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## **The National Consumer Law Center Receives Grant to Help Poor Families Maintain Heat and Power**

### *The Boston Foundation Awards \$15,000 for “Project Stay Connected”*

**(BOSTON)** Low-income residents in Massachusetts facing utility shut-offs will receive help from the [National Consumer Law Center \(NCLC\)](#), thanks to a new \$15,000 grant from [the Boston Foundation](#). The Boston Foundation—and the [MassNeeds](#) collaboration ensuring the state’s poorest residents have access to basic human needs during the winter season—are long-time supporters of NCLC’s Project Stay Connected (PSC). Through PSC, NCLC attorneys train thousands of counselors and social service providers in the basic rights of utility customers. NCLC also partners with legal services organizations across the state to provide legal advice and case assistance for low-income clients facing electric, gas, water, and telephone terminations.

NCLC received this grant as part of the Boston Foundation’s Food and Fuel Initiative, which supports essential organizations that provide immediate and direct help to local residents in distress. The Food and Fuel Initiative also supports systemic efforts to catalyze change that will benefit vulnerable households for the long term. The Boston Foundation is one of the oldest and largest community foundations in the nation. “The Boston Foundation’s generous support helps NCLC ensure that financially struggling families’ difficulties don’t result in utility shut-offs or harmful trade-offs between basic utilities and essentials such as food and medicine,” said Charlie Harak, Project Stay Connected project director.

Project Stay Connected is also supported locally by the Paul and Phyllis Fireman Foundation and an anonymous donor. “These charitable resources from local foundations are serving a critical need,” said National Consumer Law Center Executive Director Will Ogburn. “With the federal government having reduced fuel assistance funding by one-third since 2009—and winter arriving in full force—more households are in distress and calling NCLC for help to restore utility service.”

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Since 1969, the nonprofit National Consumer Law Center® (NCLC®) has used its expertise in consumer law and energy policy to work for consumer justice and economic security for low-income and other disadvantaged people, including older adults, in the United States. NCLC’s expertise includes policy analysis and advocacy; consumer law and energy publications; litigation; expert witness services, and training and advice for advocates. NCLC works with nonprofit and legal services organizations, private attorneys, policymakers, and federal and state government and courts across the nation to stop exploitative practices, help financially stressed families build and retain wealth, and advance economic fairness. [www.nclc.org](http://www.nclc.org)