

**LOW INCOME HOME ENERGY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM  
UNIVERSAL SERVICE FUND  
FFY 2017 FACT SHEET**

The Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) is designed to help low-income families and individuals meet home heating and medically necessary cooling costs. This year, the application period is October 1, 2016 to April 30, 2017. To apply for LIHEAP, contact the authorized local community action agency or community based organization in your area. For persons age 60 or over, or who are disabled, applications may be received and returned by mail. Other households may apply by mail at the discretion of the local agency.

To be eligible for LIHEAP benefits, the applicant household must be responsible for home heating or cooling costs, either directly or included in the rent; and have gross income at or below 200% of the federal poverty level. The chart below gives specific monthly gross income maximums for FFY 2017. Persons who live in public housing and/or receive rental assistance are not eligible unless they pay for their own heating costs directly to the fuel supplier. The amount of the LIHEAP heating benefit is determined by income, household size, fuel type, and heating region. The medically necessary cooling assistance benefit amount will be \$200, which will be issued as a direct credit to an active electric account in our system, otherwise they will be issued as one party check to the eligible applicant.

An eligible household that heats with natural gas or electricity may have its benefits directly forwarded to its utility company. Otherwise, in most cases eligible households directly responsible to a fuel supplier for payment of home heating costs receive a two-party check in the name of the applicant and "the fuel supplier". Households whose heating costs are included in their rent receive a single party check made out to the eligible applicant.

**Please Note:** The FFY 2017 LIHEAP application is also an application for the Universal Service Fund Program (USF). You apply for two benefit programs at the same time. USF is a program created by the State of New Jersey to help make natural gas and electric bills more affordable for low-income households. If you are eligible, USF can lower the amount you pay for gas and electricity. To be eligible, a household gross income must be at or below 175% of the Federal Poverty Level, (please refer to income guidelines listed below), and pay more than 3% of its annual income for electric, or more than 3% for natural gas. If a household has electric heat, it must spend more than 6% of its annual income on electricity to be eligible. For more information about USF, call: 1-800-510-3102.

For further information on LIHEAP or to locate the nearest application agency, call 1-800-510-3102. Additional information about LIHEAP and USF, including an application, is also available at [www.energyassistance.nj.gov](http://www.energyassistance.nj.gov)

