



Inside the Operation

WE'RE ALL PART OF THE OPERATION.

FALL 2015

Households Facing Utility Shutoffs Needed Help This Summer

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Warmer weather doesn't always mean relief from high energy bills for Connecticut families.

During the spring and summer months, some lower-income families and individuals face losing their electricity or gas services because they do not have the resources to keep up with the high cost of energy.

From July 13 through Sept. 30, Operation Fuel and its statewide network of fuel banks gave out over \$930,000 in energy assistance to more than 2,200 households that were in danger of having their utility services terminated.

Energy affordability is a year-round problem for more than 305,000 state households. Lower-income families and people living on fixed incomes are very vulnerable to high energy costs, which represent a significant household

expense and affect their ability to pay for other basic necessities.

Some households needed help this summer from Operation Fuel because of high balances on their utility bills that had resulted from trying to keep their homes warm last winter. The annual winter moratorium, which prevents households from having their utilities shut off, ended on May 1st and doesn't resume until November 1, 2015.



"Being without electricity during hot weather puts people at risk, especially for those with chronic medical conditions, young children, and the elderly. The loss of electricity also makes it impossible to refrigerate food and medicine, cook healthy meals and have lights and hot water," explains Operation Fuel's Executive Director Patricia Wrice.



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A Word from The Executive Director



Dear Friends,

Operation Fuel had a busy summer helping Connecticut residents in need stay safe during record breaking hot weather, including a rare September heatwave. Over the last few years, there has been a significant increase in requests for our Summer Assistance program, with over 2,700 households helped during the summer of 2014. Our current Summer program, which has already served more than 2,200 households, will continue to run until October 30th.

As we prepare for our upcoming Winter Assistance program, which begins on November 30th, Operation Fuel anticipates getting requests for help from more than 8,500 families and individuals who do not qualify for government assistance or who have exhausted their benefits.

Although the cost for heating oil is lower than in recent years, this past winter brought record breaking cold temperatures, and many working families and seniors are still struggling to stay current with their utility bills. While Connecticut does have a winter moratorium that protects households heating with gas and electric, there is no such protection for those relying on deliverable fuels such as oil or firewood, putting these vulnerable households at risk for freezing this winter.

When Governor Ella Grasso started Operation Fuel in 1977, it was intended to be a short-term program. However, 38 years later the need for emergency home energy assistance continues to grow. Connecticut is one of the most expensive states for monthly electricity and heating oil expenses, a burden that has over 305,000 households struggling to balance utility bills with other basic necessities. There continues to be a significant gap between what lower income households are paying for energy bills and what they can actually afford. Since 2006, that gap has more than doubled to an average of \$2,560 annually.

For some people, we are a last resort. As Connecticut's only year-round and statewide energy assistance program, Operation Fuel will continue to make it our priority to provide safe, adequate and affordable home energy to our neighbors in need.

Thank you for being a part of the Operation.

Patricia Wrice
Executive Director

Donations Needed: Operation Fuel Expects Challenging Winter

With more than 305,000 lower-income Connecticut households unable to afford their energy bills, Operation Fuel and its statewide network of fuel banks are getting ready for a very challenging winter.

Bitter cold weather is projected for Connecticut this winter, according to the Farmers' Almanac. So while the price of heating fuel is expected to be lower, heating bills still will be substantial.

In preparation, Operation Fuel is hosting its annual energy conference and a series of fuel bank training sessions. The energy conference is a partnership between Operation Fuel, Eversource Energy and UIL Holdings, which includes Connecticut Natural Gas and Southern Connecticut Gas.

"Operation Fuel plans to provide at least \$2 million in energy assistance this winter. We know the need for energy assistance will exceed our available funding this winter, but we are going to make sure that the most vulnerable households are helped. We especially will focus on households that heat with oil," explains Executive Director Patricia Wrice.

Operation Fuel and its fuel banks will begin taking energy assistance applications on November 30th for the upcoming heating season. Hardship households that heat with gas or electricity can be protected from utility shutoffs from November 1st through May 1st if they apply to their utility provider -- and are approved -- for Shutoff Protection.

There is no protection, however, for families and individual who heat with oil and other deliverable fuels, which means some Connecticut households could be at risk this winter. For people who make minimum wage or are dealing with a serious illness or job loss, a winter of high heating bills can turn into a financial crisis.

