

## What is LIEAP?

The Low Income Energy Assistance Program (LIEAP) is designed to help low-income households with the expense of keeping warm during the heating season (October 1 – April 30).

## What are the LIEAP benefits?

If you qualify, your LIEAP benefits depend on how your home is heated and how you pay your bill:

- If you pay for your heating costs directly to the utility company, a credit will be issued to your utility account
- If heat is included in your rent, you will receive a heat rebate
- If you use a wood stove for heating, you will be paid directly to purchase your wood

## How is the amount of your LIEAP benefits determined?

The amount of LIEAP benefits you may receive is determined by the type of home/apartment, number of bedrooms, past 12-month income, number of people in the house, type of heat, and area of the state.

## Are there special funds for a heating related emergency?

Yes. LIEAP has funds designed to help households in unforeseeable energy-related emergencies. If an emergency

should occur (e.g., furnace damage or hazardous conditions affecting the house), contact the local LIEAP office for emergency funds. These funds come in the form of grants or no-interest loans.

## What do I do if I want to improve energy efficiency in my house?

Weatherization is free to qualifying households. Work may include plastic window kits, caulking, and weather-stripping. Your application for LIEAP is also your application for weatherization assistance.

## Who can apply?

Anyone that needs help paying their heating costs may apply. Eligibility is based on federal poverty guidelines and includes a resource limit.

## How do I apply?

You can receive an application by calling, writing, or visiting your local LIEAP office. To find or call your local office, call the LIEAP Help Line at 1-800-332-2272. Someone in the LIEAP office can answer any questions regarding the application process.

If you have any further questions please visit the National Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program Web site at <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/liheap/>.

## When can I apply for LIEAP?

You may apply for LIEAP anytime between October 1 and April 30.

## What information is needed to apply for LIEAP?

- Names, birthdates, and social security numbers of everyone in your household at the time of the application.
- Most recent bill for your current address. If you use wood as your main source of heat, there is a special form.
- Proof of most recent 12 months of income for all household members (e.g. W2). If they are age 16 or older and have no income, include a signed and dated letter from them stating so.
- Balances in checking and savings accounts, Cash Deposit accounts, etc., and amount of business equity, if any.
- Signatures by appropriate members of the household. Benefits may be denied if your application is not complete.

## What if I need heating assistance, even though I made too much money last year?

If you made too much money last year and know you will have trouble paying your future heating costs, ask if you are eligible for Energy Share of Montana. Besides emergency payments, Energy Share of Montana assists in these types of situations.

### **Can benefits be transferred?**

No. You could be subject to fines or criminal action if you do.

### **Can I request a fair hearing?**

If you don't agree with a decision on your application, benefit status, or payments, you can request a fair hearing. A LIEAP fair hearing request must be in writing. Follow the directions regarding a request for a fair hearing on your application decision, or contact your local LIEAP office for assistance.

For more information on fair hearings, refer to Montana Legal Services Association's pamphlet on "Resolving Disputes about Your Public Benefits."

### **What happens if I lie on my application?**

You are breaking the law, and criminal action may be taken. If you had been receiving benefits because you lied, you will be required to pay them back. If you lie on your current application, you will not be eligible for the current hearing period.

### **What if I am overpaid or underpaid benefits?**

If an overpayment occurs, even if it is not your fault, it will be taken from your current and future benefits. If an underpayment occurs, it will be reimbursed to you in the form of a benefit credit.

### **MLSA HelpLine: (800) 666-6899**

Need legal help? Call the HelpLine Monday-Friday 7:30am to 6:00pm.

MLSA staff will help you apply over the phone. After you apply, MLSA may:

- Refer you to resources you can use to help yourself,
- Give you some legal advice, or
- Refer you to an attorney who will assist you for free or at a reduced cost.

### **www.MTLSA.org**

Find copies of all our brochures online. They are all available for free download!

### **www.MontanaLawHelp.org**

Need legal information? Go online. Visit [www.MontanaLawHelp.org](http://www.MontanaLawHelp.org).

You can find information about legal problems such as divorce, parenting plans, landlord and tenant issues, and public benefits. You can also find information about getting legal help, community resources, and courts.

Can't find what you want? Use LiveHelp. Click on the LiveHelp picture and get help finding the information you need.

This pamphlet is meant to give basic legal information, not legal advice about your problem. The law changes often and each case is different. This pamphlet may not apply to your problem. You should not rely on it only. Please talk to an attorney about your problem.

## **Montana Legal Services Association**

### **Public Benefits:**

### **LIEAP**



Providing, protecting, and enhancing access to justice.

Rev. 05/12

