

TIP SHEET FOR RELATIVES AS PARENTS

HELP FOR HEATING YOUR HOME THIS WINTER

Are you trying to think of affordable ways to keep your home warm this winter? The price of oil has nearly doubled since last winter, which presents a big problem for many people. This tip sheet will provide you with programs which you may be able to access to help you pay for heat this winter.

Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) is a well-known program run by 11 Community Action Programs (often known as CAP offices). LIHEAP provides money to low-income homeowners and renters. LIHEAP is not intended to pay for all heating costs; typically it covers 13% of your total heating costs for the winter. Applying and being accepted into LIHEAP can automatically make you eligible for other home assistance programs, such as: **Central Heating Improvement Program (CHIP)**, loan program used to make homes more energy efficient), **oil donations from local companies**, **LIAP** (assistance with electricity bills), **appliance replacement programs** and **weatherization programs**.

Eligibility to LIHEAP depends on your household's income. The amount of assistance you get from LIHEAP is based on your household's size, income, energy costs, and other factors. You may be eligible for assistance if your total household's income falls within 170% of the federal poverty guideline (*ex. family of 4's income would be \$31,800*). If you are just over 170% of the poverty line you are still encouraged to apply. If your heat is included in your rent, you may still apply for LIHEAP. LIHEAP may also make an emergency fuel payment, if you have less than $\frac{1}{4}$ tank of heating fuel or are in danger of having utility services disconnected.

Contact your local CAP office and make an appointment to apply for LIHEAP. At your LIHEAP meeting you will need to provide social security numbers for all people in your household, proof of your household's income, proof of present address and past utility bills. Applications are presently being accepted and it is important to apply as soon as you can to better your chances of being approved for funds.

CAP offices will have some of the best knowledge on how and where to access local heating assistance. Assistance programs are still being developed, so it is important to get in contact with and to stay in contact with your local CAP office to find out programs that will become available to you. Maine Kids-Kin can help you in finding the CAP office nearest to you.

Joe 4 Oil is a national program developed for low-income families. If you are awarded a grant from this program you will be given a 100-gallon voucher for oil. Call 1-877-563-4645 and ask for an application. Due dates for applications have not been set yet for this year but last year they started accepting applications the beginning of December. Funds for this program **do** run out and it is important to apply as soon as you can!

General Assistance Offices at your local town office or city hall can assist you with basic needs such as food, shelter, clothing and other personal items. You will need to provide proof of your circumstance and income. Your income for the month of application must be very low. Compared to other benefit programs, this is the hardest one to qualify for. If you are in an emergency, call 1-800-442-6003 for more information.

Oil prices are not going down! Experts say that by improving the efficiency of your home you can reduce the cost of heating by half! There are loan programs you can use to improve the efficiency of your home. Not all of these programs are meant for just low-income families. Last month's tip sheet addressed those programs; please refer to that when looking for a loan programs.

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