



Connecticut Department of Social Services

NEWS RELEASE

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Extended Deadline Can Help Avoid Utility Shutoffs: Mild Winter Lowers Overall Demand **Heating Aid Applications Available Through May 31**

(HARTFORD, CT) – State officials have extended the deadline for applying for federal energy assistance to cover this past winter's home-heating bills, a step that will especially help households now receiving shutoff notices from utility companies.

Applications for the Connecticut Energy Assistance Program (CEAP) are being accepted for another full month, through Tuesday, May 31, at community sites throughout the state.

"We are able to provide more time for families and individuals to apply for federally-funded home-heating assistance in part because of the comparatively mild winter," said Department of Social Services Commissioner Roderick L. Bremby. "Applications have been running well below last winter's levels, and federal resources are still available to help low-income households make ends meet and avoid energy debt. Most important, residents who heat with natural gas or electricity and who are behind on their bills can avoid shutoff notices and actions from utilities if they qualify for energy assistance."

Every spring, some Connecticut households receive shutoff notices from utility companies because they are behind on their payments. Utility shutoffs can be averted for those eligible for energy assistance through the program's intervention and direct payments.

Applications are made in person at Community Action Agencies and other local energy assistance sites. For information about eligibility and application sites, the public can call 2-1-1 (toll-free) or visit www.ct.gov/staywarm.

Home-heating aid under the federal Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) is available for households heating with natural gas, electricity and deliverable fuels (oil, kerosene and propane). The cutoff date for having a new fuel delivery paid for by CEAP was March 15, but eligible households can still get help with bills and payments they have already incurred.

Connecticut's allocation from LIHEAP this year is approximately \$80 million. So far, 85,480 households have been determined eligible for heating assistance, down from 94,387 at this time last year. State officials estimate that an additional \$10 million in federal funding is currently available to assist eligible Connecticut households.

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