



# NEWS & INFORMATION

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## **None of Iowa's low-income families need be left in the cold this winter**

For the coldest months of the year, low-income Iowans can acquire home heating financial assistance by applying for certification in the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) and protection against utility disconnection from the Winter Disconnection Moratorium.

The LIHEAP application period began on October 1 and continues to April 15. Iowans can apply for LIHEAP through their local Community Action Program (CAP) office. To locate the CAP agency nearest you, contact your local utility or the Iowa Department of Human Rights, which administers the statewide assistance program, at (515) 281-0859. The total amount of financial assistance available to Iowans through this program varies annually based upon availability of funds approved by the Federal Government.

Under Iowa's Winter Disconnection Moratorium, between November 1 and April 1, a utility cannot disconnect service to any resident that is certified as eligible for LIHEAP. Other customers may be disconnected for failure to pay utility bills during this period. If you notify your gas and electric utility that you are applying for LIHEAP certification and do so through your local CAP agency, you may receive a 30-day stay from service disconnection during the Moratorium. But you must do this prior to a scheduled disconnection to be protected while the CAP agency rules on your eligibility. The Iowa Utilities Board strongly encourages all LIHEAP customers to continue paying their utility bills as much as possible through the winter months to avoid accumulated debt in the spring. Financial assistance applied to your utility accounts through this program can help you keep these bills paid.

Local CAP agencies also help many LIHEAP customers apply for and receive Home Weatherization Program assistance that provides long-term financial relief by improving energy efficiency to reduce the amount of energy their homes use while helping ensure health and safety. A household is eligible for this energy efficiency program if a member of the household is LIHEAP certified, receives Supplemental Security Income, or participates in the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families program. A household is also eligible to apply if its income is at or below 150 percent of the Federal Poverty Guidelines. Certification for Iowa's Home Weatherization Program also provides protection from utility service disconnection during the moratorium period. Homes in this program typically receive needed insulation upgrades, a safety check with repair or replacement of heating systems or water heaters, installation of carbon monoxide or smoke detectors and energy efficient lighting, and a safety check of all combustion appliances. Health and safety improvements may be made such as mitigation of carbon dioxide problems, appliance backdrafting, and high indoor moisture levels. Windows, doors, and roofs are usually not replaced.

Eighteen CAP agencies serve all 99 counties in Iowa. These agencies assist more than 330,000 Iowans annually. They provide a wide variety of other social services, which vary according to needs and funding available to each agency.

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