

Governor Rendell Again Expands Heating Assistance for Low-Income Pennsylvanians

9/18/2006: HARRISBURG — More Pennsylvania families will be able to stay warm this winter as Governor Edward G. Rendell today announced an expansion in eligibility for Pennsylvania's Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP), which opens on Nov. 6.

"High heating fuel costs continue to burden many Pennsylvania families," said Governor Rendell. "By expanding the income eligibility for LIHEAP, we will be able to help more families in need before they end up in a heating crisis. We want to make sure that anyone who is struggling to make ends meet is able to stay warm during the cold winter months."

At the Governor's direction, income eligibility for the 2006-07 LIHEAP season was expanded from 135 percent to 150 percent of the Federal Poverty Income Guidelines.

This year, a family of four with an annual income of up to \$30,000 can qualify for LIHEAP. The more generous income limits mean that an additional 67,000 Pennsylvania families will be eligible than at the 135 percent level. (See the attached chart for additional household sizes and income limits.)

"Even though some energy prices have stabilized a bit in recent months, fuel oil is still 20 percent more costly than it was a year ago," said Governor Rendell. "By expanding eligibility, we can help more Pennsylvania families pay their home heating bills and stay warm and safe."

The federally-funded LIHEAP helps low-income households pay for a variety of home heating fuel sources and furnace repairs in the winter and is administered by the Pennsylvania Department of Public Welfare. Last year, more than 385,000 families were helped through cash grants and nearly 154,000 families received crisis assistance.

Applications for LIHEAP will be available at County Assistance Offices, local utility companies and community service agencies, such as Area Agencies on Aging or Community Action Agencies. Families can also apply for LIHEAP cash grants online at www.compass.state.pa.us.

The cash grant program is designed to help families pay their home heating bills. Cash grants are based on income, family size, type of heating fuel and heating region. In addition to proof of income and household size, applicants will need to provide a recent bill or a statement from their fuel dealer verifying their customer status and the type of fuel that they use.

Crisis grants up to \$300 are approved for families with heating emergencies, such as mechanical breakdowns or unexpected fuel shortages.

For more information, people should call DPW's toll-free LIHEAP Hotline at 1-866-857-7095, Monday through Friday, from 8:30 a.m. to 4:45 p.m.

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EDITOR'S NOTE: The attached chart provides household sizes and income limits for LIHEAP.

2006-07 LIHEAP INCOME ELIGIBILITY TABLE

Household Size Annual Household Income Limit Before Taxes
(150 Percent of FPIGs)

1	\$14,700
2	\$19,800
3	\$24,900
4	\$30,000
5	\$35,100
6	\$40,200
7	\$45,300
8	\$50,400

Each Additional
Person Add: \$5,100