"Families with low and fixed incomes are more vulnerable to the high cost of energy. Many are unable to keep up with the expense of heating their homes and at the same time keep up with the rising cost of food and other basic needs,"

points out Brenda Watson, Operation Fuel's Director of Community Programs. Utility customers can donate to Operation Fuel through the nonprofit's Add-a-Dollar program when paying their utility bills. Operation Fuel uses 100% of the donations made to the Add-a-Dollar program for energy assistance. Donations also can be made at www.operationfuel.org or by mailing a check, payable to Operation Fuel, to Operation Fuel, 75 Charter Oak Avenue, Suite 2-240, Hartford, CT 06106.



#Giving Tuesday

On December 1st, 2014, Operation Fuel participated in the annual #GivingTuesday event, with a focus on raising funds for emergency energy assistance. Thanks to the support of our generous donors, we raised over \$1,500 during the one-day fundraising campaign.

#GivingTuesday is a global day dedicated to giving back following Black Friday and Cyber Monday. It provides an opportunity for members of the community to celebrate generosity and giving by donating to their favorite charitable organization.

Operation Fuel will be participating in the campaign again this year, which is taking place on Tuesday, December 1, 2015, and with your support we can continue to keep Connecticut residents safe and warm.

Fuel Banks Are Key to Energy Program's Success

Operation Fuel's 100 fuel banks are an integral part of the nonprofit's very effective energy assistance program. "If it were not for the fuel banks, many of our state's most vulnerable residents would not have the ability to access our programs," pointed out Brenda Watson, who is Operation Fuel's Director of Community Programs.

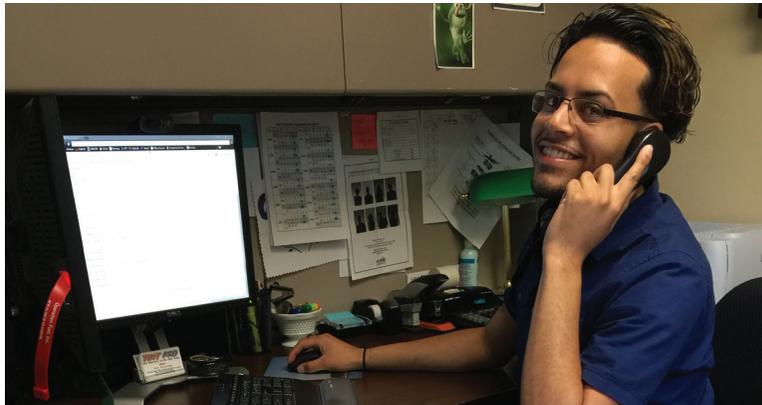
Fuel banks are located within community agencies, municipal departments of human and social services, and religious organizations. The Mary Knowles Memorial Fuel Bank, which is part of the Human Resources Agency (HRA) of

assessment of the household to see if there are any other needs.

Katie, a young mother of premature twins, recently was referred to the agency by The Hospital of Central Connecticut. Due to complications from her pregnancy, she couldn't afford to pay her electric and gas bills and her service was about to be terminated.

An Operation Fuel energy assistance grant kept her electricity on and she enrolled in Eversource Energy's Newstart Program to prevent future shutoffs.

She also received help with her gas bill through the Connecticut Energy



Christian Contreras, Energy Program Services Manager of HRA of New Britain.

New Britain, is a long-time partner of Operation Fuel. Last winter, Operation Fuel provided \$37,000 in energy assistance to 81 New Britain households through the fuel bank.

Christian Contreras, Energy Program Services Manager of HRA of New Britain, said he expects the need to be even greater this year. "Last winter really put a burden on our clients. Many still are having trouble catching up with their bills from last season on top of their current energy bills," he said.

The Mary Knowles Memorial Fuel Bank serves a wide range of clients. Some are elderly, living on a fixed income and can't afford to heat their house due to the high cost of other basic necessities. Other recipients are working families with limited incomes who are recently unemployed or under employed. When a client applies for energy assistance, HRA also does a full

Assistance Program (CEAP) and enrolled in Connecticut Natural Gas's Matching Payment Program.

As a result of her energy assistance application, Katie also was able to receive other services that she and her babies needed.

