

# ***News Release***

**Lifeline for the Empowerment and Development of Consumers, Inc.**

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## **HEAP Summer Crisis Program Approves High Number of Applicants September 19, 2013**

**PAINESVILLE, Ohio**— The HEAP Summer Crisis Program (SCP), which began on July 1, 2013 and concluded on August 31, 2013, served a high number of low-income households with emergency utility assistance and cooling.

Throughout the two months of the Summer Crisis Season, Lifeline's staff completed applications for nearly 650 households from nearly every community in Lake County for emergency assistance. Of those 650 applications, over 625 of them were either approved for assistance with their electric bill or received an air conditioner. Over \$72,000 in federal dollars were expended over the course of the season.

"We could definitely tell that it was a busier season than usual and that a lot more of our Lake County residents needed a little extra help this summer. It was a hot, humid summer with a lot of rain, which is difficult for those on a low-income budget and for those with health issues," said Carrie Dotson, Executive Director at Lifeline.

To qualify for assistance, households had to meet income guidelines and had to either have a senior citizen in the household, or have a household member with a physician documented health condition. Over 375 of the approved applications were for households with senior citizens residing in them.

"This program really isn't just about providing comfort—it's about keeping people healthy. With the guidelines to qualify for the SCP requiring that applicants must either have a senior citizen in the home or have a physician documented health condition, we know we're helping folks who really need assistance. These are people who clearly need their utilities on and to keep cool during the hottest months of the year," said Dotson.

HEAP is a federally funded program designed to help eligible low-income Ohioans meet high utility costs. This program can only be accessed one time per season and the amount of the benefit depends on the size of the household, household income and other qualifying guidelines set by the federal government.

The HEAP Summer Crisis Program provided assistance to low-income Lake County households with an elderly member (60 years or older) OR households that could provide physician documentation that cooling assistance is needed for a household member's health.

For more information on the HEAP Program, please contact Lifeline, Inc.'s Energy Assistance Office at (440) 350-9160. Lifeline's Energy Assistance Office is located at 54 S. State Street, Suite 303 in Painesville and opens daily at 8:30 a.m.

Lifeline for the Empowerment and Development of Consumers was founded in 1973 with the mission of helping Lake County residents by providing them assistance and life skills programming that is designed to increase self-sufficiency. In 1980 Lifeline became a participating agency of the United Way of Lake County, UWLC, and in 1987 was designated a community action agency by the Ohio Department of Development, ODOD. In 2008, Lifeline was designated as a mental health agency by the Ohio Department of Mental Health.

Today Lifeline continues with the same mission of helping Lake County's low-income residents break the cycle of poverty and make the transition from agency-dependency to self-sufficiency. Lifeline's current programming includes services in the healthcare, housing & energy assistance, information & referral services and consumer education & job training areas. Our motto is 'first to help, then to teach.' Lifeline is currently funded by the UWLC and by grants through the ODOD, the Lake County Board of Commissioners, the Lake County ADAMHS Board, Lake County Department of Job & Family Services, the City of Mentor, the Western Reserve Junior Service League, the CVS Foundation, Bikers Aiding Local Diabetics and through private donors.