



News from the Office of ERIE COUNTY EXECUTIVE MARK POLONCARZ

NEWS RELEASE

September 29, 2021

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ERIE COUNTY HOME ENERGY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM OPENS MONDAY

First Day for Applications is October 1; Residents Encouraged to Apply Online

ERIE COUNTY, NY— The Erie County Department of Social Services (“ECDSS”) has announced that applications for Home Energy Assistance Program (“HEAP”) regular benefits will be accepted beginning Friday, October 1, 2021, approximately one month earlier than usual. This year, in light of continuing virus-related concerns related to public gatherings, ECDSS is strongly encouraging applicants to apply online or to utilize other remote channels to apply. As in previous years, interested applicants are encouraged to apply sooner rather than later.

“We expect another busy HEAP season. In light of COVID-19-related safety concerns, we are urging residents with heat service currently on and without a shut off notice to file HEAP applications online at www.mybenefits.ny.gov, by emailing heap hotline@erie.gov to request an application, or by calling the HEAP Phone Center at 858-7644,” said **Daniel Szewc, ECDSS Assistant Deputy Commissioner**. “We are scheduling community outreach events to assist Erie County residents with completing HEAP applications.”

To set up a HEAP outreach event for your group or organization, please contact outreach staff. All outreach events will be included on the 2021-22 HEAP Outreach Calendar located on the Erie County Social Services [website](#). Outreach events will be scheduled and held with safety in mind and current COVID-19 protocols in place. Outreach may be a mix of in-person and virtual events to reduce the risk of virus transmission.

HEAP is a federally funded energy program, intended assist low income households in meeting home energy needs and decrease energy costs. Regular benefits are available to households paying separately for heat and to households whose heat is included in their rental amount. Last season, over 114,000 HEAP benefits were authorized to Erie County households.

Regular HEAP eligibility and benefits are based on income, household size, primary heating source and the presence of a vulnerable household member who is under age 6, age 60 or older, or permanently disabled. An eligible household may receive one regular HEAP benefit per program year. HEAP benefit amounts begin at \$21 and are designed to help households reduce their heating bills. Households currently receiving Temporary Assistance and/or Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (“SNAP”) benefits may qualify for an automatic basic HEAP benefit and may not be required to file a separate application. Households may ascertain whether an application is required by calling the HEAP Hotline at 858-7644.

In order to qualify for a regular HEAP benefit, the members of the household must be citizens of the United States or qualified aliens with gross monthly income at or below the amount per household size listed in the table below:

2021-2022 HEAP Benefit Gross Monthly Income Guidelines	
Household Size	Maximum Gross Monthly Income
1	\$2,729
2	\$3,569
3	\$4,409
4	\$5,249
5	\$6,088
6	\$6,928
7	\$7,086
8	\$7,243

The Heating Equipment Repair and Replacement benefit component, available to help eligible low-income homeowners repair or replace furnaces, boilers and other direct heating equipment necessary to keep the home's primary heating source functional is open and accepting applications. Applications for HEAP Emergency Benefits for households who have received a disconnect notice will be accepted beginning January 3, 2022.

For more information:

On the Erie County Department of Social Services, visit <http://www.erie.gov/socialservices/>

On the ECDSS Home Energy Assistance Program, visit <http://www.erie.gov/heap/>

Information on how to apply for HEAP benefits is available [here](#).

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