



Operation Fuel, Inc.

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Operation Fuel, Utilities and Fuel Banks Start Getting Ready for Winter

October 22, 2014 – More than 350 people attended the first Social Agency Energy Assistance Conference Wednesday where Operation Fuel, fuel banks, and representatives from utility companies and state agencies met to prepare for the upcoming heating season. The meeting focused on the availability of energy assistance and various programs that the utilities have to help with energy bills.

The need for energy assistance is expected to substantially exceed the funding that is available for Operation Fuel's winter program, according to Operation Fuel's Executive Director Patricia Wrice.

Operation Fuel and its fuel banks will begin taking applications for the winter program on December 1. Currently, there are close to 300,000 Connecticut households that can't afford their energy costs. Many of these households are elderly people on fixed incomes and families with young children.

This is the first time that Operation Fuel has held its annual fuel bank directors meeting as a social agency energy conference in partnership with The Connecticut Light & Power Company/Yankee Gas and UIL Holdings, which includes The United Illuminating Company, Connecticut Natural Gas Corporation, and Southern Connecticut Gas Company. Previously, Operation Fuel and the utilities had held separate meetings for the same audience — fuel banks, social service agencies, advocacy groups and state agencies. In addition, Operation Fuel's staff and the utilities' staff each attended the other's meetings.

"We thought that if we held a combined meeting it would eliminate duplication and reduce the amount of time people needed to spend attending multiple meetings that reviewed the same topics," explains Brenda Watson, Operation Fuel's director of community programs.