Not being able to afford heat can also be very dangerous. Contreras said clients who heat with oil but can't afford a delivery will sometimes heat their homes with electric space heaters or the kitchen stove, which are safety hazards.

Many clients have told Contreras that they don't know what they would have done if Operation Fuel hadn't been there to help. "Operation Fuel is always there to assist our clients and they take into consideration crisis situations. They truly have a heart and help us help many households that otherwise would not receive any assistance with their energy bills," concluded Contreras.

Operation Fuel Partners With IRIS to Help Displaced Families

Chantal and Abel came to the United States to escape war and violence in the Congo. After a stringent approval process, both were granted refugee status and settled in New Haven when nonprofit Integrated Refugee and Immigrant Services (IRIS) agreed to sponsor them.



Will Kneerim, Director of Employment & Education Services for IRIS, advises clients about job opportunities.

The couple, who didn't know each other previously, met in New Haven in 2013 and married about a year later. IRIS helps refugees like Chantal and Abel and other displaced people establish new lives after fleeing their country of origin due to persecution for their race, nationality, religious belief, or political opinion.

IRIS resettles about 250 people annually in the New Haven area; most are from Iraq, Afghanistan, Syria, Sudan, the Congo, and Eritrea. As part of the process, IRIS collaborates with local non-profit organizations and government programs to meet its clients' needs. Since IRIS became a fuel bank for Operation Fuel last year, 12 families have received energy

assistance, including Chantal and Abel. Energy affordability is a serious problem for some of IRIS's clients, according to Will Kneerim, Director of Employment & Education Services for IRIS. He said many are working in low-paying jobs and it's difficult for them to budget for heat, especially if they are from warm climates. While IRIS helps them get acclimated to their new environment and lifestyle and teaches them the basics, it can be a slow process. Case managers at IRIS work hard to help their clients manage their budgets and avoid getting into debt, added Kneerim.

Clients come to the United States with very few possessions and finding work is a major factor in their successful transition. Adult refugees are legally authorized to work immediately when they arrive. Because their English is limited, the couple has had trouble finding good paying jobs. They also have a family to support. Abel came here with his two young daughters, Chantal has a son, and together they have a baby daughter.

The couple has had some difficulty budgeting for expenses. When they realized that they couldn't afford their overdue energy bill they turned to their sponsor IRIS for help. Kneerim said he is very impressed with Operation Fuel, adding that the energy assistance program has been instrumental in helping Chantal and Abel stay in their home and manage their utility bills.

Operation Fuel Helps Families and Individuals Remain in Their Homes

Operation Fuel's Homeless Intervention and Prevention Program (HIPP) helped 184 people, including 84 children, from either becoming or remaining homeless this past fiscal year. The program is one of the ways that Operation Fuel is working with community partners on long-term solutions.

HIPP provided \$46,681 in energy assistance grants last fiscal year to 70

Connecticut families and individuals who were able to resume or maintain housing as a result. Now in its third year, Operation Fuel developed the program to prevent and reduce homelessness. The current partners for HIPP are LifeBridge Community Services (formerly FSW) of Bridgeport and Inspirica, Inc. in Stamford.

—continued on page 6

—continued from page 5

Losing utility services can violate a lease agreement while owing a previous utility debt can prevent the transition from a shelter to permanent housing. Applicants for HIPP must be below 60 percent of the state median income to qualify for an energy assistance grant of up to \$1,000. Some of the energy grant recipients already were homeless and had accrued past due utility bills that were preventing them from being able to move into permanent housing. The remaining recipients were living in homes or apartments but needed energy assistance to prevent their utility services from being terminated. If not for HIPP, Jesse might have lost his Bridgeport apartment and become

homeless. Last August, he went to LifeBridge Community Services when he needed help to pay his back rent. Although Jesse was 65, he hadn't begun collecting Social Security. He was working as an aide in a nursing home, but recently had suffered a heart attack and hadn't been able to work for a couple of months. So Jesse got behind on rent and utilities. LifeBridge helped him with his back rent through a Connecticut Department of Housing grant and an energy assistance grant from Operation Fuel helped him pay his utility bill. Now a year later, thanks to HIPP, Jesse still is living in his apartment and keeping up with his bills and continues to work.

