

Overview LIHEAP 2017-18

There are two components to LIHEAP (Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program):

Energy Assistance (EA)

- Provides **one-time assistance** to help with the cost of the **primary fuel source for heating**.
- Benefit is based on the household size, income & the fuel type used for home heating.
- Program runs from November **(this is a change from prior years)** through March.
- **Do not have to be in threat to receive assistance.**
- CMCA processes the applications but the payment is made by the State.

Energy Crisis Intervention Program (ECIP)

- Provides assistance to help pay fuel sources (**primary or secondary**) for a household **in an energy crisis** (service is off, they are in threat of disconnection, they have less than 20% propane in their tank, they are a COD only customer, or they have less than 10 days' worth of electric on their pre-paid electric account).
- Benefit is based on the amount that is required to resolve the crisis and keep out of threat for 30 days.
- The State gives the Agency an allocation of ECIP funds, and the Agency makes the payment on the pledges.
- The allocation by the State is a **fixed amount of funds**. When the Agency is out of that money, we can no longer assist families.
- It is possible for the State to allocate additional monies, but it is nothing we can predict or rely on. A press release is usually issued when this happens. People can also contact the CMCA Energy Office at 1-800-573-3637 or 573-443-1100 to find out if additional money has been allocated.

Winter Crisis Program

- Runs from **November** for elderly and disabled households or **December** for all other households **(this is a change from prior years)** **through May** – based on available funding (for the past several years we have run out of money between late February & early March).
- The maximum benefit amount is **\$800 for the winter**. This means a family can receive up to \$800 in assistance, **as long as the Agency has money**. If the Agency runs out of money, or if the family doesn't use the full \$800, they cannot "save" the balance to use in the summer – it is strictly a maximum benefit, not an allotment.

Summer Crisis Program

- Runs from **June through September** – based on available funding (for the past several years we have run out of money between late June & early July).
- The maximum benefit amount is **\$300 for the summer**. This means a family can receive up to \$300 in assistance, **as long as the Agency has money**.

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- If an applicant received Energy Assistance (EA) last year, they should get a Pre-printed application by mail. If they moved, it will be forwarded to them by the USPS **if they have a forwarding address on file with the USPS**. If there is no forwarding address, a blank application can be obtained from the State website at www.dss.mo.gov/fsd/liheap.htm, the Agency website at www.showmeaction.org or at any CMCA county office.

- Pre-printed Applications

Elderly (60 or older) and Disabled households' applications were mailed out by the State on Friday Sept 15th, 2017.

- **"Elderly and Disabled"** households' applications will be accepted beginning October 1st and can be dropped off or mailed in to **CMCA Energy Office, 800 N. Providence Rd., Suite 103, Columbia, MO 65203**
- **Payments/pledges will not be made until after the new start dates, which means no monies will be put on their accounts until November 1st, 2017 at the earliest.**

"All Other" households will be mailed their pre-printed applications by the State sometime in October 2017.

- **"All Other"** households' applications will be accepted beginning November 1st and can be dropped off or mailed in to **CMCA Energy Office, 800 N. Providence Rd., Suite 103, Columbia, MO 65203**
- **Payments/pledges will not be made until after the new start dates, which means no monies will be put on their accounts until December 1st, 2017 at the earliest.**

- **DUE TO THE HIGH VOLUME OF APPLICATIONS AT THE BEGINNING OF THE SEASON, APPLICANTS CAN EXPECT DELAYS.** As usual, applicants need to continue to pay their bills, and anyone in threat with their primary OR secondary energy sources should make other arrangements to prevent disconnection.
- We **NO LONGER accept Applications by FAX** – they must be mailed in or brought in to our office in Columbia. Energy suppliers, specified Agency staff and community partners can contact me by phone (573-443-8706 ext 1950) or e-mail (jennifer-donaldson@showmeaction.org) if there are any questions or concerns regarding an Application. We *will* sometimes provide an applicant a fax # to return missing docs or other info to us, but **all UNSOLICITED faxes received will be shredded.**
- The print-out application is in a **Fillable format if accessed from the State website.** This allows families to complete the Application on the computer but **they must still print it off, sign it in ink and mail it in or drop it off – electronic signatures are not allowed at this time.**
- Program Regulations require we process OFFs first & then prioritize the rest of the submissions by Disconnection Date. Notification letters will be mailed (by the State for EA and by the Agency for ECIP), but if someone needs to know quickly whether a pledge has been placed on their account, they should contact their utility provider. Ameren UE also has an automated system to notify their customers when pledges are placed on their accounts – customers should call Ameren to sign up for that service.

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- Once a family qualifies for LIHEAP (EA), they are qualified for ECIP for the full program year (Nov 2017 through Sept 2018) ***unless they move***, in which case a new application must be filled out and they must re-qualify.
- Once a household has received EA, they **DO NOT have to submit another Application in order to get ECIP (Crisis) assistance** (*unless they have moved*).

- To get **ECIP (Crisis) assistance** (after they have qualified for EA), they need to **do the following**:

Write their (the Applicant's) SSN & a good phone number directly on the disconnection notice and mail it (along with the Non-Energy Agreement Form, if applicable – see next paragraph) to CMCA for processing.

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- ❖ **If there are any non-energy charges on their gas/electric bill (such as deposits, water, sewer or trash), those amounts must be paid and proof of payment included with the disconnection notice before we can put a pledge on the account.**

In BOONE COUNTY, Boone Electric customers who are billed sewer charges on their electric bill and all City of Columbia customers must have the form filled out & past-due non-electric charges paid prior to submitting their disconnection to CMCA for processing.

- Some items to keep in mind regarding income
 - EARNED income (wages) is calculated at 80% of gross, so if there is earned income in the household and they are close to the maximum income, go ahead and have them apply
 - There is a \$100 deduction for elderly (must be 65) and disabled applicants (or spouses) – (only one \$100 credit is allowed per household)
 - There are deductions allowed for Child Support paid and some Medicare premiums
 - **Basically, if they are close on income, have them apply – they have nothing to lose!**
- When the Agency is getting low on **Crisis (ECIP) funding**, we will suspend processing ECIP & start an **ECIP Wait List**. If there is still money available once the books have been reconciled and/or we get additional funding from the State, we will work the Wait List until we completely run out of funds. The Wait Lists apply for both Winter and Summer ECIP funds. We will also keep an **EA Wait List** if the State indicates they are out of funding prior to the end of the EA season (March 31, 2018).