. Central	81	15	1	45	22	0
E.N. Central	62	24	0	29	29	2
E.S. Central	82	14	2	38	3	0
Mid Atlantic	29	44	1	37	35	1
South Atlantic	82	16	1	34	15	0
New England	20	53	3	43	39	6

PRIMARY ENERGY USED

	Electricity	Natural Gas	No Cooling
(National: 2002)	(84%)	(6%)	(9%)
West	62	6	30
Mountain	79	*	21
W.N. Central	88	4	6
W.S. Central	95	4	1
E.N. Central	83	13	3
E.S. Central	92	6	0
Mid Atlantic	85	6	9
South Atlantic	93	4	1
New England	77	9	14

\* Equals less than one-half of one percent.

HISTORIC HIGH IN CONSUMER PERCEPTIONS ABOUT RISING ENERGY COSTS

Very few (3%) of Americans believe the cost of the energy they buy to heat or cool their homes is lower compared to five years ago. Seventy-one percent opine that their energy costs have gone up over the past five years, compared to 62 percent of that opinion in 1999.

*"These days, would you say the cost of energy to heat homes in the winter and cool homes in the summer is higher, about the same, or lower than compared to five years ago?"*

<u>COST OF ENERGY</u>	<u>AUGUST 2002</u>	<u>AUGUST 1999</u>
Higher	71%	62%
Same	15	21
Lower	3	5
Unsure	11	12

In no region of the country does the proportion who believe heating fuel costs are on the rise fall below 65 percent, and the figure rises to over 70 percent in every region of the country, except in the South Atlantic and New England regions where the figure ranges between 65 and 68 percent.

<u>CENSUS REGION</u>	<u>COST OF ENERGY - 2002</u>			
	<u>Higher</u>	<u>Same</u>	<u>Lower</u>	<u>Not Sure</u>
West	70%	10%	5%	15%
Mountain	72	18	2	8
W.N. Central	72	16	2	10
W.S. Central	76	13	3	8
E.N. Central	73	15	3	8
E.S. Central	70	25	0	6
Mid Atlantic	73	12	6	10
South Atlantic	68	18	2	13
New England	65	16	5	14

PERCEPTIONS ON DIFFICULTY LOW INCOME FAMILIES HAVE MEETING THEIR ENERGY COSTS

Seventy-eight percent of Americans surveyed in this study believe it is more difficult today than five years ago for low income families to pay their energy bills. This compares to 67 percent holding this view in 1999.

*"From what you read or hear, do you think it is more difficult, neither more nor less difficult, or less difficult for low income families to pay their heating and cooling bills today than it was five years ago?"*

		PAYING ENERGY BILLS TODAY			
		More Difficult	Same	Less Difficult	Unsure
<u>Low income families</u>					
	August 2002	78%	9%	6%	7%
	August 1999	67%	11%	8%	14%

As might be expected, attitudes on this issue are directly correlated to family income. Thus as income rises, the proportion answering more difficult eases off, but even among the most affluent, 74 percent believe rising energy costs are more difficult for low income families to manage.

% "MORE DIFFICULT" FOR LOW INCOME FAMILIES TO PAY ENERGY BILLS		
Low Income Families		
<u>INCOME OF RESPONDENT</u>	August 2002	August 1999
Under \$20K	84%	75%
\$20K to \$49.9	78	69
\$50K to \$79.9	79	62
\$80K +	74	65

SHOULD THE GOVERNMENT FUND ENERGY ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS?

By a ratio of 78 to 14 percent, Americans answer "yes" to the following statement: "Should the government provide funding to help senior citizens and the poor pay for services such as home heating, cooling and lighting." These readings are exactly the same as were recorded in 1999.

In no region does the "yes" response fall below 70 percent and in no region does the "no" response exceed 23 percent.

*"Should the government provide funding to help low income senior citizens and the poor pay for services such as home heating, cooling and lighting?"*

		YES	No	UNSURE
<u>U.S. TOTAL</u>				
	August 2002	78%	14%	8%
	August 1999	78	14	8
<u>CENSUS REGIONS (2002)</u>				
West		73	17	10
Mountain		70	23	7
W.N. Central		79	8	13
W.S. Central		73	16	11
E.N. Central		76	15	9
E.S. Central		91	7	2
Mid-Atlantic		86	11	3
South Atlantic		79	13	8
New England		82	7	11

Additionally, belief the government should provide funding for senior citizens and the poor to pay for these services cuts across all incomes and age groups. Support for such policy is inversely related to income and age and peaks among women. Also, between 1999 and today, support for such federal funding has increased dramatically among America=s most affluent sectors.