Helping Small Businesses Lower Energy Costs

Operation Fuel's small business program has helped a variety of Connecticut small business owners become more energy efficient. During the past fiscal year, Project BEST provided 89 Connecticut small businesses with free energy assessments, and 76 of the businesses completed additional energy-saving upgrades.



Operation Fuel's Project Best has partnered with Eversource Energy and The United Illuminating Company (UI) since 2013. As a result, a total of 230 small businesses have completed energy assessments with 149 of the small business owners making energy efficiency improvements, such as efficient lighting, refrigeration controls and weatherization measures.

Project BEST helps eligible small businesses pay for energy efficiency upgrades that will result in long-term savings in energy use and energy costs. The process begins with a free energy assessment that evaluates the business's energy use and recommends additional ways to conserve energy and lower future energy bills.

Many types of small businesses have benefitted from Project BEST. Jacqueline McGhie used the program to upgrade the lighting at her Bridgeport shop, Jackie's Customized Sewing. The upgrades are expected to save her business about \$1,300 per year. A Project BEST grant subsidized \$2,500 of the lighting upgrades and United Illuminating funded the remaining \$1,800 through its small business program. As a result, McGhie had no out-of-pocket expense for the upgrades.

For more information on Project BEST, including program eligibility, small business owners can contact Operation Fuel's Small Business Advocate Julian Freund at 860-243-2345, ext. 3308 or Julian@operationfuel.org.

FEATURED SMALL BUSINESS

Doris' Resale Dress Shop



June Bennett, owner Doris' Resale Dress Shop

June Bennett got her start in retailing helping out the founding owner of Doris' Resale Dress Shop on the weekends. Becoming a business owner was not her original plan, but the opportunity to purchase the business presented itself 28 years ago and she has run the store at its Blake Street location in New Haven ever since.

Doris' Resale Dress Shop, a consignment shop, specializes in all ladies clothing and accessories. The store has a loyal local following but draws customers from throughout the surrounding area, June explains. "Shoes and jewelry are especially good sellers."

June responded to outreach from Project BEST in early 2015 expressing an interest in finding ways to reduce her energy costs. Her project was completed in early spring replacing inefficient T-12 fluorescent fixtures with energy efficient T-8 fixtures.

OWNER: June Bennett

LOCATION: 410 Blake St., New Haven

PROJECT: Lighting Upgrades

TOTAL PROJECT COST: \$1,298

UTILITY INCENTIVE: (\$311)

PROJECT BEST GRANT: (\$987)

OWNER'S COST: \$0

EST. COST SAVINGS: \$307/yr

Operation Fuel Elects New Officers; Adds Four Directors to Board

Operation Fuel elected one new officer and added four new board members during its annual board of directors meeting in September. Lynn Vasquez, Community Relations Specialist at Eversource Energy was elected Secretary. Vasquez has been on Operation Fuel's Board since 2011. Nancy Bulkeley, Senior Community Affairs Representative for Dominion Nuclear Connecticut, was re-elected Chairperson of Operation Fuel's board of directors. In addition, Matt Service, VP of Special Products, Environmental Office Solutions, was re-elected Vice Chair and Reverend Hopeton Scott, of The First Baptist Church in Bridgeport, was re-elected Treasurer.

Richard Schauster has re-joined the Board. Schauster is a past board member and has served on Operation Fuel's Finance Committee for several years. In years past, Operation Fuel has maintained an Assistant Treasurer position, to support the office of Treasurer's duties. The Assistant Treasurer position was also re-instated in September and Schauster was elected to the position. Three new board members were elected: Arianna Baret Peralta, Engineer, Systems Resiliency, Eversource Energy; Allan Smith, Account Executive, Cars.com, Hartford Courant Media Group; and Susan T. Wakefield, retired from Energizer Personal Care.

