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**MASSACHUSETTS GOOD NEIGHBOR ENERGY FUND
OPENS EARLIER THAN USUAL TO ALL ELIGIBLE HOUSEHOLDS**

CANTON, MA, October 4, 2021 -- Energy companies from across Massachusetts are coming together to support neighbors in need with the announcement that the Massachusetts Good Neighbor Energy Fund (GNEF) is open starting today, Monday, October 4, to all eligible households. The Fund helps families and individuals impacted by a temporary crisis, like COVID-19 or a loss of a job, and who don't qualify for federal or state assistance with the payment of their home energy expenses. This campaign year's Fund disbursement is \$500 per eligible household per heating season. The Good Neighbor Energy Fund's 37th annual "Give The Gift of Warmth" campaign's goal is to raise \$500,000 and assist more than 1,000 households.

"We are opening the fund to all eligible candidates earlier than we ever have before as we understand the heightened urgency of need for home energy assistance due to the financial difficulties of Massachusetts households further exacerbated by the coronavirus," said Mary Ellen Molloy, Chairperson of the 2021-2022 Good Neighbor Energy Fund campaign and Regulatory Affairs Specialist for Eversource Energy. Those in temporary crisis are encouraged to visit the Fund's website at www.magoodneighbor.org to see if they qualify for assistance. Molloy added that the Fund has raised more than \$22.5 million and assisted over 91,250 households in need with the payment of monthly energy expenses since its inception in 1985.

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The Fund is often the last resort for families who do not qualify for federal and state assistance programs. The Salvation Army Massachusetts Division, which administers the Fund for the sponsoring energy companies, pays the energy provider directly for households whose gross income falls between 60 and 80 percent of the state's median income levels. For example, a household size of 4 would need to have a total gross yearly income of between \$78,752 and \$105,001 to qualify.

"Millions of Americans are still experiencing the ongoing impacts of the pandemic as they struggle to recover and stay in their homes," said Jeffrey Bailey, Director of Social Services, The Salvation Army Massachusetts Division. "With the end of COVID-era federal unemployment programs established by the CARES Act, The Salvation Army anticipates an unprecedented increase in requests for heating assistance, especially as temperatures begin to drop. The Fund stands ready to help our struggling neighbors as we remain on the frontlines of need."

To apply to the Fund for assistance, visit your local Salvation Army Corps Community Center or call 800-334-3047 if you live in area codes 508, 617, 781 or 978 or 800-262-1320 if you live in area code 413. The Fund's distribution award letter will also serve as qualification for the Mass Save Enhanced Insulation Incentive for customers of a Massachusetts investor-owned utility. Specifically, the offer provides qualified customers with no-cost insulation, as well as other no-cost energy savings measures.

Participating energy companies support their respective customers' generosity through various giving programs. Massachusetts residents who wish to support the Fund can "Give the Gift of Warmth" by using the green-colored Good Neighbor Energy Fund donation envelope found as an insert in monthly energy bills or through the 'add a dollar' program some energy companies offer which allows customers to increase their monthly utility bill payment by one dollar or more. Customers can also donate on-line by visiting www.magoodneighbor.org or simply mail a check payable to "Good Neighbor Energy Fund" and send it to the Good Neighbor Energy Fund, c/o The Salvation Army, 25 Shawmut Road, Canton, Massachusetts 02021-1408.