July 29, 2021 | 12:45 pm

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NOVEMBER 2, 2020 | Albany, NY

Governor Cuomo Announces $328 Million for Home Heating Aid to Assist New Yorkers During Cold Weather Months

SOCIAL PROGRAMS (/KI ENERGY (CIALKEYWORDS/ENERGY) PROGRAMS)

Applications for the Home Energy Assistance Program Open Today

More than 1.6 Million New York Homeowners and Renters Received Heating Aid in 2019-20

Governor Andrew M. Cuomo today announced that more than $328 million in home heating aid is now available for low- and middle-income New Yorkers who need assistance keeping their homes warm during the coming winter season. Applications are now being accepted for the Home Energy Assistance Program, which provides federal funding to assist homeowners and renters with their heating costs during the cold weather months.

"Cold weather brings yet another challenge for many New Yorkers already struggling to make ends meet during this unprecedented pandemic," **Governor Cuomo said.** "This critical funding will help hundreds of thousands of them manage the cost of heating their homes and apartments as autumn brings in cooler temperatures and winter approaches."

Eligible homeowners and renters may receive assistance of up to $741 from HEAP, overseen by the Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance, depending on income, household size and how they heat their home. A family of four may have a maximum gross monthly income of $5,019 or an annual gross income of $60,226 and still qualify for benefits, which is a modest increase from the previous year's threshold.

Applications for assistance are accepted at local departments of social services in person or by telephone, with funding provided on a first-come, first-served basis. A list of local offices by county can be found here

(https://otda.ny.gov/programs/heap/contacts/). Residents outside of New York City may also apply online (https://www.mybenefits.ny.gov/mybenefits/begin) for regular heating assistance benefits. New York City residents may download an application and obtain program information here (https://access.nyc.gov/programs/home-energy-assistance-program-heap/?anyc_v=nb&utm_expid=.-z3Dv5E-TEm9FuJtvmx8Fg.1&utm_referrer=https%3A%2F%2Faccess.nyc.gov%2F%3Fanyc_v%3Dnb%26s%3DHEAP).

Earlier this year, Governor Cuomo signed legislation extending a moratorium (https://www3.dps.ny.gov/W/AskPSC.nsf/All/D3BB77AFE92D6FFF852585EE0051A13E?OpenDocument) that prevents utility companies from disconnecting utilities to residential households that are struggling with their bills due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Utility companies must instead offer these individuals a deferred payment agreement on any past-due balance.

New Yorkers who receive HEAP assistance this season and continue to fall behind on their utility bills or are running short on heating fuel may also qualify for a one-time emergency HEAP benefit. Applications for emergency benefits will be accepted starting on Monday, Jan. 4.

Anyone in need of emergency assistance should contact their local department of social services. To qualify for these federally funded programs, applicants must meet HEAP eligibility criteria and income guidelines, which vary by household size (https://otda.ny.gov/news/2020/programs/heap/).

New York State Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance Commissioner Mike Hein said, "For too many New Yorkers, the high cost of home heating can be yet another burden on already strained household budgets. The Home Energy Assistance Program helps alleviate some of this burden for homeowners and renters so they can remain current on their heating bills. All eligible households should utilize this critical assistance that can help them stay warm this winter."

Last year, more than 1.6 million homeowners and renters throughout the state received heating aid through HEAP. Among them were more than 530,000 households with a family member 60 or older, totaling roughly $98 million in heating assistance for elderly New Yorkers.

New York State Office for the Aging Acting Director Greg Olsen said, "Cold weather conditions can be a challenge for everyone but can be especially dangerous for older adults who are in danger of running out of fuel or having utility service shut off. Older adults also remain at greater risk for COVID-19. HEAP is critical in helping lower-income older New Yorkers maintain their health, and absent this vital benefit, many would not be able to remain safely at home during the pandemic."

AARP New York State Director Beth Finkel said, "AARP New York strongly encourages any utility customers who think they may eligible for assistance in paying their utility bills to contact their local HEAP program. People should not wait to sign up; apply when the program opens in early November. The whole purpose of the program is to help you afford your household energy costs this winter. Take advantage of it."

Help is also now available to assist eligible homeowners if their primary heating equipment is unsafe or not operating. Homeowners can apply to have their furnace or boiler repaired or replaced through the HEAP Heating Equipment Repair and Replacement program.

Benefit amounts are based on the actual cost incurred to repair or replace the essential heating equipment - up to $3,000 for a repair and $6,500 for a replacement. Eligible homeowners can also apply now for a HEAP Heating Equipment Clean and Tune benefit to keep their home's primary heating source working at peak efficiency. Applicants for these benefits should contact their local department of social services for more information.

Last year, HEAP provided critical assistance to New Yorkers in every part of the state:

Region: Total Households Served by HEAP in 2019-20

Western New York: 128,340

Finger Lakes: 91,736

Southern Tier: 51,008

Central New York: 58,625

Mohawk Valley: 44,961

North Country: 35,369

Capital Region: 65,879

Mid-Hudson: 97,350

New York City: 965,335

Long Island: 69,634

Contact the Governor's Press Office

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Translations

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