

**\* \* READ AND KEEP THIS NOTICE \* \***

**YOU ARE APPLYING FOR ENERGY AND/OR WATER ASSISTANCE.**

This notice has the information you will need to understand your rights and the services that you may be able to receive from the Connecticut Energy Assistance Program (CEAP) and the Low-Income Household Water Assistance Program (LIHWAP).

**CONNECTICUT ENERGY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (CEAP) IMPORTANT DATES**

November 1, 2021	First day for fuel deliveries that can be paid by the program.
May 2, 2022	Deadline for fuel authorizations or deliveries.
May 31, 2022	The last day that a household can apply to establish its eligibility for benefits.
June 15, 2022	Last day to submit deliverable fuel bills.

**LOW INCOME HOUSEHOLD WATER ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (LIHWAP) IMPORTANT DATES**

November 1, 2021	First day for households to apply for services.
May 31, 2022	The last day that a household can apply to establish its eligibility for benefits.
June 15, 2022	Last day to submit drinking/wastewater bills.

Your household is applying for energy and/or water assistance. These programs are funded by the Department of Social Services (DSS) and operated by the Community Action Agency Network (CAA). Assistance may only be provided if funds are available. All applications submitted by mail must be postmarked by May 31, 2022, to be evaluated for program eligibility. **These are not entitlement programs.**

You have the right to have a determination notice postmarked within forty-five (45) days upon receipt of your application by a CAA (excluding state-designated holidays). If you do not receive a determination notice within forty-five (45) days, call the CAA where you applied.

You have the right to a desk review if: you have been denied assistance; you are not notified of a decision within forty-five (45) days; or you are refused some, or all, of your benefits. Any desk review request must be made in writing to the chief executive officer of the community action agency to which you are making this application. Requests for desk reviews must be submitted within sixty (60) days of the occurrence, the discovery of the occurrence, or by September 30, 2022, whichever comes first.

If you are dissatisfied with the results of the desk review, you have the right to a fair hearing. A fair hearing request must be mailed to the Department of Social Services, Administrative Hearings Office, 55 Farmington Avenue, Hartford, CT 06105 or faxed to (860) 424-5729, within sixty (60) days of the desk review decision.

**ELIGIBILITY**

Eligibility for benefits is based upon the household's total gross annual income and household size. Benefits are available for households whose income does not exceed 60% of the state median income. You have the option to provide proof of categorical eligibility as described below. You may also establish income eligibility by providing four (4) consecutive weeks of income documentation within the three months prior to the date of application, or income documentation for the full year (52 weeks) prior to the date of the application to establish income eligibility. **If you are self-employed**, you must provide six (6) or twelve (12) full calendar months' income documentation and the most recently filed IRS Form 1040 (with all appropriate Schedules, including C, D, E, SE, K, etc.). Additional documentation of income may be required. If you are determined eligible, your household will be notified in writing.

Any household which makes direct to vendor payments for heat and in which a household member is participating in one or more of the following assistance programs are considered "categorically eligible" and will automatically be considered income eligible for energy assistance at a benefit level not less than that provided for households with income between 0% - 150% of the federal poverty guidelines (FPG):

1. Temporary Family Assistance
2. State Supplement to the Aged, Blind and Disabled
3. Refugee Cash Assistance Program
4. Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)
5. Supplemental Security Income

Although categorically income-eligible, households must meet all other program requirements to receive benefits.

**DELIVERABLE FUEL HEATED HOUSEHOLDS**

To be eligible for energy assistance, bills must be in the name of: the applicant, a household member who is eighteen years of age or older, or a household member who is an emancipated minor. The CAA may authorize deliveries on your behalf. All deliveries authorized by the CAA will be paid up to your benefit amount. Deliveries must be made to the service address that is listed on the energy assistance application.

Deliverable fuel households who wish to receive reimbursement for heating bills paid during the program year must provide deliverable fuel bills that document all information above and must be for deliveries made within the identified program dates. Reimbursement for client-paid bills will only be made from a household's basic benefit. Bills must list the delivery date, retail price per gallon and the number of gallons delivered.

You have the right to select a fuel vendor from the available list of approved fuel vendors. You may also change vendors during the energy assistance season at your discretion, so long as the chosen vendor is on the approved vendor list, maintained by the Department and kept by the CAA.

Vendors cannot charge you the difference between their retail price and the price determined in accordance with their supplier/vendor conditions of participation form.

