Operation Fuel’s Response in an Unprecedented Year

- 6,164 households helped with utility bills and energy costs
- 14,457 individuals benefited from emergency help
- $2.5m distributed to families for emergency grants
People who have never needed us before are asking for help.

The family on a strict budget who had been showering at their gym to save money before COVID-19 and, when the gym closed, saw their water bill skyrocket.

The mother who just gave birth who can’t cover her natural gas bill now that her family of five is home using more energy all day, every day.

The laid-off wife of a disabled husband who fearfully watches the fuel level in her oil tank get lower and lower, wondering how she will keep her hot water heating running for her family to bathe and do laundry.

The adult daughter who takes care of her parents in her home whose work hours were cut and only has enough money to pay the mortgage or the electric bill.

“I went from working 55 hours a week to [working from] home as a full-time secretary and lost my waitress job that I’ve had for 15 years. I had to ask for help.”

Amanda Colavito, Middletown CT
In 1977, then-Governor Ella Grasso, Father Thomas Lynch, and leaders from the utility, banking, insurance, and religious communities created Operation Fuel, intended to provide temporary oil embargo crisis relief to Connecticut residents.

Though the oil embargo is long over, the energy affordability crisis is still in full effect. The nation’s oldest fuel fund, Operation Fuel now provides year-round, statewide help to families, individuals, and elderly residents struggling with the costs of electricity, water, gas, and deliverable oil.
This report is presented to the members of the General Assembly as Operation Fuel’s annual account of funds received through the legislatively-established Add-a-Dollar Program, $2.1 million in ratepayer funds, and all other donations and contributions received in the course of the fiscal year.

POLICY, EDUCATION, & OUTREACH UPDATES

Beginning July 1, 2019 through June 30, 2020, Operation Fuel, Inc. provided a total of $2,573,144 in emergency energy assistance awards to 6,164 households throughout Connecticut. A network of over 100 local fuel banks performed intake and case management services, benefitting 14,457 individuals. Operation Fuel reviewed all applications to ensure that eligibility guidelines were followed before funds were administered, supervised grant distribution, had direct fiscal management of all payments to fuel vendors and utility companies, and engaged a professional accounting firm to audit all elements of its financial operations.

Operation Fuel Inc. Annual Report to the General Assembly
State of Connecticut, July 1, 2019 - June 30, 2020

Harnessing the Power of Partnerships

Operation Fuel continues to seek and build relationships with stakeholders to advance energy affordability and efficiency goals in Connecticut. These partnerships are critical to our work.

- Our executive director, Brenda Watson, serves as co-chair for the Mitigation Sector, Buildings Sub Group on the Governor’s Council on Climate Change (GC3).
- We also participate in the GC3’s Transportation Sub Group.
- Operation Fuel, Eversource, and Avangrid provided hands-on training for agencies that administer energy assistance programs.
- In November 2019, we connected with the CT Water Works Association to address water utility affordability and infrastructure.
- We also serve on the CT Green Bank Board and the Energy Efficiency Board.
Before the legislative session was cut short due to the COVID-19 pandemic, Operation Fuel was very active at the Capitol.

- We testified at a public hearing for Raised Bill 5225, which would allocate 10% of all Public Utilities Regulatory Authority (PUR) fines to Operation Fuel. Governor Lamont signed this bill into law in October 2020. Operation Fuel will direct 100% of the funds toward program purposes.

- We also joined a coalition of environmental and labor activists to support An Act Establishing a Green New Deal for CT, Raised Bill 34.

- We continue advocating for efforts to create jobs and transition the state to a clean, renewable energy economy with our partners.

- In June 2020, we met with the Black and Puerto Rican caucus to share updates on Operation Fuel programming.
In November 2019, Operation Fuel presented at a PURA technical meeting on Docket 17-12-03 regarding energy affordability, on closing service gaps for low- to middle-income populations. As PURA’s prosecutorial group led investigations into hardship protections for utility customers, Operation Fuel engaged in three separate sprint tracks with stakeholders.

