

# Keep ME Warm Fuel and Food Campaign

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**Lead Organizations:** United Ways of Maine and Maine Community Action Association

**Community Need:** People from all walks of life and from every part of Maine are struggling with rising fuel and food costs. With winter approaching and the economic outlook bleaker than ever, the need for help with basic necessities is great among Maine's lower-income families and seniors. Food pantries are reporting increased demand for services and declining resources. MaineHousing estimates that approximately 50,000 households will apply for fuel assistance through the LIHEAP program this year and of those, 10% will not qualify because they are over income. Still, these families are very much in need and will be faced with making difficult choices among basic necessities in order to survive.

**Project Activities:** The United Ways of Maine and Maine Community Action Association are joining forces to raise private funds to help meet the essential fuel and food needs of families with limited resources. United Way of Greater Portland will bring its expertise in donations management to the administration of the statewide Keep ME Warm fund and will serve as fiscal agent. Maine's ten Community Action Agencies will be called upon to play a lead role in the distribution of funds to clients. 2-1-1 Maine and other local community organizations also will play key roles in ensuring that help is readily available throughout the state. Funds will be raised for emergency fuel and food assistance, as well as for longer-term energy conservation initiatives that will help to reduce fuel expenses for families in the future.

Together, the United Ways of Maine and Maine Community Action Agencies will provide a strong and accountable infrastructure for statewide fundraising and fund distribution in a year that will most surely prove to be challenging for all.

## **Outcomes / Impact:**

### ***FUEL***

***GOAL: \$3,000,000***

In a close collaboration between the statewide networks of the ten United Ways and ten Community Action Agencies, available funds will be distributed in the following manner:

- Donors may designate the use of funds to a particular geographic area. These funds will be split between the local Community Action Agency and the local United Way.
- Undesignated funds will be considered for statewide use and will be distributed in the following manner:
  - to local CAP agencies using the state's LIHEAP formula;
  - to local United Ways (based upon population distribution) to be distributed to nonprofit agencies and faith-based organization serving families and seniors in need who are ineligible for LIHEAP assistance; and
  - to 2-1-1 Maine to fund emergency fuel assistance after hours during the week and on weekends.

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## **FOOD**

**GOAL: \$250,000**

A statewide fund will be established in collaboration with Preble Street Resource Center on behalf of the major feeding programs in Maine. The proceeds from the fund will be distributed in the following manner:

- 80% to feeding programs (soup kitchens, food pantries, etc.) in the 10 largest urban areas
- 20% to local United Ways for distribution to feeding programs in rural areas.

## **LONGER-TERM ENERGY INVESTMENTS**

**GOAL: \$500,000**

Donors who wish to invest in longer-term solutions to the energy crisis may designate their funds for weatherization, heating system tune-up and repairs or other proven energy conservation programs. Depending upon the size of the pool of money, funds may be invested in already established programs such as CAP weatherization and/or Requests For Proposals (RFPs) may be released to help determine the most effective use of funds in a given area,

**Total Project Budget:** See above for specific fundraising goals. No administrative cost will be deducted by United Way of Greater Portland in acting as fiscal agent for the fund. Individual Community Action Agencies may deduct up to 3% of the funds they receive to cover costs associated with program management, including the determination of client eligibility and the distribution of funds.

**Funds Requested from the Philanthropic Sector:** The Keep ME Warm Fuel and Food Campaign will be widely promoted by the Governor as the primary statewide mechanism for individuals, corporations, philanthropic organizations, civic organizations, faith-based groups and others to provide financial support for emergency fuel and food assistance, as well as energy conservation, for low- and moderate-income families and seniors.

**Ability to Target Funds:** Donors may specify any level of geographic distinction (region/county/municipality) for the use of their contribution.

**Accountability / Reporting:** United Way of Greater Portland will be responsible for the accounting and reporting of all funds received for distribution. The United Ways of Maine and the Maine Community Action Agencies are working to develop shared reporting standards for all agencies that receive funds to provide fuel, food and/or weatherization assistance to their clients.

**Contact Information:** Keep ME Warm Fuel & Food Fund Co-Chairs:

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