**Any heating costs incurred outside the identified periods, exceed your benefit award, or after funds are exhausted, are your household's responsibility.**

### **BASIC BENEFITS**

If you are determined eligible, your household will be approved for a basic benefit. Your notification of eligibility will identify the amount of the basic benefit. If your household has a member who is elderly (age 60 or over), disabled or under six (6) years of age, your household will be considered to be **vulnerable** and will be eligible for a higher basic benefit.

**If you are determined eligible and are in need of a fuel delivery, contact your local CAA to request an authorization for delivery.**

Automatic delivery or obtaining fuel on your own behalf is permitted as long as it is within the above-stated program dates, is delivered by an approved vendor, and funds remain in your basic benefit award. However, **payment can only be guaranteed if the delivery is authorized by the local CAA.**

**Automatic delivery customers must notify their oil vendor of their eligibility to ensure payment for deliveries made on their behalf.**

### **CRISIS ASSISTANCE (DELIVERABLE FUEL HEATED HOUSEHOLDS ONLY)**

Should you exhaust your basic benefit, you may be eligible to receive a crisis assistance benefit. The amount of the crisis assistance benefit for households that receive a Level 1 through Level 4 basic benefit award is **\$1,010**. The crisis assistance benefit for households that receive a Level 5 basic benefit award is **\$500**. The crisis assistance benefit must be used toward your primary deliverable fuel. Contact your local CAA to request an authorization for delivery.

**Automatic delivery of fuel requires prior authorization by the local CAA.**

### **SAFETY NET ASSISTANCE (DELIVERABLE FUEL HEATED HOUSEHOLDS ONLY)**

Should you exhaust your basic and crisis assistance benefits, you may be eligible to receive safety net benefits of up to **\$700** per delivery if your household receives a Level 1 through Level 5 basic benefit. **Non-vulnerable** households may be eligible to receive up to three (3) safety net deliveries. **Vulnerable** households that receive a Level 1 through Level 4 basic benefit may be eligible to receive up to four (4) safety net deliveries.

Households that receive a Level 5 basic benefit (vulnerable or non-vulnerable) are eligible to receive up to three (3) safety net benefits. Contact your local CAA for more information on how you can obtain a safety net fuel delivery. **Automatic delivery of fuel requires prior authorization by the local CAA.**

### **UTILITY HEATED HOUSEHOLDS**

You must provide a current utility bill (gas or electric), or a copy of a bill for your primary heating source. The bill must be in the name of: the applicant, a household member who is eighteen years of age or older, or a household member who is an emancipated minor. The bill must be for the service address that is listed on the energy assistance application.

If you are determined eligible, your household will be approved for a basic benefit. Your notice of eligibility will identify the amount of the basic benefit. If your household has a member who is elderly (age 60 or over), disabled, or under six (6) years of age, then your household will be considered to be **vulnerable** and get a higher basic benefit. **Payment will be sent directly to your utility company.** Should the basic benefit exceed your utility charges for service incurred from November 1, 2021 – May 31, 2022, the excess benefit shall be refunded to DSS.

### **HOUSEHOLDS WITH HEAT INCLUDED IN THE RENT (RENTAL ASSISTANCE)**

This benefit is provided to those qualified households where heat is included in their rent payment and owner-occupied dwelling units that do not have their primary source of heat individually metered or separately billed to their household. If you are determined eligible, your household will be approved for a rental assistance benefit. Your notice of eligibility will identify the amount of your rental assistance benefit. The rental assistance benefit will be sent to your household.

### **DRINKING/WASTEWATER**

To apply, you must provide a drinking or wastewater bill. The bill must be in the name of: the applicant, a household member who is eighteen years of age or older, or a household member who is an emancipated minor. The bill must be for the service address that is listed on the application.

Eligibility is based upon household income and household size, and priority is given to those households that are currently shut-off or at risk of shut off for drinking or wastewater services. Program funding is limited and will be allocated to priority groups first. Your notice of eligibility will identify the benefit amount. Benefits are determined, in part, on the existence of an arrearage (overdue payment owed) on the drinking/wastewater bill. If certified at LIHWAP Level 3 and your household has a member who is elderly (age 60 or over), disabled, or under six (6) years of age, it will be considered to be **vulnerable** and may be eligible for a higher basic benefit. **Payment will be sent directly to your drinking/wastewater company.** If you move and cannot be located, and a credit balance resulting from a LIHWAP payment exists in your drinking water or wastewater services account, the excess benefit shall be refunded to DSS.

### **OTHER**

Please note that non-qualified aliens are not eligible for federally funded CEAP or LIHWAP benefits. Applications for households that include non-qualified aliens and citizens/qualified aliens may be processed. However, any non-qualified aliens will not be included in the count of the household size, although their income will be counted.

