NCDHHS to Provide Automatic Payment to Thousands of Seniors and People with Disabilities to Help with Winter Heating Bills

Raleigh

Nov 30, 2020

The North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services today announced it will issue an automated payment to thousands of eligible households to help with winter heating expenses via the Low-Income Energy Assistance Program (https://www.ncdhhs.gov/assistance/low-income-services/low-income-energy-assistance). The automated payment will be issued beginning Dec. 1 and is designed to help eligible seniors and people with disabilities access winter heating assistance in a safe and socially distanced manner during the COVID-19 pandemic.

"More of our neighbors may be facing financial hardships because of COVID-19, and this funding can help eligible households with their heating expenses this winter," said NCDHHS Secretary Mandy K. Cohen, M.D. "We want to ensure seniors and people with disabilities are healthy and safe during a difficult time of the year."

Eligible households may qualify to receive an automated payment for the 2020-2021 LIEAP season if a member of the household 1) is age 60 or older or a person with a disability receiving services through the Division of Aging and Adult Services (https://www.ncdhhs.gov/divisions/daas), 2) currently receives Food and Nutrition Services (https://www.ncdhhs.gov/assistance/low-income-services/food-nutrition-services-food-stamps) **and** 3) received LIEAP during the 2019-2020 season. These households will be notified of eligibility in November and do not need to apply for this benefit.

Any household with a person age 60 or older or with a disability receiving DAAS services who does not receive notice of an automated payment is encouraged to practice social distancing and submit a paper application for LIEAP assistance through U.S. Mail or fax to their local department of social services. (https://www.ncdhhs.gov/divisions/social-

services/local-dss-directory) Applications may also be dropped off at the local DSS, and applicants may contact their local DSS for information on how to obtain a paper application.

Beginning Jan. 2, 2021, all other households may apply online through the ePASS portal at epass.nc.gov (https://epass.nc.gov/) or submit a paper application through mail, fax or dropping it off at their local DSS, but they do not have to go into the agency to apply. Individuals may also contact their local DSS to apply. All household applications will be accepted from Jan. 2, 2020 to March 31, 2021 or until funds are exhausted.

To be eligible for the LIEAP program, a household must:

- Have at least one U.S. citizen or non-citizen who meets the eligibility criteria
- Have income equal to or less than 130% of the federal poverty limit
- Have resources, such as saving and checking accounts and cash on hand, at or below $2,250
- Be responsible for their heating cost

For more information on the program and eligibility, visit www.ncdhhs.gov/assistance/low-income-services/low-income-energy-assistance. (https://www.ncdhhs.gov/assistance/low-income-services/low-income-energy-assistance)

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