*"Should the government provide funding to help low income senior citizens and the poor pay for services such as home heating, cooling and lighting?"*

	<u>% ANSWERING</u>	
	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>
U.S. Total: 2002	78%	14%
<u>INCOME:</u>		
Under \$20K	84	10
\$20 to \$49.9K	76	15
\$50K to \$79.9K	74	17
\$80K +	85	10
<u>AGE:</u>		
Under 35	82	14
35 to 49	79	12
50 to 64	78	13
65+	71	16
<u>GENDER:</u>		
Men	74	18
Women	82	9

AWARENESS OF LIHEAP PROGRAM

General awareness of the federally funded Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) is registered among 26 percent of respondents up from 20 percent in 1998 and 25 percent in 1999. Awareness is highest in the E.S. Central, E.N. Central and Mid Atlantic census regions of the country and well below the norm only in the W.S. Central region. Awareness in the Mountain region literally doubled over the past three years.

*"I'd like to ask you about the federally funded Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program also known as LIHEAP? ("LIE HEAP"). Were you aware of the LIHEAP program before I mentioned it to you just now, or is this the first time you have heard of it?"*

	PERCENT AWARE	
	August 2002	August 1999
<u>U.S. TOTAL</u>	26%	25%
<u>REGION</u>		
West	18	24
Mountain	48	22
W.N. Central	21	22
W.S. Central	16	17
E.N. Central	32	31
E.S. Central	24	31
Mid-Atlantic	37	36
South Atlantic	25	20
New England	22	23
<u>AGE</u>		
Under 35	17	23
35 to 49	29	26
50 to 64	34	28
65 and older	26	28

Respondents were next read a more detailed description of LIHEAP and asked whether they were aware of any such program in their state. Awareness rose to 34 percent this year from 32 percent in 1999 and 25 percent in 1998. Awareness tends to rise with the age of the respondent and is above average in the following regions: Mountain, E.N. Central, E.S. Central, Mid-Atlantic and New England.

*"I'd like to read a description of LIHEAP, and then ask a few more questions.*

*"The LIHEAP program provides heating and cooling assistance to low-income families and the elderly. Federal LIHEAP money goes to the states where it is administered by local community organizations and where the funding is augmented by charities, churches and local utilities. About 80 percent of the money is used in emergency grants to help low income families, the working poor, those making the transition from welfare to work, the disabled, low income elderly and poverty level families with young children pay their utility bills. Money is also used to weatherize homes and make energy-related repairs or to minimize health and safety risks that result from high energy burdens on low-income people. Finally, LIHEAP assistance is available throughout the country, but is used mostly in areas that experience extremes or cold or hot weather. Do you recall seeing or hearing anything about these programs in your state?"*

	PERCENT AWARE	
	August 2002	August 1999
<u>U.S. TOTAL</u>	34%	32%
<u>REGION</u>		
West	21	29
Mountain	52	30
W.N. Central	28	35
W.S. Central	20	25
E.N. Central	42	39
E.S. Central	37	48
Mid-Atlantic	43	38
South Atlantic	34	21
New England	40	36
<u>AGE</u>		
Under 35	25	27
35 to 49	34	34
50 to 64	42	28
65 and older	39	42

SUPPORT FOR LIHEAP INCREASES TO 89 PERCENT

Eighty-nine percent of Americans favor the LIHEAP program, while six percent oppose it and the balance (5%) had no opinion. In no region of the country does support fall below 82 percent and in no region does opposition exceed nine percent.

*"In general, do you favor or oppose the LIHEAP program to help poor elderly and low income families pay their energy bills during cold or hot weather emergencies?"*

	FAVOR	OPPOSE	UNSURE
<u>U.S. TOTAL</u>			
August 2002	89%	6%	5%
August 1999	84	8	8

**DETAIL 2002**

CENSUS REGIONS

West	82	9	9
Mountain	90	5	5
W.N. Central	95	2	3
W.S. Central	85	9	6
E.N. Central	89	5	6
E.S. Central	97	3	0
Mid-Atlantic	93	5	2
South Atlantic	86	6	8
New England	94	6	0

INCOME

Under \$20K	93	6	1
\$20K to \$49.9K	89	5	6
\$50K to \$79.9K	87	7	7
\$80 +	87	8	5

**BY 72% TO 9%, PUBLIC FAVORS EXPANDED FUNDING FOR LIHEAP**

Thirty-one percent believe Congress should "substantially increase funding" for LIHEAP and another 41 percent favor modest funding increases. Reduced funding is advocated by four percent and another five percent favor eliminating the program entirely. A handful (6%) favor keeping the LIHEAP budget at its current level and the balance, 13 percent, have no opinion.