When the governor declared a public health emergency in March 2020 due to COVID-19, Operation Fuel began carefully monitoring PURA Docket 20-03-15, ordering a moratorium on utility shutoffs for the duration of the emergency declaration.

In May 2020, Operation Fuel brought in our organization’s first policy & public affairs director, recognizing the need to engage in both the legislative and regulatory processes to best advocate for low- and moderate-income families.

We also participated in Dockets 19-07-01 on shared clean energy facilities, particularly as they’re marketed to low- and moderate-income consumers; 20-07-04, regarding arrearage forgiveness programs to help utility customers with back bills; and 20-05-13, regarding a PURA-led study on community choice aggregation.

In summer 2020, we were involved with PURA dockets on electric vehicles (17-12-03RE04), electricity rate increases (20-01-01), and storm response (20-08-03). We also signed on to a letter supporting rebates for electric bikes that would make these vehicles more accessible to families for whom car ownership is financially unsustainable.

Looking Ahead: Policy

Building on our 2016 study from APPRISE on energy affordability, our partners at Connecticut Green Bank commissioned a follow-up report with VEIC to analyze energy burden in the context of transportation and housing costs. This census tract data is mapped across the state, showing how highly variable and disproportionate utility costs put the highest cost burdens on dense urban and sparse rural areas of the state. In addition to advising the researchers on the final report, we are joining Green Bank to share findings through our media, advocacy, and educational communications channels. Sharing this information with policymakers will help us understand and address CT’s energy affordability challenges.
Operation Fuel’s Home Energy Assistance Application Program has proven effective in providing quick, safe help for residents who can now apply online 24/7.

For those needing help, the online system provides an important alternative to in-person appointments. Applying is now more convenient for people who work outside 9-5 business hours, do not have transportation, have limited mobility, or are responsible as caretakers for children or adult family.

The assistance portal can be found online at operationfuel.org/gethelp
Statement of Financial Position
For the year ended June 30, 2020

**ASSETS**
- Cash and Cash Equivalents: 1,373,903
- Marketable Securities: 1,223,799
- Grants and Other Receivables: 21,000
- Prepaid Expense: 33,961
- Security Deposit: 3,341
- **Total Current Assets:** 2,656,004

**OTHER ASSETS**
- Property and Equipment: 74,504
- (Net of Depreciation)
- **Total Assets:** 2,730,508

**LIABILITIES and Net Assets**
For the year ended June 30, 2020

**LIABILITIES**
- Accounts Payable and Accrued Liabilities: 197,546
- Charitable Gift Annuity Payment Liability: 5,430
- Paycheck Protection Program: 100,000
- **Total Current Liabilities:** 302,976

**NET ASSETS**
- Unrestricted: 2,278,350
- Temporarily Restricted: 149,182
- **Total Net Assets:** 2,427,532

**Total Liabilities and Net Assets:** 2,730,508

**Revenue and Expenses**
For the year ended June 30, 2020

**REVENUES AND SUPPORT FOR PROGRAMS**
- Government Grants - State: 2,100,000
- Add-a-Dollar: 585,109
- Foundation Grants: 543,327
- Individuals: 353,700
- Corporations and Small Businesses: 110,510
- Faith Communities: 3,153
- Program Contracts: 61,000
- Special Events: 93,825
- Interest Income: 14,667
- **Grand Total Revenue and Support:** 3,865,291

