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LOW INCOME HEATING AND ENERGY ASSISTANCE

The Department of Human Services (DHS) provides assistance through four (4) program elements: **Regular Energy Assistance, Crisis Intervention Assistance, Cooling Assistance, and Weatherization.**

HOW DOES A FAMILY APPLY FOR LOW INCOME HEATING AND ENERGY ASSISTANCE (LIHEAP)?

Applications for all energy assistance programs can be made through a local Community Action Agency. The assistance is available in all 159 counties in Georgia until funding is exhausted.

The general public cannot apply for **Regular Energy Assistance** until the first of December each year. The program operates through the end of April of the following year or until all funds are exhausted, whichever comes first. Persons meeting the definition of 'homebound' or 'elderly' are allowed to apply one month earlier than the general public – usually the first of November.

Applications are generally taken at local community centers and are publicized prior to the application start date.

Each year information for the LIHEAP program is posted on the DHS website at:

www.dfcs.dhr.georgia.gov.

WHO CAN RECEIVE LIHEAP?

Applicants can receive **Regular Energy Assistance** if household income is at or below 60% of the state median income level for Georgia. The applicant must be the person responsible for paying the cost of energy for the **primary** home heating source and also be a U.S. citizen or legally admitted alien.

The financial assistance will generally be in the form of a locally issued check to the utility company on behalf of eligible households. The amount of assistance will depend on the projected total gross (includes taxes) annual household income, the number of people in the home and the payment schedule or increased cost of home heating energy.

**Subsidized housing tenants whose fuel cost is included in their rental payment are ineligible to receive assistance.

HOW MUCH ASSISTANCE IS AVAILABLE?

The average amount received by recipients of the Energy Assistance program was between \$310 and \$350. The program projects to serve 216,000 low-income families each year.

WHAT ARE THE OTHER TYPES OF ASSISTANCE OFFERED?

Crisis Assistance is provided to eligible households within 48 hours after an eligible household applies and within 18 hours in a life-threatening situation. The applications for assistance are taken at accessible locations statewide, and in the homes of those who are homebound and unable to travel to any of the sites. The eligibility guidelines are the same as with the Regular Energy Assistance Program.

Cooling Assistance is open during the summer season if funds are made available. The eligibility requirements are the same as described in the Regular Energy Assistance Program. There will be priority placed on the elderly and homebound during the first week of the

program.

Weatherization The Georgia Environmental Facilities Authority, through its Division of Energy Resources, currently administers the state Weatherization Assistance Program (WAP) and aims to educate the public on energy saving activities as well as provide assistance to approximately 650 low-income households. The low-cost residential weatherization activities provide direct energy-conserving improvements to the homes of low-income citizens to reduce long term home energy consumption. Priority of services, which include installing ceiling insulation, windows, caulking and weather-stripping is given to the elderly and disabled. Local Weatherization assistance services are provided by local nonprofit organizations. The cost for weatherization of each dwelling must not exceed an average of \$4,000. To be eligible, the household's total income must be at or below 200% of poverty level.