

# **State announces Sept. 1 start of Low Income Energy Assistance Program enrollment**

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*LIHEAP, PIPP applications available for seniors, people with disabilities beginning September 1*

SPRINGFIELD – The Illinois Department of Commerce & Economic Opportunity's Office of Energy Assistance announced today that the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) will begin accepting applications for winter heating assistance for seniors and people with disabilities beginning September 1, 2016.

LIHEAP and the Percentage of Income Payment Plan (PIPP) program are funded as part of the stopgap funding plan signed into law by Governor Rauner.

LIHEAP is a state and federally funded energy assistance program for low-income families, in which heating bill payments are made on behalf of households. Applications are processed through a network of 35 local administering agencies around the state. These agencies will begin accepting applications on a first-come, first-served basis from the elderly and people with disabilities starting on September 1, 2016.

Clients must bring all required documentation when applying for assistance including:

- Proof of gross income from all household members for the 30-day income period beginning with the date of the application.
- A copy of their current heat and electric bills issued within the last 30 days (if they pay for their energy directly).
- A copy of their rental agreement (if they are renting) showing that utilities are included, the monthly rental amount and landlord contact information.
- Proof of Social Security numbers for all household members.
- Proof that their household received Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF); Aid to the Aged, Blind, or Disabled (AABD); or other benefits, such as Medical Eligibility or Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), if receiving assistance from the Illinois Department of Human Services.

A single-person household can qualify with a monthly income of up to \$1,485; a two-person household up to \$2,003; a family of three can earn up to \$2,520; and a family of four can earn up to \$3,038. Benefits are paid directly to energy vendors on behalf of eligible households. The exception is households whose heating costs are included in their rent. These households must provide proof that their rent is more than 30% of their income in order to qualify for LIHEAP benefits.

Disconnected households and families with children ages 5 or under (includes all children who are not yet 6 years old, that is, up to 5 years and 364 days old) can begin applying for LIHEAP assistance beginning October 1, 2016. Individuals not eligible for priority enrollment can apply beginning November 1, 2016.

PIPP will also be available starting September 1, 2016 for LIHEAP eligible households who are customers of one of the following utilities: Ameren Illinois, ComEd, Nicor Gas

and Peoples Gas and North Shore Gas utilities. Under PIPP, eligible households pay a percentage of their income towards their utility bill, supplemented by a monthly benefit. Participating households are eligible for a reduction in outstanding bills for every on-time payment they make. Applicants will be served on a first-come, first-served basis until funding is exhausted.

For a complete listing of LIHEAP's local administering agencies and additional information about the program, go to [www.liheapIllinois.com](http://www.liheapIllinois.com), or call the energy assistance toll-free hotline at 1-877-411-WARM.