

# Help With Winter Utility And Fuel Bills

## A Resource Guide

Here is a list of some of the programs in Maine that may be able to help with your utility and fuel costs.

### ***2 1 1 Maine***

In addition to the programs listed below, there may be other local resources available from organizations such as The Salvation Army, Red Cross, local churches or community organizations. For more information about local energy initiatives in Maine, contact 211Maine. They can be contacted by phone by dialing 211 or on the web at <http://www.211maine.org/>

### **Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (*LIHEAP or Fuel Assistance*)**

LIHEAP helps both homeowners and renters with their heating costs. Household income must be lower than 150% of the poverty level. (This equals about \$ 2058 per month for a family of 2.) If anyone in the household is over age 60, below age 2, or has a health condition that puts them at risk of hypothermia then the income limit can be higher – up to 170% of poverty level. (This equals about \$2,332 per month for a family of 2.)

If heat is included in your rent, you can still get help. If you apply and get even a little bit of help, then your monthly Food Supplement benefit may go up. If you get LIHEAP then you may also get lower electric rates.

**To Apply:** You can apply for LIHEAP through one of the Community Action Programs, depending on where you live. (Please see list below.) You need to bring proof of identity (such as a license, state ID, passport, etc.), income, social security numbers, and your address. You can use a utility bill to prove your address.

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### **Maine Equal Justice**

126 Sewall Street, Augusta, Maine 04330

TTY/Voice: (207)626-7058 ♦ Fax: (207) 621-8148 ♦ [www.mejp.org](http://www.mejp.org)

## Weatherization and Furnace Repair or Replacement (CHIP)

- Gives grants to homeowners and renters for weatherization and/or repair or replacement of central heating system.
- Income guidelines are the same as for LIHEAP.

**To Apply:** You can apply for LIHEAP and you will be considered for this program. You can also contact your local Community Action Program. (See the list below for your local program.)

## Emergency Crisis Intervention Program (ECIP)

You can get this help once per heating season for emergency fuel or to avoid electricity cut-off. You must get LIHEAP to get ECIP.

**To Apply:** Apply at your county's Community Action Program (CAP) agency. (See the list below for your local program.)

## Low-Income Assistance Plan (LIAP)

- LIAP helps low-income homeowners and renters pay for electricity costs by lowering their electric bills.
- If you get LIHEAP, then you may be able to get help from LIAP as well.
- Please note that people who get a rent subsidy (help paying their rent) may not be able to get help from LIAP.

**To Apply:** You can apply for LIHEAP and LIAP through your Community Action Program. (See the list below for your local program.)

## Arrearage Management Program

You can get help with your electric bill with CMP, Emera or other electric utility companies, if you owe more than \$500 and you have owed on your bill for more than 90 days. You will have to pay your current bill, BUT your back bill will be reduced each month you pay your current bill on time.

**To Apply:** Contact CMP or Emera. Other utilities may have a similar program

## Maine Home Repair Network

This program gives 1% mortgages or 0% deferred/forgivable mortgages (i.e. 0% interest rate with no monthly payment) to low-income homeowners for necessary home repairs.

With just one application, you can apply to both state and federal programs that fund renovations or repairs such as:

- Wells and septic system repairs or replacements
- Heating and electrical system repairs
- Roof and chimney repairs
- Structural repairs
- Lead paint mitigation
- Repair or replacement of windows and doors
- Energy efficiency improvements

- Repair or replacement of siding
- Handicap accessibility improvements
- Other health and safety repairs

**To Apply:** For more information, call your local Community Action Program (see the list below) or go to: [www.mainehousing.org/PROGRAMSHomeRepair.aspx?ProgramID=33](http://www.mainehousing.org/PROGRAMSHomeRepair.aspx?ProgramID=33)

**To Learn More:** You can learn more about some of these programs at this website: [www.mainehousing.org/ENERGYPrograms.aspx](http://www.mainehousing.org/ENERGYPrograms.aspx)

You can also go to the Pine Tree Legal Assistance website to find updates on resources that are known to them: [www.ptla.org](http://www.ptla.org)

## Other Programs That Can Help You

### Alternative Aid (AA)

- Helps families with children.
- Family cannot be getting TANF. Families must meet some TANF eligibility criteria such as deprivation. (one parent out of the home, one parent disabled, one parent unemployed)
- To get aid, the family must need the help to keep a job or get a job.
- AA can help with many things, like car repairs, housing costs, etc.
- AA can provide up to 3 times the monthly TANF benefit. This equals about \$1,782 for a family of 3 or higher if you have high housing costs.
- You can only get Alternative Aid once every 12 months.
- Family income limit is 133% of the federal poverty limit. (The equals about \$2,304 per month for a family of 3.)

