

Electric & Fuel Assistance Programs

Act now to find out what services you may qualify for and get help before your tank is empty or your electric service has been disconnected.

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Watch your tank & electric bill —don't let your tank become empty as emergency deliveries are expensive and not all programs provide emergency deliveries or can provide sufficient funds to reconnect service for large electric bills.

Central Maine Power Company -Special Payment Arrangements for Electric & Natural Gas During Winter Months

1-800-686-4044 or Maine Public Utilities Commission's Consumer Assistance Hotline 1-800-452-4699 or 207-287-1597 or 1-800-437-1220 (TTY Relay)

During the period November 15 through April 15, customers who cannot pay their utility bill because of reasons that may cause their households to be deprived of food, medicine, heat or some other necessity can declare eligibility for a Special Payment Arrangement. Customers whose income does not exceed 150 % of federal poverty guidelines or who are eligible to participate in the Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) or Supplemental Security Income (SSI) may qualify for a Special Payment Arrangement.

LIHEAP – MaineHousing's Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program

LIHEAP is funded by the U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services. MaineHousing contracts with community action agencies and other agencies to take applications and assist with program administration.

Help with home energy costs include:

Fuel Assistance, Emergency Fuel, Home weatherization and energy-related repairs, and eligibility screening for other assistance programs.

Eligibility:

LIHEAP and related assistance generally is available to low income households if your total household income falls within 230% of the federal poverty guidelines or 75% of the state area

median income, whichever is less. Eligibility for households with incomes between 200% and 230% of the federal poverty guidelines is limited to those households with a member who is susceptible to hypothermia, such as elderly, a child under the age of two, or with a doctor's diagnosis.

What to expect:

It usually takes a couple of months to process an application for LIHEAP. Eligible applicants receive an annual benefit and benefits go directly to vendors. Applicants need to apply for Liheap every year and for each new heating season, generally benefits do not begin being issued until December.

Also: If you are eligible for LIHEAP, you may qualify for other programs that require LIHEAP eligibility:

- If your home is not as energy efficient as it could be, you may qualify for home weatherization improvements through the Weatherization Program.
- If your heating system is in need of repair or replacement, you may qualify for the Central Heating Improvement Program (CHIP).
- 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 you pay your own electric bill, you may be eligible for a new, energy-efficient refrigerator from MaineHousing's Appliance Replacement Program.

Additionally the Home Energy Loan Program provides low-interest rate loans to low- and moderate-income homeowners to finance improvements to make their homes more energy efficient.

How to apply: Contact Julie Fraser, FCCS Director, at 865-4393 to schedule an appointment. Her office is located at the Freeport Community Center. Schedule an appointment in September or October in order to get the heating benefit earlier in the heating season.

General Assistance

General Assistance is a program available in each municipality in Maine to help eligible people who do not have enough money for current basic needs. Freeport residents should contact the Freeport/Yarmouth Regional General Assistance Office to schedule an appointment: 865-4743 x120. In a life or health threatening emergency after hours, contact the Freeport Police Department – 865-4800. (Pownal residents should contact the Pownal town office at 688-4431.) If you are physically unable to come to the office for medical or other valid reasons, arrangements can be made to process a phone application or conduct a home visit.

GA provides assistance with basic necessities: such as rent/mortgage, food, heating fuel, non-elective medical needs and other goods or services essential to maintain themselves or their families.

Eligibility: The General Assistance Program is regulated by state law which has set an overall maximum level of assistance which a household can receive. In addition, each municipality's GA guidelines contain maximum allowable levels for each category of assistance including rent,

food, electricity, etc. To be eligible, your income must fall below the overall maximum level of assistance for a household your size and your income must also be less than the amount you need to pay for basic necessities using established guidelines. GA cannot exceed those established maximums even though households' expenses for various items may exceed those amounts unless there is a qualifying emergency. Eligibility is based on a 30 day period. Applicants can reapply on a monthly basis and must comply with specific requirements regarding use of income, use of potential resources and work requirements. A workfare assignment may be required in exchange for general assistance based on individual circumstances.

Overall Maximums – Maximum levels of income are based on the size of household (\$802/one person, \$952/two person, \$1233/three person, \$1553/four person). Food, Housing, Utility, Personal Care and Household Supplies maximum levels are also based on size of household. Heating Fuel maximum levels vary by time of year.

What to expect:

A written decision as to eligibility will be made within 24 hours after an application is made and assistance can be provided immediately in the event of an emergency. However, if sufficient information has not been furnished to enable determination of eligibility, the application will be considered incomplete and the applicant found ineligible for any assistance until adequate information is provided.

Town of Freeport Fuel Assistance Fund

The Freeport Fuel Assistance Fund was established through the generous donations of residents, the town, and businesses and is administered through the Freeport/Yarmouth Regional General Assistance Office. Funds are generally depleted each year, so availability of funding each year is uncertain. Depending on funds, future assistance may be restricted to the months of December through March. Freeport residents should contact this office to schedule an appointment or obtain an application: 865-4743 x120. In a life or health threatening emergency after hours, contact the Freeport Police Department – 865-4800.

Help with home energy costs include:

Emergency Fuel Assistance

Eligibility:

Assistance is available to moderate to low income households, with particular attention to those households not qualifying for other fuel assistance programs but still in need of assistance (for example households receiving unemployment benefits, households relying on minimum wage incomes, etc.).

What to expect:

Decisions will be made within 24 hours or sooner, with fuel being provided as soon as possible. For each new heating season, applicants are eligible for 100 gallons of heating fuel, with exceptions being made in emergency situations. Due to limited funding, costs for emergency deliveries and priming will not be covered. Households which have used the fund in the past must show evidence that they have applied for LIHEAP by October 15th.

Carol Kaplan Fuel Fund – Freeport Community Services

The Carol Kaplan Fuel Fund is administered by Freeport Community Services. Funds for this program come from individual and business donations. This program is available to both Freeport and Pownal residents and assistance is limited to once per year. For assistance, contact Sue Mack at 869-1005.

Citizens Energy – CITGO Oil Heat Program (Joe 4 Oil)

In past years eligible households could receive a one time delivery of up to 100 gallons of heating oil. Interested parties can usually call for a program update in December at 1-877-563-4645 or visit their website at www.citizensenergy.com.