

Low-income customers will be disproportionately impacted by COVID-19.¹ State funding of \$30 million for utility bill assistance is needed now.

An unprecedented influx of newly unemployed and furloughed Oregonians will exacerbate deficiencies in the existing low-income safety net.

- 269,900 initial claims have been filed in the last three weeks. The total net job loss for the Great Recession was 147,800.²

State emergency funding cannot wait.

- Although power shut off and late fee moratoriums instituted by utilities provide short-term relief, customers are still obligated to pay their utility bills.
- Funding now to help keep customers' energy bills at a manageable level is critical so that customers are not left with insurmountable debts when the COVID-19 crisis has been abated.
- The Community Action Partnership (CAP) agencies offer a variety of other wrap-around services, reducing the overall financial burden experienced by low-income customers, and freeing up dollars to be spent on critical items like groceries.

Oregon's new federal emergency LIHEAP allocation in the Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security (CARES) Act is only \$9 million – state funds are needed to close the gap.

- State funding of \$30 million is needed to address the unprecedented demands from massive COVID-19 layoffs.
- Early estimates of the economic impacts of the pandemic indicate the need for energy assistance will double as unemployment numbers continue to grow.
- Adding CARES Act funding to Oregon's existing LIHEAP allocation (most of which has already been spent on winter heating needs) only brings federal funding to \$36.4 million. This is significantly less than what was made available in the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) of 2009 and the subsequent allocation in 2010, both of which totaled more than \$50 million each.

Today, even without the impacts of COVID-19, less than 20% of low-income utility customers who need energy bill assistance receive it.³

- In 2019, funding for low-income bill assistance programs totaled \$53.4 million, serving 110,000 households:
 - \$27.4 million: Federal Low-Income Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP)
 - \$20 million: Oregon Energy Assistance Program (OEAP) funded by Pacific Power and PGE customers
 - \$6 million: Funded by consumer-owned utilities and natural gas customers
- Providing bill assistance to all qualifying customers would cost \$314 million annually.
- 1 in 5 Oregon households spend 23% of their household income on energy bills.⁴

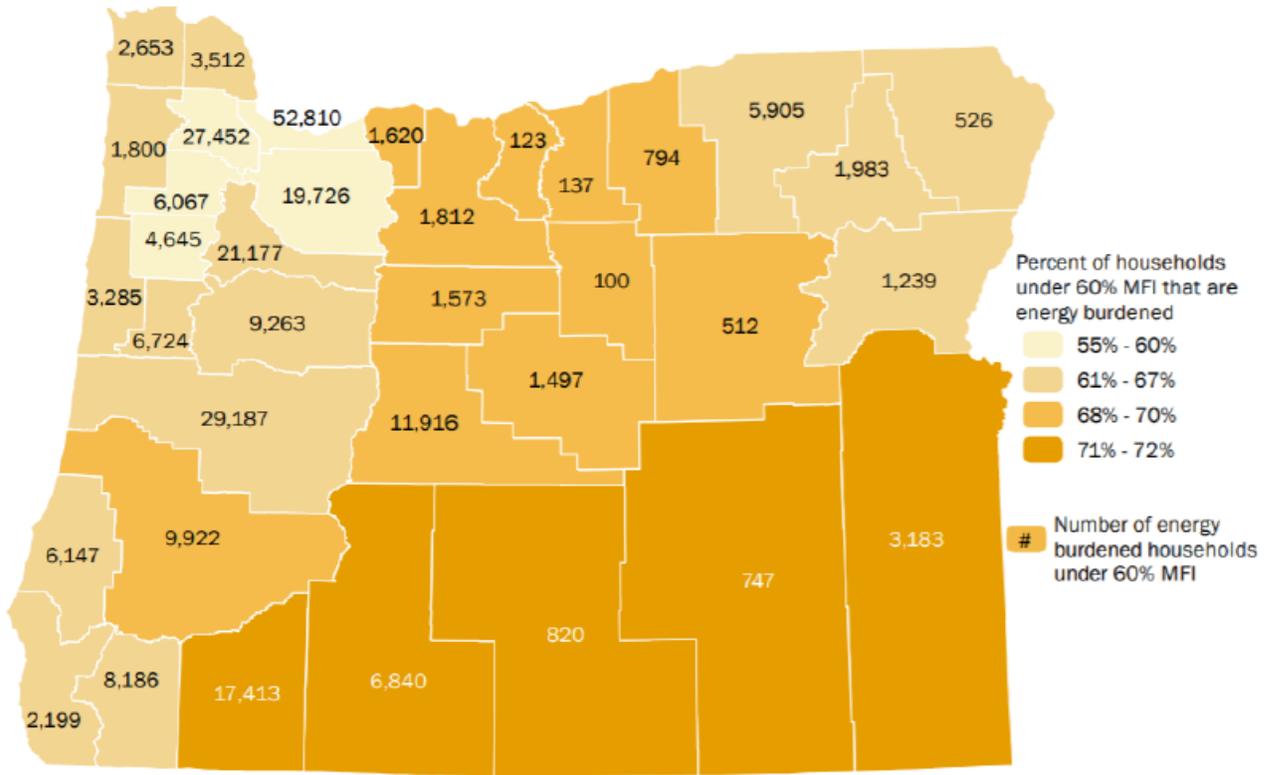
¹ *Coronavirus May Disproportionately Hurt the Poor—And That's Bad for Everyone, TIME Magazine*

² *Oregon Workforce and Economic Information, Oregon Employment Department*

³ *OHCS LIHEAP/OEAP Need-Gap Analysis, 2017-2018*

⁴ *The Home Energy Affordability Gap, 2019, Fisher, Sheehan, & Colton*

STATEWIDE ENERGY BURDEN FOR LOW INCOME COMMUNITIES



⁵ Oregon Housing and Community Services presentation to the Joint Carbon Committee, May 2019