**To Apply:** You can apply for AA at your local DHHS office.

### Emergency Assistance (EA)

- Helps families with children under age 21.
- Family income must be less than 100% of the federal poverty limit. This equals about \$1,732 per month for a family of 3. Families receiving TANF, PaS, SSI, or Food Stamps also qualify.
- Helps with different types of emergencies when you don't have enough money.
- The types of emergencies are:
  - Rent or Security Deposit
  - Mortgage Payments or Property Taxes
  - Home repairs (wells, chimney, septic system, etc.)
  - Clothing; or special medical equipment.
  - Disaster Assistance due to flood, fire, storms, etc.
- You can only get EA help once every 12 months.

**To Apply:** You can apply for EA at your local DHHS office. You will need proof of the emergency.

## General Assistance (GA)

- Helps with basic necessities, like housing, fuel, food, utilities, clothing, and medical expenses.
- You must be very low-income. You may need to prove that you have spent your money on basic necessities.
- All towns and cities have this program.

**To Apply:** You can apply at your local Town Office or City Hall. Call DHHS at 1-800-442-6003 if you have trouble applying.

## Rural Housing Repair Loans and Grants

Gives loans and grants to very low-income homeowners to repair, improve, modernize, or to remove health and safety hazards in their rural homes.

<http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/me/SFH/Fact%20Sheets/Rehab%20and%20Repair%20Loan.pdf>

You can get either:

- Loans are for up to 20 years at 1% interest; or
- Grants (free) may be for people who are 62 years of age or disabled.

Loan/grant combinations may be arranged for applicants who can repay part of the cost. The program defines 'very low-income' as below 50 percent of the area median income. See the following for the program's income guidelines:

[http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/me/index\\_files/Income%20Guidelines.pdf](http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/me/index_files/Income%20Guidelines.pdf)

**To Apply:** Call **Rural Development**. Listed in the Phone Book under U.S. Government, Agriculture Department. Or call 1-800-352-8963 Ext. 161 and they will connect you to the correct office.

## Efficiency Maine

Efficiency Maine has a number of programs to help people lower their energy costs. To find out if you can get help, go to [www.energymaine.com](http://www.energymaine.com) or call (866) 376-2463.

## Weatherization & CHIP Agent Contacts

For an application or more information, contact the program agent that serves your area:

Agency	Area Covered	Location	Telephone
<a href="#">Aroostook County Action Program</a> 	Aroostook County	Presque Isle	Phone: 207-768-3023 Toll Free: 800-432-7881
<a href="#">Community Concepts, Inc.</a> 	Androscoggin, Oxford Counties	South Paris	Phone: 207-743-7716 Toll Free: 800-866-5588 TTY: 207-743-0276
<a href="#">Kennebec Valley Community Action Program</a> 	Kennebec, Lincoln, Sagadahoc, and Somerset Counties	Waterville	Phone: 207-859-1500 Toll Free: 800-542-8227
<a href="#">Penquis Community Action Program</a> 	Penobscot, Piscataquis Counties	Bangor	Phone: 207-973-3500 Toll Free: 800-215-4942 TTY: 207-973-3520
<a href="#">Penquis Community Action Program</a> 	Knox County	Rockland	Phone: 207-596-0361 Toll Free: 800-585-1605
<a href="#">Peoples Regional Opportunity Program</a> 	Cumberland, York Counties	Portland	Phone: 207-553-5800 Toll Free: 800-698-4959 TTY: 207-874-1013
<a href="#">Waldo Community Action Partners</a> 	Waldo County	Belfast	Phone: 207-338-6809 or 207-338-6810 Toll Free: N/A
<a href="#">Washington-Hancock Community Agency</a> 	Washington, Hancock Counties	Millbridge	Phone: 207-546-7544 Toll Free: 800-828-7544
<a href="#">Western Maine Community Action</a> 	Franklin County	East Wilton	Phone: 207-645-3764 Toll Free: 800-645-9636

The **Maine State Housing Authority** can help with housing-related issues.

- MaineHousing**, 353 Water Street, Augusta Maine 04330  
 Phone: (207) 626-4600; Toll Free: (800) 452-4668  
 TTY: (800) 452-4603; Fax: (207) 626-4678  
 Web: [www.mainehousing.org](http://www.mainehousing.org)

Other programs may be able to help you with your household costs. This can help free up money so that you have enough to pay for your heating costs. Some of these programs are **Food Supplement , Women, Infants and Children (WIC), and Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF)**. Other programs are the **Property Tax Fairness Credit , Earned Income Tax Credit, Transitional Child Care, and Transitional Transportation assistance**. There are different eligibility criteria for each of these programs.

If you have questions about these programs, call **Maine Equal Justice** at 626-7058 or toll free 1-866-626-7059.