



Contact: Mary Ellen Vanni  
Executive Director  
410.821.3022, Ext. 3

---

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
NOVEMBER 7, 2005

## **Weinberg Foundation Grants Fuel Fund of Maryland \$450,000 To Help Low-Income Families Pay Soaring Energy Bills**

**Baltimore -- November 7, 2005 --** The Harry and Jeanette Weinberg Foundation, Inc., announced today the awarding of a \$450,000 grant to be given over three years to the Fuel Fund of Maryland, Inc. to help vulnerable Marylanders pay their energy bills.

“The Fuel Fund of Maryland’s mission closely aligns with the Weinberg Foundation’s,” says Donn Weinberg, Vice President of the Weinberg Foundation. “We are dedicated to aiding those unfortunate people who by reason of poverty, disability, failing health, and/or advanced age are unable to adequately help themselves—and so is the Fuel Fund.”

“The Fuel Fund is extraordinarily grateful to the Weinberg Foundation for this outstanding gift to vulnerable people in Maryland,” says Mary Ellen Vanni, Executive Director of the Fuel Fund. “Already the Fuel Fund has spent \$100,000 more on people needing help with their energy bills than the same time last year—and the winter has barely begun. This is an historic time: many more families are not only in need, but the depth of their need is much greater.”

Driving the need for significantly more funds is a record rise in energy prices. On top of an 80 percent increase in natural gas prices over the last four years, forecasters predict a 48 percent increase this winter. Home heating oil costs are expected to climb 70 percent over last year’s prices; propane by 30 percent. Next summer electric price increases are expected to top 30 percent.

The multi-year award will also stabilize the Fuel Fund financially, says John F. Goedeke, Jr., President of the Fuel Fund Board of Directors. “The Weinberg grant allows us to plan ahead for 2006 and 2007 and build on this gift. We will also look for corporate and individual support to match this grant so we can meet the unprecedented need the Fuel Fund families are facing.”

“We thank the Weinberg Foundation,” says Ms. Vanni, “For ensuring that many more Maryland families will stay safe and secure in their homes this winter despite the dramatic increases in fuel prices.”

(more)

### **About the Fuel Fund of Maryland**

The Fuel Fund of Maryland, Inc. is a 501 (3)(c) nonprofit founded in 1981 to assist low-income families in Central Maryland meet their home energy needs. In 25 years, the Fuel Fund has raised over \$10 million to help more than 100,000 families. The Fuel Fund was awarded the *Seal of Excellence* from the Maryland Association of Nonprofits in 1999. The award is given to nonprofit organizations that go above and beyond minimum legal requirements and hold the highest standards of ethics and accountability under the Maryland Association of Nonprofit Organizations' *Standards for Excellence* code.

###