Additional funding helps in energy assistance aid

Urban Services is offering additional direct benefits to households needing financial support to keep warm in the winter and to those who have previously applied and already received benefits.

This distribution is made possible since Baltimore has received additional federal funding through the Maryland Energy Assistance Program.

Urban Services operates M.E.A.P. in Baltimore. In response to the new allocation, Urban Services is alerting residents by promoting Energy Awareness Days.

Support is being given by state elected officials, government leaders, representatives from the Baltimore Gas and Electric Company, fuel companies and fuel co-ops.

The purpose of the Energy Awareness Day is to inform citizens who may be eligible for energy assistance to apply before the 26-week program ends on March 30.

Further, to accommodate working applicants, 15 Urban Services Neighborhood Centers and 15 Mayor's Stations will be open on Thursday evenings until 7:00 p.m.

A total of 32 various sites are available to take energy applications.

New applicants and households already certified will automatically receive an increased benefit as a result of Baltimore's additional funding allocation of $440,000.

Households who have already received MEAP services should contact their vendors regarding additional benefits. Presently, over 30,000 city households are registered with the program.

Federally funded, the program is designed to help low - income households whose energy bills are excessively disproportionate to family budgets.

However, Edward Dupree, Energy Chief for Baltimore City, pointed out that, "MEAP is not an emergency program. With the latest change a family of four will be able to receive a maximum of $441 in assistance."

Although the extra funding is welcome, Urban Services Acting Executive Director, Lloyd C. Mitchner said, that the Energy Assistance Program in Maryland had decreased approximately 40 percent over the past several years.

This is attributed to federal cutbacks.

CHILDREN'S

SPRING VALUES

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SAVE ON DRESSWEAR FOR BOYS FROM GOOD LAD AND BABY TOGS.
Shortall sets, suspender sets, 2-pc. and 3-pc. sets. Infants' 3-24 mos., toddlers' 2T-4T. (D.052/272/154) Reg. $14-$44, SALE 10.48-32.98

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The Afro-American Section B

METRO PROFILE

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■ Area Entertainment B6
Saturday, March 10, 1990

The Minister's Message

Muslim leader addresses Black media

"We are raising a concept based upon a reality that our people are suffering in the United States; our condition is getting worse. And there does not seem to be the will on the part of the U.S. government to really do the right thing, if you will, by our people."

By Olive Vassell
Afro Assistant Editor

He arrived at the offices of the Washington AFRO-AMERICAN Newspaper surrounded by scores of fresh, but stern-faced young men. They are his constant travelling companions, necessary because of the never-ending threats on his life.

Minister Louis Farrakhan, head of the Nation of Islam and advocate for Black empowerment, had come to meet with "his brothers and sisters of the Black press."

Speaking for nearly two hours to a gathering of Washington area Black publishers and editors, he shared with them his assessment of the present and vision of the future for Blacks and encouraged them to "take comfort."

"We don't have much longer to suffer . . . I do believe God will chastise America . . .Don't be bullied."

Sitting relaxed among the group Minister Farrakhan told them to "treat me like one of the members of your family, even if you disagree.....I don't expect you to treat me anyway other than a family member and that is you should feel free to ask me anything that you wish."

Appearing smaller than the giant size image he projects on stage, he talked passionately of the state of race relations in the U.S. Despite the existence of an increased Black middle class, Whites and Blacks are becoming more polarized, he said. "The solution of separation is becoming more and more realistic."

His face folded in pain as he spoke of recent reports that 25 percent of young Blacks are either in prison or on parole, or in the judicial system, and of high infant mortality rates. They show that any "progress we (the Middle class) have politically, socially and for some economically is not a solution to the problem of our people," he said.

He spoke of plans to establish an African homeland for African-Americans, clarifying reports that he was advocating a mass Black exodus to the continent.

"We are raising a concept based upon a reality that our people are suffering in the United States, our condition in every way is getting worse. And there does not seem to be the will on the part of the U.S. government to really 'do the right thing,' if you will by our people.

"The urgency of the suffering of the mass of our people, the hostile climate that is building in the United States, the plans that I believe the U.S. government has against our people, necessitate that we as concerned Black people think about and plan a future for our people.

"We would like to teach our people first and then give our people the chance to vote to see whether or not they would like to be separated."

He said the Jewish example of the establishment of Israel after the second world war, could be paralleled with the establishment of a homeland for Black people in Africa.

Exploratory talks had been made with African countries, he said, but declined to mention which had been approached, because "it was premature to do that."

