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**Governor Announces Changes to LIHEAP Program to Better Support In-need Households**

STATE CAPITAL (March 6, 2026) – Governor [Name] today announced significant changes to the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) for the upcoming program year, to ensure that heating assistance reaches those most in need.

The updated LIHEAP program measures need for *Heating Assistance* using the ‘*energy burden’* metric which is defined as the proportion of a household’s income spent on heating expenses. Households with a higher energy burden are identified as having higher need and will receive the higher level of support.

"Every family deserves to stay warm during the cold months without worrying about how to make ends meet," said Governor [Name]. "By focusing on energy burden, we are ensuring that the families who struggle the most receive the greatest help. This change makes our LIHEAP program fairer and more effective."

**Key Changes to the LIHEAP Heating Assistance Program**

1. **Eligibility Criteria:**  
   Households earning under 125% of the federal poverty level are eligible to participate in the program.
2. **Energy Burden Metric:**
   * High-energy burden households are defined as those spending over 10% of their income on heating.
   * Moderate-energy burden households are defined as those spending between 5% and 10% of their income on heating.
3. **Benefit Levels:**
   * **High-energy burden households** will receive assistance covering 100% of the average heating bill for their household size and fuel type.
   * **Moderate-energy burden households** will receive assistance covering 50% of their average heating bill.
   * **All other eligible households** will receive a standard benefit of $100.

By using the *energy burden* measure, we ensure that funding is allocated to those who need it the most, maximizing the impact of the program. While benefit levels may decrease for some users due to fund redistribution, this strategy aims to reduce the energy burden for all eligible households to below 5%.

The actual funding available for the program will be known only after October. Learning from our experience with this year’s program implementation, eligibility has been revised back to 125% of poverty limit. We expect the number of participants to be higher by 2% compared to 2024. The benefit levels and eligibility have been planned in expectation of a funding cut of 1 percentage point compared to last year, and we expect to be able to serve all the participants. We expect the *Heating Assistance* program to cost approximately $85 million and benefit over 200 thousand households. Funding under *Crisis Assistance* ($28 million) and *Weatherization* ($14 million)will be available at the previous usual levels and all households earning under 125% of the poverty limit are eligible to apply.

Households eligible for assistance are encouraged to apply as soon as possible. For more information about the updated LIHEAP program, eligibility requirements, and application details, visit [state website] or contact [state hotline].

*Reference*

1. *ChatGPT used to create the content of the Press Release*