If you are determined eligible, you may request a clean, tune and test (CT&T) of your heating system. You may also receive assistance if you are a homeowner and your heating system, water heater, or oil tank is inoperable or unsafe. Please contact your local CAA for more information.

Persons who misrepresent their circumstances when applying for energy or water assistance are subject to prosecution and/or repayment of any benefits provided, following the completion of an investigation and final determination by the Department's investigations division, and are prohibited from participation for the remainder of the current program year and for the two program years following the year in which the misrepresentation occurred.

Households whose primary heat is a deliverable fuel or natural gas must provide a current copy of the electric bill unless it is verified that the bill is in the landlord's name.

Information regarding your application may be provided to another CAA for the purpose of providing weatherization services. Information that you provide during the eligibility process may also be provided to other programs operated by the CAA, DSS, or the Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP), for the purpose of verifying your eligibility for DSS-administered or DEEP-administered programs, to comply with federal or state reporting requirements, or to connect you to additional services. In addition, information may be provided to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, the U.S. Department of Energy, or any of their duly authorized representatives for the purpose of review, audit, or evaluation. Your deliverable fuel vendor, drinking/wastewater provider, and your electric company may be required to provide energy consumption information to assist in determining the energy burden of your household.

Your household may also qualify under Connecticut law for the Winter Protection Program. If so, your electric service may not be disconnected between November 1, 2021, through May 1, 2022. Contact your electric company for more information.

Should you have additional questions regarding assistance, please contact your local CAA.

#### **DHHS NON-DISCRIMINATION STATEMENT:**

The Department of Social Services and its administrative partners at the Community Action Agencies (CAAs) comply with applicable Federal civil rights laws and do not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, disability, or sex. The Department and the CAAs do not exclude people or treat them differently because of race, color, national origin, age, disability, or sex.

The Department of Social Services:

1. Provides free aids and services to people with disabilities to communicate effectively with us, such as:
  - Qualified sign language interpreters
  - Information in other formats (large print, audio, accessible electronic formats, other formats)
2. Provides free language services to people whose primary language is not English, such as:
  - Qualified interpreters
  - Information in other languages

If you need these services, contact your local CAA or the Department of Social Services Benefits Center at 1-855-626-6632.

If you believe that the Department of Social Services or the CAAs have failed to provide these services or discriminated in another way on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, disability, or sex, you can file a grievance with the DSS ADA Coordinator (see contact information below). You can file a grievance in person or by mail, fax, or email. If you need help filing a grievance, the ADA Coordinator is available to help you.

You can also file a civil rights complaint with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office for Civil Rights, electronically through the Office for Civil Rights Complaint Portal, available at <https://ocrportal.hhs.gov/ocr/portal/lobby.jsf>, or by mail or phone at the contact information below:

#### **CT NON-DISCRIMINATION STATEMENT:**

You have the right to make a discrimination complaint if you think we have taken action against you because of your race, color, religion, sex, gender identity or expression, marital status, age, national origin, ancestry, political beliefs, sexual orientation, intellectual disability, mental disability, learning disability, or physical disability, including, but not limited to, blindness.

An individual with a disability may request and receive a reasonable accommodation or special help from the Department of Social Services when it is necessary to allow the individual to have an equal and meaningful opportunity to participate in programs administered by the Department.

If you asked for an accommodation or special help and we refused to provide it, you may make a complaint to the Department's ADA Coordinator or any of the agencies listed below:

<b>Commissioner of Social Services</b> Attn: ADA Coordinator 55 Farmington Avenue Hartford, CT 06105-5033 Ph: (860) 424-5040, Fax: (860) 424-4948 TDD: (800) 842-4524 Toll Free: (800) 842-1508 Email: <a href="mailto:AffirmativeAction.DSS@ct.gov">AffirmativeAction.DSS@ct.gov</a>	<b>Connecticut Commission on Human Rights and Opportunities</b> 450 Columbus Boulevard, Suite 2 Hartford, CT 06103 Ph: (860) 541-3400, Toll free: (800) 477-5737 TDD: (860) 541-3400, Fax: (860) 246-5265 <a href="https://portal.ct.gov/CHRO">https://portal.ct.gov/CHRO</a>	<b>U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services, Office for Civil Rights</b> JFK Federal Building, Room 1875 Boston, MA 02203 Ph: (617) 565-1340, Toll free: (800) 368-1019 TTY: (800) 537-7697, Fax: (617) 565-3809 <a href="http://www.hhs.gov/ocr/office/file/index.html">http://www.hhs.gov/ocr/office/file/index.html</a>
---	--	--