Among those with an opinion, support for increased funding totals 83 percent. Reduced funding is the view of ten percent and seven percent favor no change.

*"In efforts to reduce the federal budget, funding for LIHEAP has been cut in half in recent years and some members of Congress have proposed that the LIHEAP program be cut further or even eliminated. Other members of Congress say LIHEAP has taken more than its fair share of budget cuts, serves only one of five people who need the assistance, and that it should have its funding increased to provide a safety net to help impoverished elderly and poor families meet their energy bills. What do you think: should Congress substantially increase funding for the LIHEAP program, increase funding modestly, reduce funding further or should the program be eliminated altogether?"*

	ALL RESPONDENTS		THOSE WITH AN OPINION*	
	August 2002	August 1999	August 2002	August 1999
Increase funding substantially	31%	28%	36%	32%
Increase funding moderately	41	40	47	47
<b>(Net Increase)</b>	<b>(72%)</b>	<b>(68%)</b>	<b>(83%)</b>	<b>(79%)</b>
Make no funding changes	6	5	7	6
Reduce funding further	4	6	4	7
Eliminate program	5	6	6	8
<b>(Net Reduce)</b>	<b>(9%)</b>	<b>(12%)</b>	<b>(10%)</b>	<b>(15%)</b>
Not sure/no opinion	13	15	0	0

\*Note: Repercentaged to exclude respondents with no opinion.

	INCREASE FUNDING:		Make No Changes	Reduce Funding	Eliminate Funding	Un-sure
	Sub-stantially	Mod-erately				
<u>2002</u>						
West	28%	35%	3%	4%	9%	21%
Mountain	28	45	5	5	7	10
W.N. Central	38	50	4	2	0	6
W.S. Central	30	37	5	5	4	19
E.N. Central	36	37	7	7	4	9
E.S. Central	22	52	11	3	3	9
Mid Atlantic	27	49	6	4	1	13
South Atlantic	32	37	12	2	5	12
New England	42	42	0	0	10	6

RECAP

	Total Increase Funding	Total Decrease/ Eliminate Funding
TOTAL: 2002	72%	9%
West	63	13
Mountain	73	12
W.N. Central	88	2
W.S. Central	67	9
E.N. Central	73	11
E.S. Central	74	6
Mid-Atlantic	76	5
South Atlantic	69	7
New England	84	10

## LIHEAP SEEN AS VALUABLE TOOL IN WELFARE TO WORK TRANSITION

Nine of ten Americans believe the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program can be valuable in helping former welfare recipients with jobs stay off welfare and remain in the workforce. Nearly half think the program could be very helpful. Both readings represent an increase in these beliefs, compared to 1999.

*As you may be aware, even after they obtain jobs, many former welfare recipients live below the poverty level. In helping these people successfully complete the transition from welfare to work, do you think the LIHEAP program can be very helpful, somewhat helpful or not at all helpful?≡*

	AUGUST 2002	AUGUST 1999
Very helpful	52%	47%
Somewhat helpful	39	38
Not at all helpful	4	7
Unsure	5	8

WINTER ASSISTANCE SEEN AS MOST CRITICAL

Notwithstanding that this survey was completed during August, Americans are more impressed with the need for LIHEAP assistance for people in the cold weather. Thus, although 54 percent say the assistance is needed in both seasons, 94 percent believe it is critical in cold weather compared to 57 percent for summer.

