



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
May 14, 2020

Wolf Administration Launches LIHEAP Recovery Crisis Program to Ease Utility Costs for Pennsylvanians Affected by COVID-19 Crisis

Harrisburg, PA – Department of Human Services (DHS) Secretary Teresa Miller today announced a Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) Recovery Crisis Program to help Pennsylvanians during the COVID-19 public health crisis. Beginning in May, DHS will work with utility companies and deliverable fuel vendors to help Pennsylvanians at risk of losing access to electric, natural gas, or deliverable fuels such as oil, pay utility bills, and maintain access to home energy services.

“The COVID-19 public health crisis has created difficult economic situations for households around Pennsylvania. For low-income families, these uncertain times are creating even greater challenges to meeting essential needs and making ends make,” said Secretary Miller. “The LIHEAP Recovery Crisis Program will help households across Pennsylvania bridge this uncertainty and the recovery period ahead.”

LIHEAP provides assistance for home energy bills, helping ensure continuity of utility and other energy services for low-income Pennsylvanians. Assistance is available for both renters and homeowners. The LIHEAP Recovery Crisis Program will offer a crisis benefit and a supplemental payment for households that previously received a crisis payment made directly to utility companies or fuel providers to help offset costs for home utilities.

LIHEAP Recovery Crisis benefits may be available if a household:

- Has their main or secondary energy source completely shut-off;
- Is notified that their utility service will be shut off in the next 60 days;
- Has broken energy equipment or leaking lines that must be fixed or replace; or,
- Is in danger of being without fuel in 15 days or less.
- Owes funds to a utility provider that would constitute a service termination if not for the Public Utility Commission’s moratorium on terminations.

The Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Stimulus (CARES) Act provided \$900 million in additional LIHEAP funds to states. Pennsylvania received \$34.9 million in LIHEAP funds through CARES. DHS will use these funds and funds remaining from the 2019-20 LIHEAP season to fund the LIHEAP Recovery Crisis Program.

LIHEAP Recovery Crisis program will open on May 18, 2020, and run through August 31, 2020, or until all budgeted funding is expended. The LIHEAP Recovery Crisis

maximum benefit will be \$800 for this period. Eligibility guidelines will be the same as those used during the 2019-20 LIHEAP season, and DHS will permit a file transfer agreement with utility providers to allow a utility to submit a LIHEAP Recovery Crisis application on behalf of a consenting household, provided the household has already received LIHEAP Cash to the utility during the regular season. Utility terminations are [prohibited for the duration](#) of the Governor's disaster declaration, but past due balances can be submitted as proof of Recovery Crisis eligibility if the utility company confirms that the balance would result in a termination if the moratorium was not in place.

DHS will also automatically issue a \$100 supplemental payment to approximately 100,000 households that received LIHEAP Crisis funds during the 2019-20 season. Any household that has not reached the maximum benefit in the 2019-20 season can apply for additional assistance up to the \$800 maximum limit.

More information about LIHEAP and household income eligibility is available [here](#). LIHEAP Recovery Crisis applications and instructions can be found here or can be submitted online at www.compass.state.pa.us.

Visit pa.gov for a ["Responding to COVID-19" guide](#) or the Pennsylvania Department of Health's dedicated [Coronavirus webpage](#) for the most up-to-date information regarding COVID-19.

Guidance to DHS providers related to COVID-19 is available [here](#).