



NEWS & INFORMATION

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November 20, 2008

For Immediate Release

20-08

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Home heating assistance is available to lowans who qualify

The Iowa Utilities Board (IUB) reminds lowans needing assistance with winter heating bills that there is still time to apply for the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP). Certification in this program provides protection from utility disconnection during Iowa's Winter Disconnection Moratorium and, with available funds, heating financial assistance.

LIHEAP applications are being taken through April 15. Lowans 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. Iowa received approximately \$77 million dollars in federal funds for the program this heating season and average grants this winter will be \$550, up from \$390 last winter. The total amount of financial assistance available to lowans 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 (prior to a scheduled disconnection) that you will be applying for LIHEAP certification, you may receive a 30-day stay from service disconnection during the Moratorium period. The 30-day clock starts when you notify your utility, so promptly applying for LIHEAP certification through your local CAP agency can help you maintain service while your application is pending. The IUB strongly encourages all LIHEAP qualified 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 utility customers apply for and receive Home Weatherization Program assistance. This program provides long-term financial relief to households 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 for this assistance 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 lowans 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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