

# Legislative Update

A Publication for the Information of the Kentucky Legislators

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## PRESIDENT'S 2007 BUDGET PROPOSAL

### Resolution Restores Funding

The next six to eight weeks could be the most decisive weeks of the year in determining the ultimate outcome of FY2007 spending.

Despite deep domestic spending cuts contained in the Bush FY '07 Budget Request, the final Senate Budget Resolution rejected the Bush cuts and restored Labor -HHS-Education programs to their FY 2005 levels. Specifically, the Specter-Harkin amendment successfully added another \$7 billion in real money to Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education programs. This would take these programs back to their funding levels before the two most recent across-the-board cuts.

Hopefully, the 73 to 27 vote in favor of the Specter-Harkin amendment marks the end of (or at least the beginning of the end of) the constant downward pressure on spending for domestic discretionary programs.

Of equal importance to the actual passage of the Specter-Harkin budget amendment was the understanding in the Senate that any ultimate budget compromise with the House must include the additional \$7 billion for Labor-HHS-Education programs.

The good news contained in the Senate-passed Budget Resolution, however, quickly evaporated in the House. Although House Republican leadership was unable to pass FY 2007 Budget Resolution during the week of April 3, they are expected to attempt to bring the Resolution back to the House floor the week of May 1.

The current House Budget Resolution contains the domestic program cuts proposed in the President's Budget Request. We expect all 201 Democrats and the one Independent to vote against the Republican budget plan.

#### Did you know?

Audubon Area Community Services is one of 23 Community Action Agencies (CAAs) in Kentucky, serving primarily the Green River, Barren River, Pennyriple and Purchase regions. CAAs were developed in 1964 with the signing of the Economic Opportunity Act. Its goal of improving the lives of low-income families reflects our mission today:

*Developing resources...*

*Investing in human potential*

## RESOURCE AND REFERRAL

### R&R Contract Reduced

Recent contracts for Audubon Area Community Services Resource and Referral (R&R) program came in in mid April at a reduced rate for one region but more for another. The Cabinet for Health and Family Services increased the Pennyriple region's contract from \$132,680 to \$136,341 but cut the contract for the Green River region from \$149,546 to \$119,553. Carrie Blackham, R&R director, said the adjustment may be due to changes in the formula the state uses to calculate funding for regions.

The Resource and Referral program provides educational opportunities to early childhood professionals who wish to improve their skills and information on area child care centers to parents. Parents can learn which centers in their area participate in Kentucky's STARS program. For more information, contact Blackham at (270) 686-1692.

## NATIONAL COMMUNITY ACTION MONTH

### Celebrating Accomplishments

Every year in May, the 1,000-member Community Action Agency (CAA) network celebrates **National Community Action Month** by highlighting the innovative ways Community Action helps people and changes lives. The commemoration, established by the Community Action Partnership, began in 1997 as "National Community Action Week" and became "National Community Action Month" a year later.

Audubon Area Community Services welcomes all legislators to visit one of our many sites to see first hand how our programs help low-income families. From our award winning Head Start to our weatherization and senior volunteers programs, Audubon Area provides quality programs to help Kentuckians reach their fullest potential.

We use the nationally acclaimed Results Oriented Management and Accountability (ROMA) to track our progress, as does most all community action agencies nationwide. Guided by six anti-poverty goals, ROMA provides a framework for continued growth and improvements.

If you would like more information on our services, please call Lydia Johnson, public information and outreach director, at (270) 686-1652.

## LIHEAP Assistance Totals

Totals for the 2005-06 Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) are in and show an increase in what was spent last year. The increase was expected with the rising energy costs, but AACS received an additional \$345,000 in February to offset the larger numbers. The additional money was part of the \$10 million in emergency funds that the Kentucky General Assembly approved to help with high energy costs. The additional money allowed persons who had already been served in 2006 a chance to be served again. The maximum amount allocated per family increased from \$125 to \$250; therefore, eligible families already served in 2006 could have applied for the additional \$125. The amount of income families earn to be eligible increased as well to 130 percent of the federal poverty limit, or \$2,097 in gross monthly income for a family of four.

The federal LIHEAP operates on two cycles — the subsidy component and the crisis component. During the subsidy component, implemented during the months of November and December, the benefit amount a family receives is based on its household income. During the crisis component, which typically begins the first week of January, a family must be within four days of running out of fuel, or they must have received a disconnect notice.

The following is a breakdown for each county served in the Green River region:

### *Subsidy (11/1/05 - 12/31/05)*

Daviess – \$135,419  
Hancock – \$13,193  
Henderson – \$59,953  
McLean – \$21,609  
Ohio – \$65,888  
Union – \$28,711  
Webster – \$30,020  
**Total: \$354,793**

Last year's total: \$334,758

### *Crisis (1/9/06 - 3/22/06)*

Daviess – \$184,298  
Hancock – \$24,029  
Henderson – \$101,917  
McLean – \$33,586  
Ohio – \$110,000  
Union – \$53,040  
Webster – \$54,419  
**Total: \$561,294**

Last year's total: \$319,922

## President's 2007 Budget Proposal Cuts Weatherization

The President's Budget Resolution proposes to cut Weatherization by a third, to \$164.2 million, reducing states weatherization funding by an average 32 percent. Fourteen warm-weather states will see higher cuts. Kentucky stands to get a 32 percent cut. Congressmen Sanders (I-VT), Boehlert (R-NY) and Grijalva (D-AZ) are asking members of Congress to sign a letter requesting the current funding level of \$242 million for this program, which reduced recipients' energy bills by 31 percent and energy consumption by over 20 percent. Audubon Area Community Services conducted a survey of its Weatherization Program clients in 2005 and found that the majority were satisfied with the service they received.

*For more information on our Weatherization Program contact Lydia Johnson, public information and outreach director, at (270) 686-1652.*

- 88 % said their homes were warmer.
- 83% said their heating costs dropped.
- 97% said they would recommend the program to others.

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