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Policies and Procedures

FFY17 Money has arrived – Service Providers can make payments

The first HHS LIHEAP grant award for FFY2017 was received Tuesday, October 25, 2016. The grant award is \$101,494,836. This represents approximately 90% of the anticipated FFY17 grant award for Minnesota. Commerce is processing the award into Minnesota's state accounting system. Service Providers will be able to make payments starting tomorrow.

Primary Heat and Crisis funds have been allocated and entered into eHEAT. Commerce is in the process of making the 'Pending Obligation' Primary Heat payments 'Certifiable' in eHEAT to allow benefit payments. 'Certifiable' payments will be generated in small incremental batch by the application log date. Commerce will move this date over the next few days until all 'Pending Obligation' payments have been processed. As Primary Heat payments are made "Certifiable", Service Providers can make them 'Payable.' Service Providers must process Crisis events in eHEAT to generate Crisis payments.

Commerce is also allocating Administration, A16 and ERR to Service Providers. NFAs are being processed by Commerce and Service Providers can expect them soon.

FFY2016 EAP Closeout Package due Tuesday, November 1

EAP Service Providers must submit final close out documents, called the *Closeout Package*, to Commerce. The *Final Closeout Package* is due November 1, 2016 for the LIHEAP 2016 federal fiscal year ending September 30, 2016.

The EAP FSR for September 2016 must be marked final in eHEAT. If your September FSR has been reopened because it was not marked final please resubmit and let us know to mark it as final. Please also make sure to follow up with a final cash request by November 1 if cumulative expenses on the final FSR are higher than cumulative payments. For any questions regarding close out procedures please contact jana.dietering@state.mn.us.

Please refer to the *FFY2016 EAP Policy Manual*, Chapter 14 for additional information.

Notices

Statewide Survey of Residential Retail Prices for Propane

The price of residential propane varies from a low of \$1.00/gallon to \$3.33/gallon across the state. It may be advantageous for a household to switch vendors if a lower price for propane is available. Although EAP staff cannot recommend a vendor, households may be encouraged to shop around. A list of available vendors may be provided to households.

2016-2017 Propane**Mean of average price (\$ per gallon)**

Date	Low	High	Average	2015-16	2014-15	2013-14	2012-13
16-Oct-04	\$0.92	\$2.96	\$1.21	1.23	Not Avail	1.68	1.49
16-Oct-11	\$0.97	\$3.06	\$1.23	1.27	1.84	1.67	1.50
16-Oct-18	\$1.00	\$3.33	\$1.30	1.24	1.85	1.69	1.53
16-Oct-25				1.24	1.84	1.78	1.53

News Release

Minnesota Commerce Department receives \$101.5 million in federal funds for Energy Assistance Program

Minnesota Department of Commerce sent this bulletin at 10/27/2016 01:15 PM CDT



October 27, 2016

Minnesota Commerce Department receives \$101.5 million in federal funds for Energy Assistance Program

Low-income Minnesotans encouraged to apply for heating assistance

For Immediate Release:

SAINT PAUL – The Minnesota Commerce Commissioner Mike Rothman announced that the state's Energy Assistance Program is receiving over \$100 million (\$101,494,836) in federal funding to help low-income Minnesotans pay their heating bills this winter.

The funds from the federal Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) are used to reduce home heating costs by making grant payments directly to utility companies and heating fuel vendors on behalf of eligible Minnesota homeowners and renters. The new funding is about 90 percent of the total federal funds expected for the state's program this heating season.

"The Energy Assistance Program is an essential safety net for low-income Minnesotans who struggle to pay their energy bills and stay warm throughout the winter," said Rothman, whose agency administers the program. "We encourage all Minnesotans who may have difficulty paying their heating bills to apply for energy assistance. Households with seniors, small children, people with disabilities or veterans are especially encouraged to apply."

Rothman noted that the U.S. Department of Energy expects that heating costs will rise this winter as a result of colder temperatures and higher energy prices, especially for heating oil, propane and natural gas. Even modest increases in heating use and energy prices can be a financial challenge for low-income households.

The Minnesota Commerce Department administers the Energy Assistance Program in partnership with 30 local service providers throughout the state. It is funded through the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

The program helps homeowners and renters who earn less than 50 percent of the state's median income (\$47,194 for a family of four) obtain grant money to help pay their heating bills.

The program served nearly 133,000 Minnesota households last year, with an average grant of about \$500. Some of these households also received help to address no-heat crisis situations and repair broken heating systems.

How to apply for heating assistance

Local service providers have reviewed thousands of applications for energy assistance already this fall, and payments for many who qualified will begin as early as this week.

There is still plenty of time for new applicants and for those who qualified last year to reapply, but funding is limited and administered on a first-come, first-served basis. Applications will be taken until May 31, 2017, or until funds run out.

Qualifying households must apply for assistance with the local service provider in their area. To get more information about the program and contact their local service provider, Minnesotans can call 800-657-3710 or visit the [Energy Assistance section](#) of the Commerce Department website.

Cold Weather Rule protection

In addition to applying for heating assistance, low-income Minnesotans are encouraged to contact their utility and seek protection under the state's Cold Weather Rule.

The Cold Weather Rule, in effect from Oct. 15 to April 15, protects residential utility customers from having their heat shut off.

Customers must contact their utility to establish and maintain a monthly payment plan. Households that need to reconnect for winter should contact their utility now to take advantage of the payment options.

Minnesotans who use delivered fuels such as propane, fuel oil or wood to heat their homes are not covered by the Cold Weather Rule, but they are eligible for financial help from the Energy Assistance Program.

More information on shut-off protection and the Cold Weather Rule is available at the [Minnesota Public Utilities Commission website](#) or by calling 651-296-0406 or 800-657-3782.

Media Contact:

Ross Corson

Director of Communications

[Minnesota Department of Commerce](#)

P: 651-539-1463 | C: 651-368-5050 | ross.corson@state.mn.us

