News

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Minnesota's Energy Assistance Program helping thousands, program adjustments will help even more households during COVID-19 pandemic

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SAINT PAUL, MN – To ensure that newly unemployed and other financially challenged households can get help quickly, the Minnesota Department of Commerce has adjusted program policies for Minnesota's Energy Assistance Program. The result of these changes – changes such as income eligibility and a deadline extension - will allow even more Minnesotans to receive help.

"Newly unemployed Minnesotans may not be aware of the Energy Assistance Program," said Commerce Commissioner Steve Kelley. "The Energy Assistance Program can help those behind on their energy bills, or help pay for home heating and furnace repairs for income-qualified households."

Households can now apply until July 1, meaning that there is still time for those who have not already received help this heating season. The Department of Commerce especially encourages newly unemployed, those impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, households with young children, people with disabilities, veterans and seniors to apply.

"An unprecedented number of people need a safety net to stay afloat at this time," added Commerce Commissioner Kelley. "The Energy Assistance Program can help them weather this storm."

In the short time since the changes were made, new applications for energy assistance have increased significantly and thousands have already received help.

Changes made to help during the COVID-19 pandemic

The Energy Assistance Program has adjusted program policies to make it easier for households to apply and get additional help. Some policy adjustments that will mean more access to help include:

- Income eligibility based on the past one month only.
- The application deadline is extended to July 1.
- The annual crisis benefit maximum is increased to $1,200 (up from $600). Crisis benefits are for past due bills, emergency fuel deliveries.
- Allowing crisis benefits to pay a household's past due bill, even without a disconnection notice.

Energy Assistance Program key facts

Renters and homeowners are eligible.

- Assets such as the value of your home are not considered in determining eligibility.
- Grants range from $200 to $1,400, based on household size, income and fuel cost.
- The average grant is about $500.
- In addition to the initial grant, additional funds are available to:
    - Help pay a past due bill or get an emergency fuel delivery.
    - Help homeowners get their broken furnace repaired or replaced.

How to apply for the Energy Assistance Program

New applicants have until July 1 to apply. Funding is limited and administered on a first-come, first-served basis. Households apply at their local Energy Assistance Program service provider.

- Households can find their Energy Assistance Program provider:
- By calling 1-800-657-3710 and following the prompts to enter their zip code, or
- On this list of service providers by county or tribe (https://mn.gov/commerce/consumers/consumer-assistance/energy-assistance/eap-provider.jsp).
- The Minnesota Department of Commerce administers the program in partnership with 29 local Energy Assistance Program service providers across the state, including Community Action Programs, counties, tribal governments and non-profits.
- Find general Energy Assistance Program information (https://mn.gov/commerce/eap.jsp).

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