



Operation Fuel, Inc.

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Operation Fuel and Utility Companies Host Annual Energy Assistance Conference

October 27, 2015—Operation Fuel partnered with Eversource, United Illuminating, Southern Connecticut Gas and Connecticut Natural Gas to host its annual energy assistance Conference. Operation Fuel and its fuel banks will begin taking applications for the winter energy assistance program on Monday, November 30.

More than 280 people attended the second annual Social Agency Energy Assistance Conference on Wednesday, October 14, bringing together staff from Operation Fuel, utility companies, state agencies, and local fuel banks to focus on the growing home energy crisis faced by over 305,000 Connecticut households.

The conference presented an opportunity for Operation Fuel's partnering fuel banks to meet directly with representatives from Eversource, United Illuminating, Southern Connecticut Gas and Connecticut Natural Gas to learn more about updates to utility arrearage forgiveness programs, medical and hardship protection procedures, and payment options for households struggling to stay current with their utility services.

During a panel hosted by Operation Fuel, Energize Connecticut, and the Connecticut Department of Social Services, Operation Fuel's Director of Community Programs Brenda Watson discussed the options available to Connecticut residents looking to increase energy efficiency and lower their utility bills by taking advantage of the various energy audits, rebates for home improvements, and conservation programs available to consumers in addition to assistance programs provided by the state and Operation Fuel.

Fuel banks were also given the chance to attend a training session on the Utility Social Agency Web portal to ensure access to the most current information available, and to efficiently and effectively assist clients through the application process.

This year's event also featured keynote speaker Jonathan Harris, Commissioner of the Connecticut Department of Consumer Protection, who emphasized the need to protect vulnerable clients from the widespread problem of identity theft and consumer scams, often aimed at seniors.

"This is our second year partnering with Eversource, United Illuminating, Southern Connecticut Gas and Connecticut Natural Gas to host one large conference. We applaud the commitment from the utility companies to collaborate for this conference and for smaller regional trainings throughout the state. Doing so ensures that our service providers are given the information and tools they need to better serve customers in need," said Brenda Watson, director of community programs at Operation Fuel.

Operation Fuel is a private, nonprofit program that provides emergency energy assistance through its statewide network of fuel banks to lower-income working families and individuals, the elderly, and disabled individuals who are in financial crisis and not eligible for energy assistance from government-funded programs. For more information on Operation Fuel or to make a donation, go to www.operationfuel.org. Donations also can be sent to Operation Fuel, 75 Charter Oak Avenue, Suite 2-240, Hartford, CT. 06106.