

Governor Pritzker Announces Expansion Of Utility Assistance Program Applications

November 2 2023 9:06 AM



CHICAGO – Governor JB Pritzker and the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (DCEO) are encouraging additional income-eligible families to apply for the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) to support with

utility bill assistance for natural gas, propane, and electricity. Applications expanded today, November 1, to include income-eligible households that are disconnected or facing imminent disconnection.

“With temperatures dropping and the winter season just weeks away, my administration is ensuring that every family has the assistance they need to keep the lights and the heat on,” said Governor JB Pritzker. “With DCEO’s Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program, we are providing utility bill support to thousands of income-eligible families—and I urge those who are disconnected or facing imminent disconnection to apply. Here in Illinois, we look out for our neighbors, and that’s exactly what LIHEAP is all about.”

Eligible families including those that are disconnected or facing imminent disconnection can apply by visiting helpillinoisfamilies.com or by visiting their local agency (a list of partners throughout the State can be found [here](#)). Families can also call 1-833-711-0374 for assistance in 30 languages.

“Essential utilities like electricity and gas should not be an obstacle when trying to live, work and raise a family. The expansion of the LIHEAP program is a welcome opportunity for our most vulnerable to receive access to much-needed utility assistance,” said Lt. Governor Juliana Stratton. “We will continue to find ways to support our Illinois families.”

All families who meet the qualifications and provide proper documentation will receive support until funding is exhausted. Families who earn up to 200% the federal poverty level, have a household with a senior, a child or children under 6, and/or a person with a disability, along with households that provide proper documentation of disconnection or imminent disconnection from a utility are now eligible to receive support through LIHEAP. A chart with eligible income thresholds can be found on the [webpage](#).

“The State of Illinois’ LIHEAP program continues to provide vital support to families in need of utility assistance across Illinois, and starting today, income-eligible households that are disconnected or facing disconnection can apply at helpillinoisfamilies.com,” said DCEO Director Kristin Richards.

Income-eligible households in addition to October priority period households and households that are disconnected or facing imminent threat of disconnection will be able to apply for assistance during the upcoming application opening period December 1, and applications will be accepted through August 15, 2024, or until funds are exhausted. The energy bill assistance program offered through the Help Illinois Families Program in program year 2024 will provide \$237 million to eligible families for energy bill assistance.

This year, the tiered application system was reinstated to ensure families most in need are able to apply first. The first group eligible to apply is expected to represent more than half of households that apply for the program.

- October 2 – Income-eligible households who fall under the following categories:
 - Households with seniors age 60+
 - Households with a documented long-term disability
 - Households with children under age 6
- November 1 – Income-eligible households who fall under the following categories:
 - October priority period households
 - Households that are disconnected
 - Households facing imminent threat of disconnection
- December 1
 - All income-eligible households

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 over 311,000 households received LIHEAP, with an average of over \$1,000 per household.

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.

Information for Families to Apply:

- Families eligible to apply November 1 include:
 - Families who meet the income eligibility guidelines AND have a household that meets at least one of the following categories:

- October priority period households with at least one senior (60+), person with a disability, child, or children under 6
- Households that are disconnected
- Households facing imminent threat of disconnection
- 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 [here](#))
- 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 the application process.
- Additional information about eligibility and criteria can be found on the [website](#) along with fact sheets in [English](#) and [Spanish](#).