

F.A.Q List

WHEN CAN I APPLY FOR ASSISTANCE

The season begins **October 1** of each year and ends **August 31st** (*new program season dates) was previously October 1st to April 30th of every year unless extended by the state.

WHAT IS THE APPLICATION REVIEW PERIOD – HOW LONG DOES IT TAKE TO GET HELP

The application processing period is 30-60 days

The first check run for the state of NJ is Mid-December of each year – checks are issued every 2-weeks thereafter until the end of the season

The first credits to the utility for approved files occurs the last week of November each year and occurs weekly thereafter until the end of the season

WHO DETERMINES MY STATUS

The status of your file is determined by the State of NJ Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program via automated system based upon the following criteria:

- Complete file with all required documents. (Documents Required for Every Household is Different -based upon variances in a number of different instances- policy dictates the required documents, not the staff)
- Meets the income guideline for the program LIHEAP 225% federal poverty level USF 175% federal poverty level (USF also has a burden requirement of 3-6% depending upon heating arrangement)

HOW MUCH WILL I RECEIVE

The amount of funds a household receives is based upon a set table of funding. The benefits for LIHEAP are based upon:

Household size _ Income _ Heat Living Arrangement _ and Region

DOES THE BILL HAVE TO BE IN MY NAME

The person who is applying for assistance should be the person who is named on the utility and/or heating account for the household; if the bill is not in the applicant's name it must be in the name of another adult household member.

WHAT IF THE BILL IS IN THE NAME OF SOMEONE NO LONGER IN MY HOUSEHOLD

If you have a utility bill in the name of a departed loved one or in a previous roommate or other previous household member and your name is not on the bill; you will have to have your name added and present an overflow document which may be obtained at the utility Customer Service Center.

WHAT IF SOMEONE WHO NO LONGER LIVES WITH ME HAS THEIR NAME ON ANY OF MY DOCUMENTS

If you are submitting documents to the administrating agency for review and they have person's named in the document that are not listed as part of the application household, it will be required to provide legal current proof that they are no longer part of the household composition. (This also relates to the above example)

WHAT CAN I PROVIDE TO PROVE SOMEONE IS NO LONGER PART OF MY HOUSEHOLD

Acceptable documents that may be submitted to prove other address are one of the following items:

Current official mail with the "members" full name and address

Current NJ State or other state Driver's License

Restraining order

Death Certificate or Obituary Notification

HOW TO GET ASSISTANCE FOR COOLING

An original dr. note or completely filled out Dr. Certification form is required, it must specify a medical need for AC and be stamped with physician's office stamp or have business card of physician attached.

WHAT IF I HAVE A SHUT OFF NOTICE ON MY ACCOUNT or AM OUT OF FUEL

The state of NJ has specific Emergency Assistance Periods. The Oil Heating Emergency Period begins typically during the last week of December each year after the first check runs of the season. (DCA determines when)

November 15th of every year the Board of Public Utilities protects Consumers from the disruption of services Between November 15 and March 15th of each year based upon temperatures. The Moratorium covers low income households who advise the utility of their criteria.

The following households are entitled to protection from disruption of services during this time if they let the utility know:

LIHEAP/USF recipient's _ Food Stamp recipients _ TANF or Welfare recipients _ SSI recipients _ PAAD/Lifeline recipients _ Persons who are experiencing a circumstance beyond their control.

You must contact the utility co. and let them know you meet one of the criteria above and get enrolled in a WTP Payment Plan. During this time you should submit your LIHEAP application for review and processing of benefits, and after March 16th of each year, if you pay directly for Gas or Electric Heat and have a shut – off notice, you may apply for and receive assistance to prevent the disruption of services. **(*The amount for emergency assistance is determined by Department of Community Affairs and based upon the availability of funding from the State)**

Fuel Heating clients who are out of or running low on fuel may apply for assistance when DCA (Department of Community Affairs) authorizes emergency season for fuel.

WHAT IF MY HEATING SYSTEM IS NOT FUNCTIONING

If you are the owner of your home and you qualify for the program you may request a heating system repair to be done any time after October 1st of each program season up to the program deadline.(must have a complete file and be pending benefits before any approval of repairs may be done) If you have an issue with the heating system we need to know what is wrong to the best of your knowledge and you must be available for a technician to visit the home, do repairs and allow for a field inspection to pass the work done in order for the payment to get made on your behalf. **(*The amount for emergency assistance is determined by Department of Community Affairs and based upon the availability of funding from the State)**

I RECEIVE FOODSTAMPS OR LIFELINE AND AM PROCESSED AUTOMATICALLY WHY DO I NEED TO FILL AN APPLICATION OUT WITH LACASA

Clients who are processed via the automatic file send from the state are often processed with erroneous data, the fields in the FAMIS and DHS system are not matched to the fields in the USF/HEA system for energy assistance. The Food Stamp system is designed to log Food Stamp household data and criteria, that data or criteria may or may not match the policy of LIHEAP (Heating, Cooling, USF, or Emergency regulations and policy) the same for an automatic file send for Lifeline through DHS so Clients who have any errors on their records in the state system for LIHEAP must submit a physical signed application and documents to the authorized agency in order for updates to be made to the erroneous data.

Mismatched Data causes the following types of errors:

old addresses _ wrong heat living arrangements _ old or omitted utility account information _ wrong household size and or income _ wrong residential status i.e. renter/owner

Results of these errors are but not limited to:

Lost Checks _ wrong benefit amount _ not being screened properly for benefit _ not entitled to repairs or emergency funding due to wrong data _ missing out on benefits like cooling _ and confusion for the client.

We hope this information is helpful; please note that we are making changes to improve the services provided and making the process more fluid for everyone involved. I believe the faster you are able to be serviced with minimal errors the better. All changes in processing and application submittal are being done to improve the program and increase the numbers of households served in an equal and fair manner.

Thank you for entrusting us to provide this service for you, this and each year.

***If you have life sustaining equipment in your home you must alert the utility company and request a Priority 4 Form from PSE&G also, please mention it to the representative you see at the agency today.**