

C.L. "BUTCH" OTTER  
GOVERNOR

## NEWS RELEASE

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

CONTACT: Jon Hanian

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(208) 334-2100

### **ADDITIONAL HELP WITH HEATING BILLS AVAILABLE FOR LOW-INCOME IDAHOANS**

(BOISE) – Governor C.L. "Butch" Otter said today that extra help keeping warm is available this winter for Idaho's low-income residents.

The state has 54 percent more funding than it did last year from the federal government's Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP). The \$17.9 million available to Idahoans this year could increase the average benefit to eligible households by more than \$100.

More than 32,000 low-income Idaho families received home heating assistance through the LIHEAP program last year, with an average payment of \$278 per household made directly to utility companies. This heating season's average LIHEAP benefit is estimated at \$386.

"Many of our citizens are feeling the pressure of the economic downturn these days, so a little extra help is welcome news," Governor Otter said. "Besides having more money to keep people warm, we're changing the eligibility guidelines so more low-income folks will have access to assistance."

Eligibility is based on income and benefit amounts are calculated on "energy burden," which factors income, annual energy costs and geographic location. Areas that experience more severe cold weather or have higher annual energy costs are awarded a greater benefit through the program.

Under the expanded income guidelines, a family of four with an income up to \$2,827 per month can still be eligible – a threshold \$177 per month higher than last year. The change should provide more help for Idaho seniors on fixed incomes.

This year's income guidelines for LIHEAP eligibility are:

<b>Family Size</b>	<b>2008-2009 Idaho LIHEAP Income Guidelines</b>	
	<b>Monthly Income</b>	<b>Annual Income</b>
<b>1</b>	<b>\$1,387</b>	<b>\$16,640</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>\$1,867</b>	<b>\$22,400</b>
<b>3</b>	<b>\$2,347</b>	<b>\$28,160</b>
<b>4</b>	<b>\$2,827</b>	<b>\$33,920</b>
<i><b>Each Add'l. add:</b></i>	<b>\$480</b>	<b>\$5,760</b>

People who meet income guidelines can contact their regional Community Action Agency to apply for assistance. People can find the nearest Community Action Agency office online at [www.idahocommunityaction.org](http://www.idahocommunityaction.org), or by contacting the 2-1-1 Idaho CareLine.

In addition to the low-income heating assistance, Idaho received approximately \$4.1 million in LIHEAP funding for the Weatherization Assistance Program, which helps low-income people repair or replace heating sources, insulation, weather-stripping and caulking in their homes.