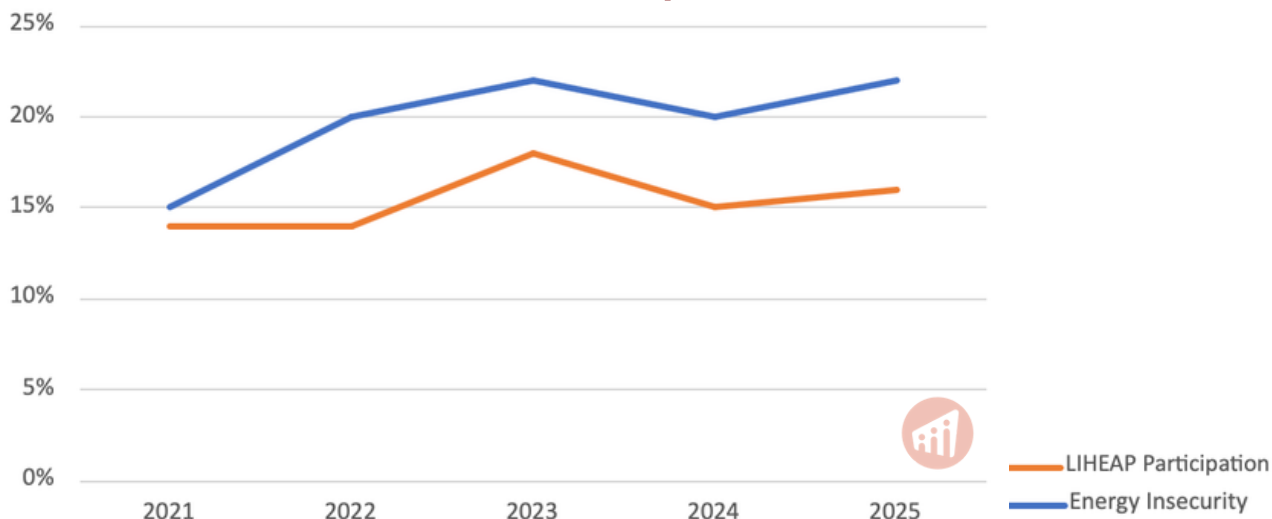


PERSISTENT ENERGY INSECURITY AMONG MASSACHUSETTS FAMILIES WITH YOUNG CHILDREN

ENERGY INSECURITY PREVALENCE AND LIHEAP PARTICIPATION AMONG FAMILIES WITH YOUNG CHILDREN, 2021-2025



Source: Children's HealthWatch data, 2021-2025

Energy insecurity is a **persistent nationwide challenge** that adversely affects the health and well-being of children and families. Among families with young children accessing health care at Boston Medical Center in Boston, MA, energy insecurity peaked in 2025, affecting **more than 1 in 5 families** (22%).

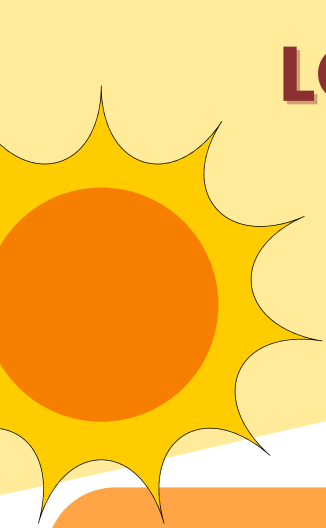
Energy insecurity is measured as households who have experienced at least one of the following in the previous year:

- A threatened or actual utility shut-off or refused delivery of heating fuel
- An unheated or uncooled day because of inability to pay utility bills
- Use of a cooking stove as a source of heat

ENERGY INSECURITY HARMS FAMILIES

Energy insecurity is associated with poor health outcomes for children. Research shows children in energy insecure households are more likely to:

- Be food insecure
- Be in fair or poor health
- Be at risk for developmental delays
- Have ever been hospitalized since birth
- Have moved two or more times in the past year



LOW INCOME HOME ENERGY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM: A PRESCRIPTION FOR ENERGY INSECURITY

HEALTH BENEFITS OF LIHEAP

Compared to eligible non-participants, children in families that received LIHEAP were:

- Less likely to be at risk for growth problems
- More likely to have **healthier weights** for their age
- **Less likely to need to be hospitalized** when seeking care for acute medical problems
- More likely to be **housing secure**

11%

of households participating in LIHEAP in Massachusetts have at least one young child.

In FY2024, LIHEAP served 150,047 households across Massachusetts, including **17,324 low-income households with children** under 5 years old, a population that is uniquely vulnerable to economic instability and health and growth consequences of energy insecurity.

However, **less than 1 in 5 income-eligible households in MA participate** in LIHEAP due to chronic underfunding – a trend reflected in the Children's HealthWatch dataset of likely income-eligible families with young children.

Energy prices have increased **faster than the rate of inflation** since 2022, with the national average electricity price increasing by 13% from 2022 to 2025. In the face of rising energy costs, it is more important than ever to **ensure LIHEAP is adequately funded** to meet need and meaningfully assist all eligible households.

POLICY RECOMMENDATION

Maximize LIHEAP appropriations at \$5.1 billion to improve program access year-round and support the health and well-being of young children and their families.