2015-2016 Board of Directors

Nancy Bulkeley, Chair
Dominion Nuclear Connecticut

Matthew Service, Vice Chair
Environmental Office Solutions

Hopeton Scott, Treasurer
First Baptist Church, Bridgeport

Richard Schauster, Assistant Treasurer
Empire Industries, Retired

Lynn Vasquez, Secretary
Eversource Energy

John Bowman
F.F. Hitchcock Oil Company

Tim Cole
West Wind Consulting

Monika Doshi
Saath

Laura Gonzalez
United Illuminating

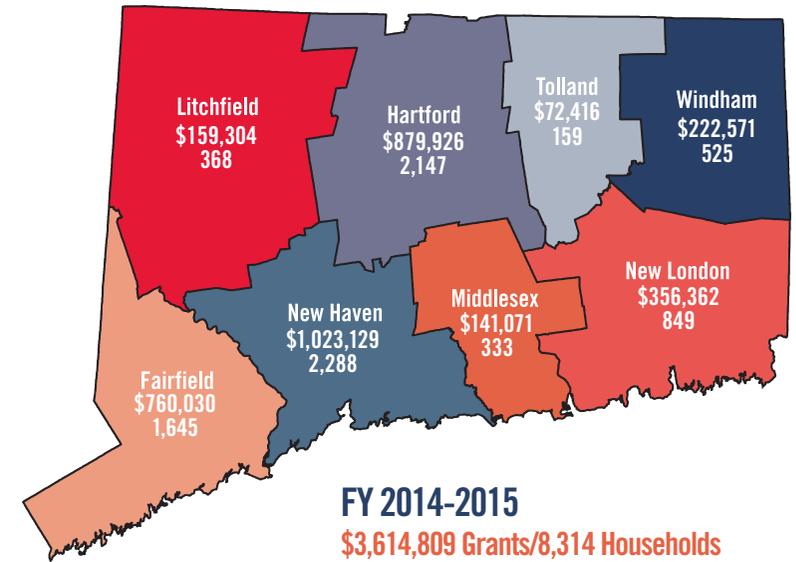
Arianna Baret Peralta
Eversource Energy

Allan Smith
Hartford Courant Media Group

Susan T. Wakefield
Energizer Personal Care, Retired



Services Provided



Financials

Statement of Financial Position

For the year ended June 30, 2015

ASSETS	
Cash and cash equivalents	2,335,283
Certificates of Deposit	227,666
Grants and other Receivables	79,017
Prepaid Expense	1,789
Security Deposit	3,341
Total Current Assets	2,647,096
OTHER ASSETS	
Property & Equipment (Net of depreciation)	55,508
Total Assets	2,702,604

Liabilities and Net Assets

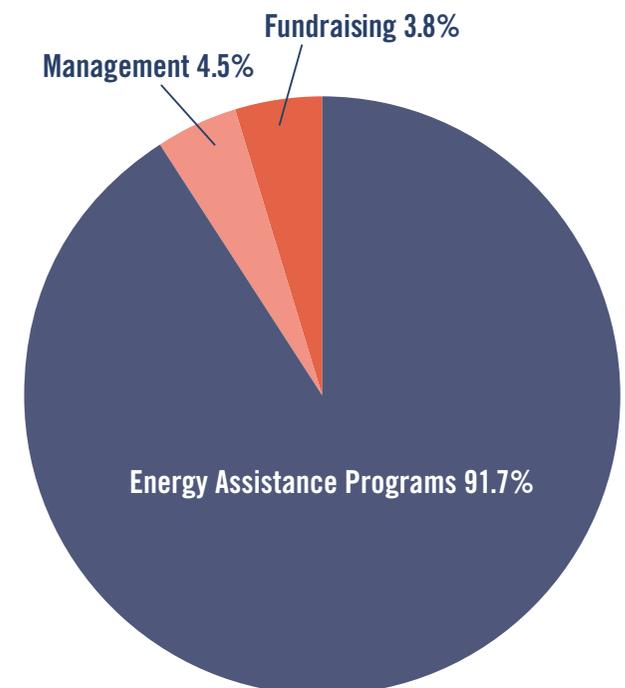
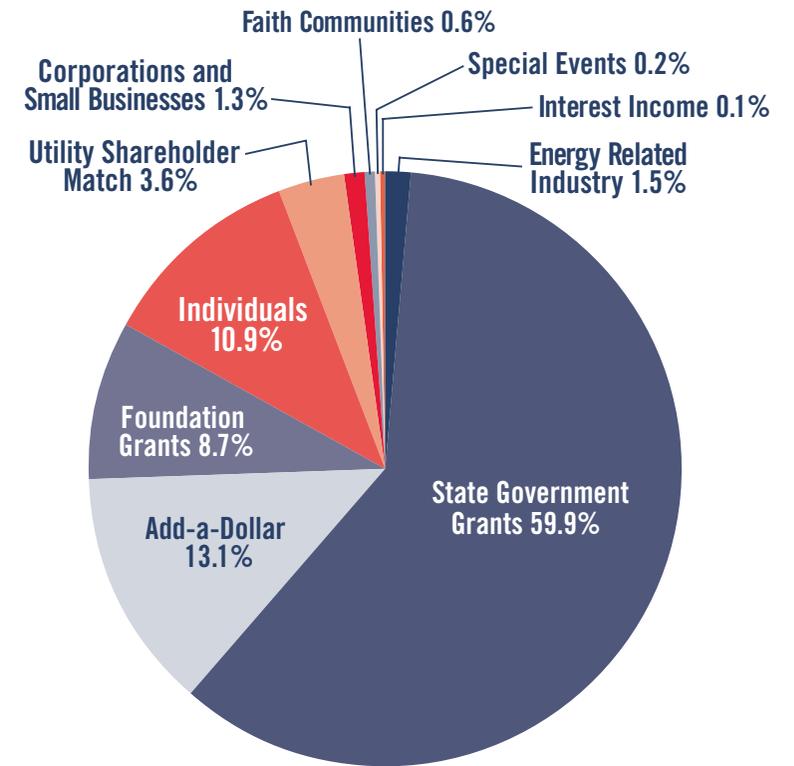
2014-2015

