

## What is LIEAP?

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

## What are the LIEAP benefits?

How you receive LIEAP benefits depends on how your home is heated and how you pay your heating bill:

- If you pay a utility company for your heating costs, your LIEAP benefits will be paid directly to the utility company.
- If heating costs are included in your rent, your LIEAP benefits will be paid directly to you as reimbursement after you verify you have paid your rent.
- If you use a wood or coal stove for heating, your LIEAP benefits will be paid directly to you as reimbursement after you submit receipts. Households who use wood may choose to receive direct payment without having to show receipts.

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

The amount of LIEAP benefits you receive depends on a number of factors like:

- Your home (house vs. apartment, number of bedrooms, etc.);
- Your past income;
- The number of people in the house;
- The type of heat source you use, and

- What area of the state you are in.

## 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?

In addition to LIEAP payments, you may qualify for free weatherization assistance. This 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 your household income and assets.

## How do I apply?

You can apply by submitting a written application to your local eligibility office. To find your local eligibility office, visit <http://dphhs.mt.gov/hcsd/energyassistance/eligibilityoffices.aspx> or call 1-833-317-1080.

You can get a paper application from your local eligibility office or by downloading and

printing online at <http://dphhs.mt.gov/Portals/85/hcsd/documents/lieap/LIEAPApplication.pdf>.

If you need assistance in submitting a written application, call your local eligibility office. They may be able to help you and make it easier for you to submit your application.

If you have any further questions please visit the National Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program website at <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/liheap/> or the Rocky Mountain Development Council's website at <http://rmdc.net/energy-assistance/low-income-energy-assistance-lieap/>.

## When can I apply for LIEAP?

You may apply for LIEAP anytime between October 1 and April 30. Emergency assistance is available any time of the year.

## 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. If you move to a new home, you will need to reapply for LIEAP benefits.

## What if I disagree with a LIEAP decision?

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 eligibility office for assistance.

For more information on fair hearings, read Montana Legal Services Association's pamphlet on "Public Benefits Fair Hearings: How to Protect Your Rights."

## What happens if I lie on my application?

If you lie or intentionally withhold information on your LIEAP application, you are breaking the law and criminal action may be taken against you. 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 heating period.

## What if I am overpaid or underpaid benefits?

If an overpayment occurs, even if it is not your fault, you will have to repay. If you continue receiving LIEAP benefits, you can repay the overpayment by having it taken from your current and future benefits.

If an underpayment occurs, it will be reimbursed to you in the form of a credit.

## How do I get more help?

Montana Legal Services Association (MLSA) provides free civil legal help to low-income people who meet certain eligibility criteria:

- Apply at anytime online at [mtlsa.org](http://mtlsa.org);
- Call our Helpline at 1-800-666-6899 (Helpline hours may be limited to certain day time hours).

## What help can I find at MLSA?

- Legal advice and representation;
- referrals to pro bono attorneys and other providers;
- Self-help clinics and materials.

## [www.MontanaLawHelp.org](http://www.MontanaLawHelp.org)

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

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

## [www.MTLSA.org](http://www.MTLSA.org)

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

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:

## Low Income Energy Assistance Program (LIEAP)



Providing, protecting, and enhancing access to justice.

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