



## Office of the Ohio Consumers' Counsel

Your Residential Utility Consumer Advocate

# CONSUMER FACT SHEET

### Office of the Ohio Consumers' Counsel

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# HOME ENERGY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM: HEAP GUIDELINES

The Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP) is a federally-funded program managed by the Ohio Development Services Agency (ODSA). It is designed to help income-eligible consumers with winter heating costs.

The funding provides two distinct components: HEAP and the Winter Crisis Program (WCP), also called Emergency HEAP (E-HEAP). To qualify for either program, total household income must be at or below 175 percent of the federal poverty level (see chart).

## HEAP

The HEAP program provides a one-time credit once per winter heating season towards a household's primary heating source. HEAP benefit amounts vary and are determined by the following criteria:

- ▶ Household income;
- ▶ Number of people in household;
- ▶ Cost of primary heating fuel or bulk fuel supplied;
- ▶ Federal funding levels; and
- ▶ Geographic region of the state.

## How to apply for HEAP

Consumers may apply for HEAP from July to May by completing an online application at [www.energyhelp.ohio.gov](http://www.energyhelp.ohio.gov) or by scheduling an appointment with the local Community Action Agency. An Energy Assistance application may also be downloaded from the website and mailed to: Ohio Development Services Agency, Energy Assistance Programs, P.O. Box 1240, Columbus, Ohio 43216. Applications may also be available at county Job and Family Services, Area Agency on Aging offices, libraries, or by contacting ODSA at 1-800-282-0880. Mailed applications can take 12-16 weeks to process.

To complete an application, you will need:

- ▶ A list of all members of the household with birth dates and social security numbers
- ▶ Proof of income for all household members 18 years of age and over for at least the previous 30 days
- ▶ Proof of citizenship or legal residence for each household member
- ▶ Copies of recent utility bills
- ▶ Disability verification (if applicable)

Failure to fully complete the application and provide all required documentation, including signing the application, will delay processing.

For more information, or to locate your local Community Action Agency, visit [www.energyhelp.ohio.gov](http://www.energyhelp.ohio.gov) or contact ODSA at 1-800-282-0880.

## HEAP Payments

HEAP-qualified consumers living in households served by state-regulated utilities will receive a one-time credit on their winter heating bill. In most cases, payment will be applied directly to the energy bill. Vouchers may be sent to those HEAP-qualified consumers who receive bulk fuel; have a master metered account (one main meter that serves several accounts); or are customers of a rural cooperative or municipal utility. Vouchers can be redeemed with the company or utility supplying the heating source.

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The Office of the Ohio Consumers' Counsel (OCC), the residential utility consumer advocate, represents the interests of 4.5 million households in proceedings before state and federal regulators and in the courts.

The state agency also educates consumers about electric, natural gas, telephone and water issues.

For more information, please visit the OCC website at [www.occ.ohio.gov](http://www.occ.ohio.gov).



*The Office of the Ohio Consumers' Counsel is an equal opportunity employer and provider of services.*

**Winter Crisis Program/E-HEAP**

The Winter Crisis Program (WCP), also called E-HEAP, provides financial aid once per heating season beginning November 1 through March 31 to income-eligible consumers who:

- ▶ Have been disconnected or received a shut-off notice;
- ▶ Have less than a 25 percent supply of bulk fuel; or
- ▶ Need to establish new service or pay to transfer service.
- ▶ Household member has a COVID-19 diagnosis in 2020.

**How to Apply for WCP/E-HEAP**

Consumers must:

- ▶ Complete an application during an interview, usually with a local Community Action Agency;
- ▶ Be an adult member of the household;
- ▶ Submit proof of income for all household members 18 years and older;
- ▶ Submit shut-off notice and most recent utility bills; and
- ▶ Provide a list of all household members, including birth dates, Social Security numbers and proof of citizenship (or legal residency) for all household members.

Applicants should call to make an appointment at a Community Action Agency and verify what documentation they should bring with them to verify eligibility. State-regulated utilities will delay disconnection until five days after a confirmed appointment for WCP/E-HEAP with the local Community Action Agency.

**WCP/E-HEAP Payments**

Once a consumer has been approved for the WCP/E-HEAP, the local agency will authorize the payment to the utility. The payment will cover disconnection prevention, reconnection of service, 30 days of bulk fuel, or payment assistance if there is a COVID diagnosis.

Households served by a state-regulated utility with a remaining outstanding balance will be required to sign up for a payment plan, such as the Percentage of Income Payment Plan Plus (PIPP Plus).

In some cases, the program also can make payment towards heating system repairs.

Customers of American Electric Power, Cleveland Electric Illuminating, Columbia Gas of Ohio, Dayton Power & Light, Dominion East Ohio, Duke Energy, Ohio Edison or Toledo Edison may want to contact the utility for additional emergency assistance programs.

**2020-2021 Income Guidelines**

Size of household*	Total Gross Annual Household Income
	175%
1	\$22,330
2	\$30,170
3	\$38,010
4	\$45,850
5	\$53,690
6	\$61,530
7	\$69,370
8	\$77,210

\* For families/households with more than 8 persons, please contact your local community action agency.