

Need help paying your energy bills?

As everyone is aware, the rising cost of natural gas, heating oil, propane and electric power has caused a sharp increase in electric and heating bills the past few years, especially to those living in rural areas. Many consumers are struggling to find ways to pay their energy bills and pay for other necessary provisions, like food and medicine.

Thankfully there are different agencies that can provide some financial assistance to consumers who have problems paying their heating and electric bills or face disconnection of their electric power.

LIHEAP - State of Alaska

The Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) is a nationwide program designed to help low-income families and senior citizens pay home energy costs. View their Website for more information: www.LIHEAP.org.

Alaska's LIHEAP program receives money from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services to fund this program that runs from October 1 through April 30 of each year. Households with elderly or disabled members may apply from September 1 through April 30.

Applicant eligibility is based on income guidelines and grants are calculated using a point system. An applicant can only receive one heating assistance grant each season. Grants are paid directly to the fuel and/or electric company – not the applicant.

It can take up to 45 days to process an application so you should continue to pay your bills while waiting for a decision on your application.

If your bills are overdue and you receive a disconnect notice or are about to run out of heating fuel, you may be eligible to apply for emergency processing.

You must submit a copy of your disconnect notice with the emergency processing application.

For more information about this program and to receive an application, call the Dept. of Health & Social Services, Division of Public Assistance Heating Assistance Program at 907-465-3058 or toll free at 1-800-470-3058 (option #5). Their address is 10002 Glacier Highway, Suite 200, Juneau, AK 99801-8569.

Or go online and visit the State of Alaska's Heating Assistance Program Website at: <http://health.hss.state.ak.us/dpa/programs/hap>.

Areas Served by Tribal Organizations

Households eligible for benefits from a tribal organization administering a LIHEAP are not eligible for benefits under the State Heating Assistance Program. Some tribal organizations serve both Native and non-Native residents.

The following tribal organizations offer a Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program.

Association of Village Council Presidents

P.O. Box 219
Bethel, AK 99559
1-800-478-3521
1-907-543-7400
Website: www.avcp.org

Bristol Bay Native Association

P.O. Box 310
Dillingham, AK 99576
1-800-478-5257 or
1-907-842-5257
Fax: 1-907-842-5932
Website: www.bbna.com

Kuskokwim Native Association

P.O. Box 127 * Aniak, AK 99557
1-907-675-4384 or 1-800-478-5875
Fax: 907-675-4387
Website: www.kuskokwim.org

Tanana Chiefs Conference

122 1st Avenue, Suite 600
Fairbanks, AK 99701
1-907-452-8251
Website: www.tananachiefs.org

Other Organizations

Here are some regional organizations that provide home energy assistance:

Bering Straits Regional Housing Authority

P.O. Box 995 * Nome, AK 99762
1-800-478-5255 or
1-907-443-5256
Website: www.bsrha.org

Maniilaq Association

P.O. Box 256 * #733 2nd Avenue
Kotzebue, AK 99752
1-800-478-3312 (in AK) or
907-442-3311
Website: www.maniilaq.org

Power Cost Equalization Program

The goal of the Power Cost Equalization (PCE) program is to reduce the cost of power to customers in rural parts of Alaska that rely on high-cost diesel fuel for most of their electric power generation. To receive a PCE payment, a customer of an eligible electric utility must make timely payments to the utility for the electric power purchased.

Failure to pay your electric bills in a timely manner could result in the loss of eligibility in the PCE program and could cause your electric bills to soar even higher.

Keep Your Lights On!

To avoid loss of heat and/or power this winter, please be responsible and pay your bills on time or call AVEC's Member Service department to work out a payment agreement (if eligible). Do not wait until the last minute to apply for financial assistance.