*And finally, which would you say is more important: providing heating assistance in the winter, cooling assistance in the summer, or are both equally important?≡*

	CLIMATIC REGIONS: 2002			
	National	Colder	Mixed	Warmest
Summer	3%	3%	5%	4%
Winter	40	38	46	39
Both important	54	58	45	55
Not sure	3	1	4	2
<hr/>				
NET WINTER	94	96	91	94
NET SUMMER	57	61	50	59

### THREE POWERFUL PRO-LIHEAP ARGUMENTS

Three position statements in favor of LIHEAP are widely supported by Americans. Each draws agreement from 80 percent or more. Additionally, each has a powerful impact on individuals who initially expressed opposition to the idea of federal funding of this type, as may be seen in the fact that four of ten, or more, agree with the pro-LIHEAP arguments. The three strongest arguments are as follows:

- A. Eighty-seven percent believe that programs like LIHEAP should be kept in place since energy prices are likely to increase and there is still a chance that severe weather will threaten the safety of elderly and poor people. Additionally, four in ten persons who initially oppose government funding of LIHEAP agree with this point of view.

*"It is very likely that energy prices will continue to rise in the future, so programs like this should be continued so long as there is a chance of severe weather that threatens the lives of elderly and poor people."*

	INITIAL POSITION ON LIHEAP FUNDING			
	2002 Total	Favor	Oppose	Unsure
Agree	87%	94%	41%	46%
Disagree	7	3	55	13
Unsure/Neither	6	3	4	41
(NET Pro-LIHEAP)	(+80)	(+91)	(-14)	(+33)

- B. Another compelling argument is that LIHEAP helps people who need it the most since two-thirds of assistance recipients have family incomes under \$8,000 per year. This argument puts strong cross-pressures on people who initially said they oppose LIHEAP 42 percent agree with the statement, while a smaller proportion (36%) disagree.

*"Since two-thirds of the people receiving help from LIHEAP have family incomes of less than \$8,000 per year, the program is helping the people who need it most."*

	INITIAL POSITION ON LIHEAP FUNDING			
	2002 Total	Favor	Oppose	Unsure
Agree	81%	86%	42%	56%
Disagree	7	5	36	14
Unsure/Neither	<u>12</u>	<u>9</u>	<u>22</u>	<u>30</u>
(NET Pro-LIHEAP)	(+74)	(+81)	(+6)	(+42)

- C. The argument that poor and elderly people should not be forced to choose between fuel and food is the most persuasive of the three especially with those who initially oppose LIHEAP funding. Eighty-eight percent say they agree with this argument as do 62 percent of those who were initially opposed to LIHEAP funding. Finally, among Americans who were initially unsure about the wisdom of LIHEAP funding, 67 percent agree with this argument as justification for funding.

*"During severe weather seasons, people living in poverty and low income elderly should not have to choose between buying fuel to heat their homes and buying food for themselves and their families."*

	INITIAL POSITION ON LIHEAP FUNDING			
	2002 Total	Favor	Oppose	Unsure
Agree	88%	91%	62%	67%
Disagree	7	6	20	11
Unsure/Neither	<u>5</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>18</u>	<u>22</u>
(Net Pro-LIHEAP)	(+81)	(+85)	(+42)	(+56)

FOUR SOLID SECONDARY ARGUMENTS

Two Pro-LIHEAP assertions yield high levels of agreement from the American public, but at a somewhat lower level than the three arguments just discussed. One simply argues that it is a better value to pay the heating bill of low income and elderly people during severe weather than it is to pay for their hospitalization or housing if they become ill or are forced from their homes. Seven of ten Americans agree with this logic, as do 41 percent of those initially opposed to LIHEAP funding.

*"It makes more sense for the government to pay the winter heating bills of low income and elderly people than paying to care for or house these people in a hospital or shelter if they become ill or are forced from their homes."*

	INITIAL POSITION ON LIHEAP FUNDING			
	2002 Total	Favor	Oppose	Unsure
Agree	73%	76%	41%	65%
Disagree	15	12	50	18
Unsure/Neither	<u>12</u>	<u>12</u>	<u>9</u>	<u>17</u>
(NET Pro-LIHEAP)	(+58)	(+64)	(-9)	(+47)

The second argument posits that elected officials from mild climate states should support LIHEAP even if it does not directly effect voters in the state of that elected official. By an impressive 76 to 15 percent ratio, Americans agree with this proposition.

*"I believe elected officials from my state should be supportive of programs like this to help the poor and the elderly even if severe cold or hot weather is not a problem in my state."*

	INITIAL POSITION ON LIHEAP FUNDING			
	2002 Total	Favor	Oppose	Unsure
Agree	76%	82%	21%	38%
Disagree	15	11	68	17
Unsure/Neither	<u>9</u>	<u>7</u>	<u>11</u>	<u>45</u>
(NET Pro-LIHEAP)	(+61)	(+71)	(-47)	(+21)

Additionally, agreement with this assertion is ubiquitous throughout the nine census regions of the country and, thus underscores the fact that support for LIHEAP is not dependent upon living in a region with severe cold weather.

