



# NEWS & INFORMATION

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## **Home heating assistance is available to lowans who qualify**

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

This year's LIHEAP application period started on October 1 for elderly, disabled, and crisis households. Applications will be accepted from all households on November 1 through April 30. The (annual) one-time benefit payments are provided to certified customers on a first-come, first-serve basis. Lowans can apply for LIHEAP through their local Community Action Program (CAP) office. To locate the nearest CAP agency, contact your local utility or the Iowa Department of Human Rights, which administers the statewide assistance program, at (515) 281-0859. Iowa anticipates having approximately \$67.8 million dollars in federal funds available for the program this heating season and one-time benefits to customers this winter will be about \$600, up from about \$550 last winter and \$390 two years ago. The total amount of financial assistance available to lowans through this program varies annually based upon the availability of federal funds.

Under Iowa's Winter Disconnection Moratorium, from November 1 through 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 urges 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.

**(MORE)**

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 to Needy Families program. A household is also eligible to apply for this assistance if its income is at or below 200 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 different CAP agencies serve all 99 counties in Iowa. These agencies assist more than 307,000 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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