



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

**CONTACT:**

Amy Rosenband (HFS) 312.814.0908

Jerry Thomas (CEDA) 773.677.6378

jerry@jerrythomaspr.com

**\*\*MEDIA ADVISORY\*\***

***For Monday, September 25, 2006***

**Blagojevich Administration to announce \$1 million federal grant to reduce home energy service disconnections at CEDA's 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration**

***Illinois one of only four states to receive REACH grant***

CHICAGO – Officials from Governor Rod R. Blagojevich's administration will join Community and Economic Development Association of Cook County, Inc. (CEDA) for their 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration and to announce a \$1 million federal grant to reduce home energy service disconnections, which often contribute to and lead to homelessness. Illinois is one of only four states to receive the Residential Energy Assistance Challenge Option Program (REACH) grant this year.

The REACH project will target those LIHEAP beneficiaries that have the highest risk of payment failure – especially those with incomes between 0% and 100% of the poverty level. Households receiving a LIHEAP grant in the fall or winter are often disconnected again at the end of the season due to nonpayment or inconsistent payment – leaving many homes without any energy service until LIHEAP assistance becomes available again. The REACH project will provide a variety of intensive education and case management services to help LIHEAP participants stay connected throughout the year, including budget counseling, referral to other income support services, energy education and weatherization services, and encouragement to promote regular utility bill paying. The REACH project will be administered by the Illinois Department of Healthcare and Family Services.

Illinois Department of Healthcare and Family Services Director Barry Maram will accept the REACH grant on behalf of the Blagojevich Administration, and will join CEDA for their 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration. CEDA is a nonprofit community action agency that serves 225,000 individuals annually with a budget over \$100 million. As a nationally acclaimed leader in the quest to eliminate poverty, CEDA operates an array of innovative and effective family and community-based programs in Cook County, IL.

**Who:** Barry Maram, Director, Illinois Department of Healthcare and Family Services  
Robert Wharton, President and CEO, CEDA  
Harry Pestine, Community Affairs Director, Federal Reserve Bank

**What:** REACH Grant announcement and CEDA 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration

**When:** Monday, September 25, 2006

**Time:** 11 a.m.

**Where:** CEDA Downtown  
208 S. La Salle  
19<sup>th</sup> floor