**EXPENSES**
- Energy Assistance Programs: 3,290,565
- Administrative: 176,663
- Fundraising: 269,810
- **Total Expenses:** 3,737,038
At Operation Fuel, help is funded by really special people who care about people, and our wrinkles don’t mean a thing. A donation, however small, can make the life of a senior in-need a little brighter, warmer, and filled with the joy of living again.”
AARP-CT
Aetna Foundation
American Eagle Financial Credit Union Fund
Aquarion Water Company
ASK Fund/Beatrice Fox Auerbach Foundation
AVANGRID Foundation, Inc.
Barnes Group Foundation
Charlotte Barringer
Beatrice Fox Auerbach Foundation
Lena Benas Memorial Fund
Beth Schiro Fund
J. Bernhard
Bernard Blum Fund
Jonathan Bernon
Sherry Brown-Marfuggi
Bruyette Family Foundation
Budd Family Fund
Richard Buel
Peggy Busse
Gary Carter
Richard Cartun

The Domam Foundation
Katie Dykes
Eastern Savings Bank Foundation
Wayne Eisenbaum Charitable Foundation
Energy Federation Incorporated
Enswoth Charitable Foundation
ERJ Fund
Eversource Energy
Fairfield County’s Community Foundation
FARMington Bank Community Foundation
David Feist
Feldman Family Philanthropic Fund
First Church Congregational
First Congregational Church of Cheshire
First Congregational Church of Washington
Fisher Fund at HFPG
The Renee B. Fisher Foundation Fund
Fuller Family Fund
The Garthwait Family Fund
Barbara Garside
Rolfe Gjelistad
Barbara Gorman
William and Jean Graustein Foundation
William Casper Graustein Memorial Fund
Florence Grieb
James Hamilton
Beverly Harris
The Hartford – Windsor Committee
Hartford Foundation for Public Giving
Neale Hauss
HCC Global Financial Products
The Claire Helsing Foundation
Peter Herbert
Maximilian E. & Marion O. Hoffman Foundation
iHeart Radio
ION Bank Foundation
Kristian & Nancy Jensen Charitable Fund
Jewett City DPU – Electric Division
Jewish Federation of Greater Hartford
Donald Joffray
Miroslaw Klapyk
Catherine M. Kornas Fund
Karen Lambert
Jeffry Larson
Marta Lawrence
John Leary
LaVerne Mahoney
Carl Marks Foundation Inc.
Mazda of Manchester
The McCormack Foundation
Michelle Melander
Peggy Mendelson
The Metropolitan District
H. Miller
Francis Morrison
William and Alice Mortensen Foundation
Laura J. Niles Foundation
Finn Nightingale Family Fund
Steve Nightingale
Norwich Public Utilities
The Frank Loomis Palmer Fund
Pastuszak Estate
Louis Pear
Robert Peitzsch
People’s United Foundation
Samuel Peterson
Phyllis Pierson
Public Utilities Regulatory Authority
Walter Riemer
Joseph Roach
Gavin Rush
Natalie and Norma Sestero Fund
SI Financial Group Foundation
Rosalie Sorenson
Virginia Spencer
Starion Energy
State of Connecticut
St. John’s Episcopal Church
Linda Ternullo
Ann E. Thomas and Michael B. Bonzagni Fund
Travelers Championship
Unitarian Universalist Society: East
United Illuminating/AVANGRID
United Way of Central and NE Connecticut
United Way of Naugatuck and Beacon Falls
Valley Community Foundation
Marc VanVooren
Vistra Corporation
Webster Bank
Violet West
Windsor Federal Savings
Ruth Woodford
William Wynne

Thank You Funders and Supporters

Charles Nelson Robinson Fund
Chelsea Groton Foundation
Marion Isabell Coe Fund
The Franklin Conklin Foundation
Community Foundation for Greater New Haven
Community Foundation of Eastern CT
Connecticut Community Foundation
Connecticut Green Bank
Connecticut Health Foundation
Connecticut On-line Computer Center
Connecticut Power and Energy Society
Connecticut Water Company
David Crompton
Angela De Lara
Virginia De Lima
Dime Bank Foundation
James Ditkoff
Dominion Foundation
Getting (my bill) paid off means a Christmas tree with lights this year and a turkey leg in the microwave. It means using two light bulbs instead of one to illuminate the dark of winter. It means someone cares.”

A Trumbull, CT senior, name withheld