	AGREE	DISAGREE	NEITHER/ UNSURE
TOTAL: 2002	76%	15%	9%
West	73	14	13
Mountain	72	10	18
W.N. Central	80	12	8
W.S. Central	69	22	9
E.N. Central	75	14	11
E.S. Central	86	14	0
Mid-Atlantic	78	13	9
South Atlantic	76	14	10
New England	78	19	3

A third argument finds 77 percent agree that LIHEAP should be high on the list of programs to keep. In 1999, 74 percent agreed that LIHEAP should be high on the list of programs to be kept operating.

*"Since LIHEAP serves an important human need and is one of the most effective social programs receiving federal money, it should be high on the list of programs to be kept operating in the future."*

	INITIAL POSITION ON LIHEAP FUNDING			
	2002 Total	Favor	Oppose	Unsure
Agree	77%	85%	19%	27%
Disagree	8	4	60	20
Unsure/Neither	<u>15</u>	<u>11</u>	<u>21</u>	<u>53</u>
(NET Pro-LIHEAP)	(+69)	(+81)	(-41)	(+7)

Notwithstanding the appeal of additional tax cuts at the federal level, 70 percent believe that the life saving aspects of the LIHEAP program are so important that its funding should not be reduced in the name of an income tax cut. This compares to 65 percent holding this view in 1999. Support for cutting LIHEAP as a part of income tax reductions shrank to 16 percent, from 21 percent in 1999.

*A Life saving programs such as LIHEAP are so important that funding for this program should not be reduced in the name of an income tax cut.*

	INITIAL POSITION ON LIHEAP FUNDING			
	2002 Total	Favor	Oppose	Unsure
Agree	70%	75%	34%	33%
Disagree	16	14	52	26
Unsure/Neither	<u>14</u>	<u>11</u>	<u>14</u>	<u>41</u>
(NET Pro-LIHEAP)	(+54)	(+61)	(-18)	(+7)

BY 72 TO 16 PERCENT, AMERICANS REJECT REDUCING LIHEAP FUNDING IN THE NAME OF NATIONAL DEFENSE BUDGET

A new question in this year=s survey explored whether, in the wake of the September 11<sup>th</sup> tragedy, Americans would favor setting aside LIHEAP needs in favor of the defense budget. By an impressive 72 to 16 percent, Americans say no, clearly underscoring their belief that both can be funded within the federal budget.

*A Life saving programs such as LIHEAP are so important to protecting Americans who are elderly or poor that funding should not be reduced simply in the name of adding to the defense budget.≡*

	<u>INITIAL POSITION ON LIHEAP FUNDING</u>			
	<u>2002 Total</u>	<u>Favor</u>	<u>Oppose</u>	<u>Unsure</u>
Agree	72%	77%	29%	34%
Disagree	16	11	63	31
Unsure/Neither	<u>12</u>	<u>12</u>	<u>8</u>	<u>35</u>
(NET Pro-LIHEAP)	(+56)	(+66)	(-34)	(+3)

## APPENDIX 1

### SAMPLE PROFILE

<u>AGE OF ADULT SAMPLE</u>	
Under 35	29%
35 to 49	31
50 to 64	23
65 +	17
<u># OF PERSONS IN HOUSEHOLD</u>	
One	17
Two	35
3-4	33
5 +	15
<u>OWNER/RENTER</u>	
Owner	72
Renter pays utilities direct	24
Renter landlord pays utilities	3
Renter not sure who pays	1
<u>EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT</u>	
High School or less	33
Some college	35
Undergraduate Degree	16
Post Graduate Work	15
<u>ETHNIC ORIGIN</u>	
Caucasian	76
African American	9
Hispanic	6
Native American	5
Asian	2
Refused	2
<u>HOUSEHOLD INCOME</u>	
Under \$20K	19
\$20K to \$49.9K	35
\$50K to \$79.9K	20
\$80K +	14
Refused	12
<u>CENSUS REGION</u>	
West	16
Mountain	6
W.N. Central	7
W.S. Central	11
E.N. Central	16
E.S. Central	6
Mid-Atlantic	14
South Atlantic	19
New England	5