



Help with Winter Utility and Fuel Bills: A Resource Guide

Maine 211

In addition to the programs listed below, there may be other local resources available from organizations such as The Salvation Army, Red Cross, local churches or community organizations. For more information about local energy initiatives in Maine, contact 211Maine. Pick up the phone and dial 211 or go online to <http://www.211maine.org>.

Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP or Fuel Assistance)

In order to qualify for this benefit program, you must be a resident of the state of Maine and you must need financial assistance for home energy costs.

In order to qualify, you must have an annual household income (before taxes) that is less than or equal to the following amounts:

| Household Size* | Maximum Income Level (Per Year) |
|-----------------|---------------------------------|
| 1 | \$18,735 |
| 2 | \$25,365 |
| 3 | \$31,995 |
| 4 | \$38,625 |
| 5 | \$45,255 |
| 6 | \$51,885 |
| 7 | \$58,515 |
| 8 | \$65,145 |

A person who participates or has family members who participate in certain other benefit programs, such as the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Supplemental Security Income (SSI), Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) or certain needs-tested Veterans benefits may be automatically eligible.

If heat is included in your rent, you can still get help. If you apply and get even a little bit of help, then your monthly Food Supplement benefit may go up.

Additional help may be available if you have less than a 3-day supply of heating fuel or are in danger of having utility services disconnected and you have no means to pay your energy company.

If you are eligible for HEAP, you also may qualify for other programs that require HEAP eligibility:

If you receive residential electric service from an electric utility and you are not living in government subsidized housing, you may be eligible for assistance with your electric bills from your electric utility's Low Income Assistance Plan (LIAP).

If your home is not as energy efficient as it could be, you may qualify for home weatherization improvements through our Weatherization Program.

If your heating system is in need of repair or replacement, you may qualify for the Central Heating Improvement Program (CHIP).

To Apply: You can apply for LIHEAP through one of the Community Action Programs, depending on where you live. (Please see list below.) You need to bring proof of identity (such as a license, state ID, passport, etc.), income, social security numbers, and your address. You can use a utility bill to prove your address.

Weatherization and Furnace Repair or Replacement (CHIP)

This program gives grants to homeowners and renters for weatherization and/or repair or replacement of central heating system. The income guidelines are the same as for LIHEAP.

To Apply: You can apply for LIHEAP and you will be considered for this program. You can also contact your local Community Action Program. (See the list below for your local program.)

Emergency Crisis Intervention Program (ECIP)

You can get this help once per heating season for emergency fuel or to avoid electricity cut-off. You must get LIHEAP to get ECIP.

To Apply: Apply at your county's Community Action Program (CAP) agency. (See the list below for your local program.)

Low-Income Assistance Plan (LIAP)

LIAP helps low-income homeowners and renters pay for electricity costs by lowering their electric bills.

If you get LIHEAP, then you may be able to get help from LIAP as well.

Please note that people who get a rent subsidy (help paying their rent) may not be able to get help from LIAP.

To Apply: You can apply for LIHEAP and LIAP through your Community Action Program. (See the list below for your local program.)

Arrearage Management Program

You can get help with your electric bill with CMP, Emera or other electric utility companies, if you owe more than \$500 and you have owed on your bill for more than 90 days. You will have to pay your current bill, BUT your back bill will be reduced each month you pay your current bill on time.

To Apply: Contact CMP or Emera. Your CAP agency will also help you apply when you apply for LIHEAP benefits. Other utilities may have a similar program

Maine Home Repair Network

This program gives 1% mortgages or 0% deferred/forgivable mortgages (i.e. 0% interest rate with no monthly payment) to low-income homeowners for necessary home repairs.

With just one application, you can apply to both state and federal programs that fund renovations or repairs such as:

- Wells and septic system repairs or replacements
- Heating and electrical system repairs
- Roof and chimney repairs
- Structural repairs
- Lead paint mitigation
- Repair or replacement of windows and doors
- Energy efficiency improvements
- Repair or replacement of siding
- Handicap accessibility improvements
- Other health and safety repairs

To Apply: For more information, call your local Community Action Program (see the list below) or go

to: www.mainehousing.org/PROGRAMSHomeRepair.aspx?ProgramID=33

To Learn More: You can learn more about some of these programs at this website: www.mainehousing.org/ENERGYPrograms.aspx

You can also go to the Pine Tree Legal Assistance website to find updates on resources that are known to them: www.ptla.org

Other Programs That Can Help You

Alternative Aid (AA)

This program helps families with children.

The family cannot be getting TANF but must meet some TANF eligibility criteria.

