

November 2, 2009

Mayor's Press Office
312-744-3334

**CITY WILL USE UP TO \$1 MILLION TO EXPAND
WINTER HEATING ASSISTANCE SERVICES IN NEIGHBORHOODS**

No One Wants Any Family, Child or Senior to be Left in the Cold, Mayor says

Mayor Richard M. Daley said today the City will contribute up to \$1 million to help create a new "Energy Action Network" pilot program to expand winter heating assistance services in neighborhoods and encourage residents and businesses to save money through energy efficiency.

"More than ever, Chicago's working and low income families need our support. Now, as winter's cold weather approaches, I'm increasingly concerned that many families may not be able to pay their winter heating bills and that the number of families who cannot pay them this year may be higher than ever," Daley said in a news conference held at the Chinese-American Service League, 2141 S. Tan Ct., one of the new network sites.

The Mayor pointed out that for many years, the City has worked with the Community and Economic Development Agency of Cook County (CEDA), with the federal and state governments and with many partners from the private and not-for-profit sectors to provide support for those who need help paying their heating bills.

In the 2010 City budget, Daley has recommended that that \$750,000 from the Parking Meter Human Infrastructure Fund be used to increase funding for the "Share the Warmth" program the City operates with Peoples Energy to help families pay their heating bills.

"No one wants any family, child, or senior to be left in the cold," the Mayor said.

The new initiative is called the Energy Action Network and the City's partners include CEDA, the Field Museum, the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity, the Northern Illinois Energy Project, ComEd and Peoples Gas.

The City will contribute up to \$1 million to the program, which will help expand the support provide right in people's neighborhoods. Those in need will receive information and assistance to help them get through the winter safely. The money will come from a combination of federal economic stimulus and other grant funds.

Daley said the idea for the network came out of the City's Climate Action Plan as part of an overall goal of reducing energy consumption.

The Network will consist of 21 already-existing locations around the City that because of the contributions of the partners will be able to expand the support they provide to residents.

At these locations, people will be able to apply for a range of services provided by the federal Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program, the Share the Warmth Program and ComEd's Residential Special Hardship Fund.

And they will be able to get information about and help with weatherizing their home to make it more energy efficient and save money on utilities in the long term.

The first group of Energy Action Network locations includes religious institutions, health centers, housing organizations and other community-based organizations with experience working in and serving their community. They were selected using a competitive grant application process.

By linking and using community organizations to coordinate and deliver weatherization and utility assistance to City residents, the network aims to:

- Decrease the disconnections of utility services;
- Increase the number of homes that receive weatherization assistance;
- Build capacity within key community-based organizations to engage residents;
- Leverage partnerships to more effectively and efficiently deliver City and partner services;
- Develop climate action leaders and citizen stewards by building relationships with trusted community organizations and helping them link energy efficiency to their core work; and
- Establish a network that engages residents and businesses to save money and improve quality of life through energy efficiency and other work year-round.

“During these tough times, tens of thousands of Chicagoans and their families need our support. Helping them pay their heating bills, which otherwise may have gone unpaid, is one important way to provide that support,” Daley said. “Helping them save money and make their homes more comfortable is another way.

“If we don't fight for them, who will?” he said.

#

The Energy Action Network locations are:

Bethlehem Star M.B. Church II	600 E. 73 rd St.
Eyes on Austin	5579 W. North Av.
Fernwood United Methodist Church	10105 S. Wallace St.
Puerto Ricans Unidos En Accion	2608 W. Division St.
Spanish Action Committee of Chicago	2452 W. Division St.
Brock Social Service Center	10302 S. Corliss Av.
Casa Aztlan	1831 S. Racine Av.
Central United Community Church	8246 S. Cottage Grove Av.
Chinese-American Service League	2141 S. Tan Ct.
God's Gang	9556 S. King Dr.
Hanul Family Alliance	5008 N. Kedzie Av.
Hegewisch Community Committee	13260 S. Brandon Av.
Hope Organization II	6921 S. Halsted St.
Hope Organization II	1042 W. 103 rd St.
MACEO, Inc.	1255 W. 63 rd St.
Romanian-American Community Center	3643 W. Irving Park Rd.
Unity Parenting and Counseling, Inc.	600 W. Cermak Rd.
Universal Prayer Tower – Satellite	2145 W. Maypole Av.
WECAN	6450 S. Stony Island Av.
South-East Asia Center	5120 N. Broadway
South Austin Coalition	5650 W. Madison St.