

Briefing Notice

Federal Programs for Energy and Housing: A Lifeline for America's Low-income Families

Tuesday, July 31, 2018

9:00 AM – 10:30 AM

Breakfast will be served

Room 2060 Rayburn House Office Building

Please RSVP to expedite check-in: www.eesi.org/073118housing#rsvp

Live webcast (connection permitting) will be streamed at: www.eesi.org/livecast

Energy Efficiency for All (EEFA) and the **Environmental and Energy Study Institute (EESI)** invite you to a briefing to discuss the role of energy efficiency in reducing the cost of housing, especially for low-income families who must spend a greater percentage of their income on energy bills and so have a heavier “energy burden” than higher-income households. According to a 2016 study of America’s largest cities by EEFA and the American Council for an Energy-Efficient Economy (ACEEE), the median low-income household spent 7.2 percent of its income on energy, twice as much as the median for all households (3.5 percent). The energy burden is even greater for rural households. **A new EEFA/ACEEE report released this month finds that rural households have a median energy burden of 4.4 percent, and rural low-income households are even worse off, shouldering a median energy burden of 9 percent.** In this forum, a panel of experts on housing and energy policy will review federal energy efficiency services and programs that are serving the most vulnerable U.S. citizens. Speakers are:

- **Ellen Lurie Hoffman**, Federal Policy Director, National Housing Trust
- **Ariel Drehabl**, Senior Research Analyst, Local Policy, American Council for an Energy-Efficient Economy
- **Carmen Bingham**, Affordable Clean Energy (ACE) Project Coordinator, Virginia Poverty Law Center
- **Sarah Ralich**, Energy & Construction Manager, Action Housing
- **Dave Rinebolt**, Director of Special Projects and Counsel, Ohio Partners for Affordable Energy; former Program Director, DOE Weatherization Assistance Program

When monthly bills for electricity and fuel take a large bite out of small paychecks, residents are often forced to choose between heating/cooling and other necessities like food and medicine. But high energy burdens are not simply a result of low incomes and/or high energy prices. Housing that is not well constructed and maintained, with air leaking through roofs, walls and windows, coupled with inefficient appliances, lighting and heating/air-conditioning, can lead to high energy usage and costs even if utility rates are low. Making homes more energy efficient and reducing energy costs per square foot can reduce utility bills and lighten the energy burden for low-income families and individuals; improve their comfort, health and quality of life; and reduce the environmental impacts of energy use. EEFA/ACEEE studies have found that the **U.S. Department of Energy’s Weatherization Assistance Program**, which retrofits single-family homes for people who live at or below 200 percent of the federal poverty level, saves families an average of \$283 per year. In addition, affordable-housing developers rely on the **Low-Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC)** to build and preserve energy efficient, multi-family affordable housing. For the lowest income households, **rental assistance from HUD** and the **Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP)** from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services provide critical lifelines.

This event is free and open to the public.

For more information, contact Ellen Vaughan at evaughan@eesi.org or (202) 662-1893.

