

Pritzker Administration Encourages All Income-Eligible Families To Apply For Utility Bill Assistance

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CHICAGO – The Pritzker Administration and the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (DCEO) are encouraging all 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, December 1, to include all income-eligible households.

“Every Illinoisan deserves to have a warm home during the winter, and we’re here to help our most vulnerable residents,” said Governor JB Pritzker. “Access to energy is a basic necessity—that’s why my administration is continually working to ensure that families across the state can afford rising costs.”

Income-eligible families 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.

“As the cold winter months arrive, Illinois families need the resources to provide heat and electricity in their homes, regardless of income. The expansion of the LIHEAP application for families offers a pathway to alleviate financial stress around household utilities,” said Lt. Governor Juliana Stratton. “I urge those who are disconnected or facing disconnection to apply.”

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 are now eligible to receive support through LIHEAP. A chart with eligible income thresholds can be found on the [webpage](#).

“Hundreds of thousands of Illinois families will receive critical utility bill assistance through the State’s Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program,” said DCEO Director Kristin Richards. “As LIHEAP expands to include all income-eligible families across Illinois, I encourage people seeking support to apply for assistance at helpillinoisfamilies.com.”

All income-eligible households can now apply for assistance, 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 were 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 December 1 include all families who meet the income eligibility guidelines.
- 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](#).