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Energy Assistance Programs

The Low Income Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) (Fuel Assistance) provides eligible households with help in paying winter heating bills. The Program pays benefits of fixed amounts based on household income and size. An additional benefit is available to eligible households having a high energy burden. Local administering agencies determine household eligibility based on annualized income and the number of members in the household. The agency then will make payments towards the heating bills to the primary heat source vendor (oil, propane, wood or coal dealer, gas, or electricity). Special provisions are made for those households whose heat is included in their rent and those living in subsidized housing.

Households with incomes up to 200% of the Federal Poverty level are eligible for the Fuel Assistance Program. Homeowners and renters are both eligible.

The Weatherization Assistance Program (WAP) is designed to assist low-income households reduce their heating bills by providing home energy efficiency services. The program is operational year round. After a household is determined eligible, the local agency schedules an energy inspection of the home. A MA Weatherization Certified Energy Auditor completes an inspection of the energy, health, and safety concerns of the home and completes a Work Order/Job Write Up.

Local certified and insured weatherization contractors are hired to complete the work at no cost to the occupants. Typical work completed includes air sealing, attic and/or sidewall insulation, weather stripping, and minor repairs associated with the weatherization work. Heating system work, if needed, is typically referred to a separate program administered by DHCD. All work receives a thorough quality control inspection by the agency's Energy Auditor. To the greatest extent possible, work is coordinated with any utility-funded Demand Side Management (DSM) programs that may be available in the area.

Households with incomes up to 200% of the Federal Poverty level are eligible for the Weatherization Assistant Program. Program eligibility is based on household eligibility for the LIHEAP Program. In addition, those households with a member receiving TAFCS or SSI are categorically eligible. Due to limited funding, priority points are awarded to households with members who are elderly, handicapped, with children under 7 years old, or Native Americans. Households with exceptionally high energy bills also may receive priority of service.

Tenants (with landlord approval) as well as homeowners are eligible for weatherization. Weatherization services vary dependent on the specific needs of the home and DOE-approved conservation measures. Typical jobs range from \$500 to \$4,600 with the average grant being approximately \$1,600. No client contribution is required.

The Heating Emergency Assistance Retrofit Task Weatherization Assistance Program (HEARTWAP) is designed to provide heating system repair and replacement services to low-income households. The program is operational year round. During the winter months, the program serves primarily as an emergency intervention service to provide assistance to low-income clients having problems with the operation of their primary heating system. Eligible households call the local administering agencies and notify HEARTWAP staff when they are having a problem. Heating companies, under contract with the local agency, provide services necessary to keep the heating system operation efficiently and safely. Provisions are in place for LIHEAP clients to contact their dealer directly if the emergency occurs during the evening or on weekends.

Households with incomes up to 200% of the Federal Poverty level are eligible for HEARTWAP. Program eligibility is based on household eligibility for the current year's LIHEAP Program. Tenants are eligible for some services, but are required to first contact their landlord who is legally responsible for the maintenance of the heating system.

HEARTWAP services vary dependent on the specific needs of the home. Emergency repairs average from \$50 to \$150. Heating system replacements for unsafe, inoperable, and irreparable systems can be as high as \$2,750.

For more information, please call Barbara Janowsky at Concord Light 978-318-3153.