

## Gov. Pritzker Announces \$300 Million in Funding for Energy Bill Assistance

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**SPRINGFIELD** – Governor JB Pritzker and the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (DCEO) are encouraging families in need to apply for \$300 million in available funding for energy bill assistance through the Help Illinois Families program. All families who meet the criteria and provide required documentation are eligible to receive bill assistance for natural gas, propane, and electricity through the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP).

"Every Illinoisan deserves access to reliable energy—regardless of their economic status," **said Governor JB Pritzker.** "Thanks to LIHEAP, we are making natural gas, propane, and electricity assistance accessible for our state's family that are feeling the squeeze from rising costs of living. My administration has always been—and will always be—committed to making sure that every resident has access to the services they need to keep the lights on."

Beginning September 1, 2022, families can apply by visiting <u>helpillinoisfamilies.com</u> or by visiting their local agency (a list of partners throughout the State can be found <u>here</u>). Families can also call 1-833-711-0374 for assistance in 30 languages.

"Starting September 1st, support with energy bills is available through DCEO's Help Illinois Families program and all households who meet the income threshold are eligible for support with their utility bills," **said DCEO Director Sylvia I. Garcia.** "Families who earn up to two-times the federal poverty level qualify for help, which means a family of four making around \$55,000 a year or less is eligible. I encourage all Illinois families in need of assistance to visit our website or call our hotline to learn more and apply."

LIHEAP provides one-time payments directly to energy service providers on behalf of recipients. While the amount of support varies based on the needs of individual families, last year's LIHEAP recipients received an average of \$1,330 per household. All families who meet the qualifications and provide proper documentation will receive support until funding is exhausted. Families who earn up to two-times the federal poverty level are eligible to receive support through LIHEAP. A chart with eligible income thresholds can be found on the webpage and below:

## Family Size (Household) 30-Day Gross Income?

1	\$2,265
2	\$3,052
3	\$3,838

4 \$4,625

?6 ?\$6,198

## **Key Information for Families to Apply:**

- Visit helpillinoisfamilies.com to fill out and submit a request for services form online OR visit your local agency (a list of partners throughout the State can be found <a href="here">here</a>)
- After you submit the form, someone from your local agency will be in touch.

Call 1-833-711-0374 for assistance at any point during this process. Additional information about eligibility and criteria can be found on the website.

## **Additional Program Information:**

The State of Illinois offers various programs to support eligible low-income families with utility assistance. These programs are open to ALL eligible low-income Illinois families who meet the criteria, including undocumented families. Programs for eligible families include:

- One-time Direct Vendor Payment: All LIHEAP recipients receive a one-time payment.
- Crisis/Reconnection Assistance: Funding is available for families in heating-related emergency situations.
- **Furnace Assistance:** Based on funding availability, Furnace Assistance may be provided to households that do not have an operating furnace for their residence.
- Home Weatherization Program: The Illinois Home Weatherization Assistance Program (IHWAP) helps low income residents and households conserve fuel and reduce energy costs by making their homes and apartments more energy efficient.
- Low-Income Household Water Assistance Program: The Low-Income Household Water Assistance Program (LIHWAP) provides eligible households with a benefit of up to \$400 for water and wastewater services based on poverty level. Households facing the threat of imminent disconnection, or those that have already been disconnected, may be eligible for a benefit of up to \$1,500. The application for LIHWAP is open through September 30, 2023, pending funding availability.

In addition to LIHEAP and available state resources, the federal government through the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) recently unveiled several initiatives designed to lower energy costs for families, including federal rebates for the installation of energy efficient appliances, rebates for families to make improvements for energy efficiency and more.

Last year's LIHEAP funding - which was available from September 2021 through May 2022 – provided a record level of assistance to 302,000 households.