- To get aid, the family must need the help to keep a job or get a job.
- AA can help with many things, like car repairs, housing costs, etc.
- AA can provide up to 3 times the monthly TANF benefit. This equals about

- \$1,782 for a family of 3 or higher if you have high housing costs.
- You can only get Alternative Aid once every 12 months.
- Family income limit is 133% of the federal poverty limit. This equals about \$2,304 per month for a family of 3.

To Apply: You can apply for AA at your local DHHS office.

Emergency Assistance (EA)

- Helps families with children under age 21.
- Family income must be less than 100% of the federal poverty limit. This equals about \$1,732 per month for a family of 3. Families receiving TANF, PaS, SSI, or Food Stamps also qualify.
- Helps with different types of emergencies when you don't have enough money.
- The types of emergencies are:
 - Rent or Security Deposit
 - Mortgage Payments or Property Taxes
 - Home repairs (wells, chimney, septic system, etc.)
 - Clothing; or special medical equipment.
 - Disaster Assistance due to flood, fire, storms, etc.
- You can only get EA help once every 12 months.

To Apply: You can apply for EA at your local DHHS office. You will need proof of the emergency.

General Assistance (GA)

- Helps with basic necessities, like housing, fuel, food, utilities, clothing, and medical expenses.
- You must be very low-income. You may need to prove that you have spent your money on basic necessities.
- All towns and cities have this program.

To Apply: You can apply at your local Town Office or City Hall. Call DHHS at 1-800-442-6003 if you have trouble applying.

Rural Housing Repair Loans and Grants

Gives loans and grants to very low-income homeowners to repair, improve, modernize, or to remove health and safety hazards in their rural homes. <http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/me/SFH/Fact%20Sheets/Rehab%20and%20Repair%20Loan.pdf>

You can get either:

- Loans are for up to 20 years at 1% interest; or
- Grants (free) may be for people who are 62 years of age or disabled.

Loan/grant combinations may be arranged for applicants who can repay part of the cost. The program defines 'very low-income' as below 50 percent of the area median income. See the following for the program's income guidelines:

To Apply: Call **Rural Development**. Listed in the Phone Book under U.S. Government, http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/me/index_files/Income%20Guidelines.pdf Agriculture Department. Or call 1-800-352-8963 Ext. 161 and they will connect you to the correct office.


Efficiency Maine

Efficiency Maine has a number of programs to help people lower their energy costs. To find out if you can get help, go to www.energymaine.com or call (866) 376-2463.

Weatherization & CHIP Agent Contacts

For an application or more information, contact the program agent that serves your area:

| Agency | Area Covered | Location | Telephone |
|--|---|--------------|---|
| Aroostook County Action Program  | Aroostook County | Presque Isle | 800-432-7881 |
| Community Concepts, Inc.  | Androscoggin, Oxford Counties | South Paris | 207-795-4065 207-743-7716 800-866-5588 TTY: 207-743-0276 |
| Kennebec Valley Community Action Program  | Kennebec, Lincoln, Sagadahoc, and Somerset Counties | Waterville | 207-859-1500 800-542-8227 |
| Penquis Community Action Program  | Penobscot, Piscataquis Counties | Bangor | 207-973-3630 800-215-4942 TTY: 207-973-3520 |
| Penquis Community Action Program  | Knox County | Rockland | 207-596-0361 800-585-1605 |
| The Opportunity Alliance (formerly People's Regional Opportunity Program) | Cumberland, York Counties | Portland | 207-553-5900 800-698-4959 TTY: 207-874-1013 |
| Waldo Community Action Partners  | Waldo County | Belfast | (207) 338-3025 or (800) 498-3025 |
| Washington-Hancock Community Agency  | Washington, Hancock Counties | Milbridge | (207) 664-2424 or (207) 546-7544 or (800) 828-7544 (from 8:00-12 noon) |

| | | | |
|--|-----------------|----------------|---|
| Western Maine Community Action  | Franklin County | East Wilton | 207-645-3764 800-645-9636 |
| York County Community Action Corp. | York County | Sanford | 207-324-5762 800-965-5762; TTY 207-490-1078 |

The **Maine State Housing Authority** can help with housing-related issues.

- MaineHousing**, 353 Water Street, Augusta Maine 04330
 Phone: (207) 626-4600; Toll Free: (800) 452-4668
 TTY: (800) 452-4603; Fax: (207) 626-4678
 Web: www.mainehousing.org

Other programs may be able to help you with your household costs. This can help free up money so that you have enough to pay for your heating costs. Some of these programs are **Food Supplement (SNAP), Women, Infants and Children (WIC), and Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF)**. Other programs are the **Property Tax Fairness Credit, Earned Income Tax Credit, Transitional Child Care, and Transitional Transportation assistance**. There are different eligibility criteria for each of these programs.

If you have questions about these programs, call **Maine Equal Justice** at 626-7058 or toll free 1-866-626-7059.