"We are the kith and kin of Africa, even though we've become a unique people. There are tens of thousands of miles of lands in Africa, uncultivated, undeveloped, desirable, profitable, so why not encourage Mr. Bush not to kill our young people because you're afraid of their ever growing strength, but give us a chance to reform them. Since nobody in America reforms Black people like we do."

"Give us your tired Black people, your poor.....send these the homeless....to us....let the prisoners go."

The minister said money currently being spent on keeping young people in prison — nearly $35,000 annually per person — could be used to help resettle Blacks.

Further, he added that Black people "the children of slaves....whose fathers built this economy, whose children fought bled and died to maintain it" should be given reparations, like those given to other communities like the Japanese and Jewish people.

He said Blacks have "just as much right" to the U.S. as other groups and urged the U.S. government to give them dual citizenship so "we can go back and forth to Africa and America and build on this side and on that side."

Minister Farrakhan also spoke at length about the plan to destroy Black males in the U.S., comparing it to the biblical story of Pharaoh's plan to kill all the male children of Israel.

"Juxtapose Pharaoh's plan with Bush, Reagan and preceding administrations and the decimation of the ranks of Black men and you have the bible fulfilled right in our midst."

We are "Dealing with a people that never have loved us. You're dealing with a people that see our vast population as useless, millions of unemployed and millions unemployable....."

"Brothers and sisters we're in trouble and if the Black press is not strengthened, when Black press becomes the voice of truth and salvation, we are lost."

On the question of his relationship with the Jewish community, Minister Farrakhan said that neither he nor his organization was anti-semitic. He said the whole issue of anti-semitism had arisen after the Nation of Islam decided to throw its support behind the Rev. Jesse Jackson's 1983 Presidential Campaign.

He said he defended Rev. Jackson, following FBI reports of threats on his life, at the Nation of Islam's conference in 1984 and stated to both Whites and Jews opposing Rev. Jackson that "when Blacks and Jews converge, we have always worked together, but when our interests are opposed Jews have always followed their self-interest."

"Blacks are coming of age, so we should be expected to follow our self-interest and Jesse Louis Jackson is our enlightened self-interest. I said to them you can criticize Jesse, you can condemn him if you will, I said but you should be careful how you handle Rev. Jackson, because 90 percent of Black people are lining up behind him."

"I knew that the way they were handling the Reverend, they themselves were alienating Blacks from Jews, because we were in love with Jesse . . . so I said we are tired of feeding our leaders to White America like raw meat to wild beasts, and I said if anything happens to Rev. Jackson, he'll be the last Black man that you kill.....God himself will chastise you and destroy you if you work to hurt him and Blacks themselves will rise against you even as they did with the assassination of Dr. King. Well, the next day, Louis Farrakhan was the new Black Hitler. That's how it got started."

The controversy ultimately led to Minister Farrakhan being censored on the Senate floor — an occurrence that still makes him angry — and what he called a deliberated attempt to negate the organization's good works.

He points to the achievements of the Washington-based Nation of Islam, who cleaned up a Mayfair Mansions, drug-ridden housing project in northeast Washington, and has kept it clean for two years.

"This tells you of the deep hatred for muslims . . . because it is attached to Louis Farrakhan they can't seem to recognize the good in it," he said of an attack on a resolution in Washington's city council commending the work of the Nation of Islam in Mayfair Mansions.

But he is determined to continue to represent interests of Black people, whatever the cost, he said "If it means that we sacrifice in this day to make it better for those who come behind, then we should be willing to do that, at least some of us should."

Louis Farrakhan was born May 11,1933 in New York, NY, the son of Caribbean immigrants.

He studied music in Boston, excelling as a concert violinist.

In the late 40's and early 50's he turned back to his roots, earning a reputation as a Calypso singer, performing under the name "Calypso Gene."

He converted to Islam at the height of his career and used his talent to extol the message of his religion. He wrote and produced a musical "Orgena" — Negro spelled backwards and recorded several songs, including one titled,

"A White Man's Heaven is a Black Man's Hell."

He became the leader of the Nation of Islam in 1975, following the death of founder Elijah Mohammed.

Today, he still enjoys music, playing the violin (he owns a Stradivarius — the Rolls Royce of violins) and still makes records. His last, "Benefit of Unity and Let Us Unite," was released in 1980.

Minister Farrakhan has been married to his wife Betsy for 36 years, and the couple has nine children.

Photos By Lawrence W. Jackson Jr.

MINISTER LOUIS FARRAKHAN displays a myriad of expressions while holding an emotionally charged meeting with members of Washington's Black media corps.