LIABILITIES	
Accounts Payable & Accrued Liabilities	189,159
Deferred Revenue - Small Business Program	47,050
Charitable Gift Annuity Payment Liability	14,046
Total Current Liabilities	250,255
NET ASSETS	
Unrestricted	1,021,828
Temporarily Restricted	1,430,521
Total net assets	2,452,349
Total Liabilities and Net Assets	2,702,604

Revenue and Expenses

For the Year Ended June 30, 2015

REVENUES AND SUPPORT FOR RESIDENTIAL PROGRAMS	
Energy Related Industry	53,610
Governmental Grants - State	2,100,000
Add-a-Dollar	460,010
Foundation Grants	305,770
Individuals	382,077
Utility Shareholder Match	124,599
Corporations and Small Businesses	46,165
Faith Communities	21,820
Special Events	7,760
Interest Income	5,075
Total Support for Residential Programs	3,506,886
Support for Small Businesses Pilot Program	195,439
Grand Total Revenues and Support	3,702,325
EXPENSES	
Energy Assistance Programs	4,479,242
Management	217,369
Fundraising	185,848
Total Expenses	4,882,459



Our Mission: Operation Fuel brings together communities, businesses, government and individuals to ensure people in need have access to vital year-round energy assistance.



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Operation Fuel, Inc.

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INSIDE THE OPERATION

FALL 2015

How to Contribute

SEND A CHECK

Send a check payable to Operation Fuel to:
Operation Fuel
75 Charter Oak Avenue, Suite 2-240
Hartford, CT 06106

Or make a check payable to Operation Fuel and enclose it with your utility bill. The utility companies will forward all checks to Operation Fuel.

ADD-A-DOLLAR

Support Operation Fuel through the Add-a-Dollar program with your utility company. You may donate \$1.00 by adding the amount to your utility bill, both paper bills and electronically. 100 percent of funds raised through the Add-a-Dollar program are used for energy assistance grants. The utility companies also match a percentage of Add-a-Dollar funds raised. You may contact your local utility companies to donate more than \$1.00 or to become enrolled in an automatic Add-a-Dollar program.

DONATE ONLINE

Donate online through Operation Fuel's secure Web site, www.operationfuel.org. Click on the "Donate Online" button at the top of the page.

MATCHING GIFTS

Take advantage of your company's matching gifts program. Contact your company's human resources department for more information.

ESTATE PLANNING / PLANNED GIVING

Plan for the future security of Operation Fuel by considering a planned gift through your estate plans, such as gifts of stock, real estate and life insurance policies. For more information please contact Kim O'Brien Green, Director of Development at 860-243-2345 x3303.

JOIN OUR NEWSLETTER

To help us make the most of our resources, we'd like to keep you updated by sending you our newsletter. Simply visit www.operationfuel.org and enter your email address to subscribe.

BE PART OF THE OPERATION

If you are a corporation or business wishing to partner with Operation Fuel please contact Kim O'Brien Green, Director of Development at 860-243-2345 x3303.