

Dear Friend:

The Mercer County Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) and Universal Service Fund (USF) are administered by the County Housing and Community Development Office. Funds for the programs are provided through grants awarded by the New Jersey Department of Community Affairs.



The goal of LIHEAP and USF is to help pay the winter heating bills and medically necessary cooling costs of low-income and elderly people. During extreme weather conditions, people living in poverty and low-income elderly should not have to choose between buying fuel to heat or cool their homes and buying food for themselves and their families. LIHEAP and USF assistance clearly helps the people who need help the most.

If you are interested in participating in LIHEAP, I invite you to contact the Mercer County Office of Housing & Community Development at (609) 989-6858 to determine your eligibility to receive assistance.

Sincerely,

Brian M. Hughes, County Executive

Brian M. Hughes
County Executive

Kelvin S. Ganges
Chief of Staff

Andrew A. Mair
County Administrator

Elizabeth Maher Muoio
Director
Economic Development &
Sustainability

Edward M. Pattik, Director
Housing & Community
Development



**MERCER COUNTY BOARD OF
CHOSEN FREEHOLDERS**

Ann M. Cannon
Anthony P. Carabelli
John A. Cimino
Pasquale "Pat" Colavita
Samuel T. Frisby
Andrew Koontz
Lucy R. Walter



Funded in part by the NJ
Department of Community
Affairs and the County of
Mercer

Mercer County



2011

**Low Income Home
Energy Assistance
Program (LIHEAP)
&
Universal Service
Fund (USF)**



County of Mercer
Housing & Community Development
640 South Broad Street—Room 420
Trenton, New Jersey 08650
(609) 989-6858 (609) 989-0306 fax
www.mercercounty.org

LIHEAP/USF 2011 Program Year

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 November 1, 2010 to April 30, 2011. To apply for LIHEAP, contact the Mercer County Housing and Community Development Office at (609) 989-6959 or (609) 989-6858. For persons age 60 or over, or who are disabled, applications may be received and returned by mail. Households may also apply in person at 640 South Broad Street, Room 429, Trenton, New Jersey.

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 provided gives specific monthly gross income maximums for FFY 2011. Persons who live in public housing and/or receive rental assistance are not eligible unless they pay for their own heating/cooling costs directly to the fuel supplier. The amount of the LIHEAP heating benefit is determined by income, household size, fuel type, and heating region. This year, the medically necessary cooling assistance benefit is set at \$160.

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 receives 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. A household receiving medically necessary cooling benefits also receives a single party check.

Please Note: The FFY 2011 LIHEAP application is also an application for the Universal Service Fund (USF) Program. Therefore, you apply for two energy assistance programs at the same time. USF is a program created by the New Jersey Board of Public Utilities 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 must meet the same income guidelines as LIHEAP (listed below), and pay more than 3% of its annual gross 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 gross income on electricity to be eligible. USF income levels are at 175% of the federal poverty level.

ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

USF Household Income Limits

1 person	\$1,580	7 person	\$4,852
2 person	\$2,125	8 person	\$5,398
3 person	\$2,670	9 person	\$5,943
4 person	\$3,216	10 person	\$6,489
5 person	\$3,762	11 person	\$7,034
6 person	\$4,307	12 person	\$7,579

LIHEAP Household Income Limits

1 person	\$1,805	7 person	\$5,545
2 person	\$2,429	8 person	\$6,169
3 person	\$3,052	9 person	\$6,792
4 person	\$3,675	10 person	\$7,415
5 person	\$4,299	11 person	\$7,532
6 person	\$4,922	12 person	\$7,686

The following documentation is required when a applying:

- Social security cards for all household members.
- Proof of income—pay stubs, W2's, social security statement, pension statement, general assistance etc.
- Proof of Ownership—Deed or tax bill statement.
- Renters—Lease agreement (if no lease, landlord must complete a form that will be provided).
- Utility bill - gas, electric, or oil receipt.
- Cooling assistance - Doctor's note stating medical condition requires air conditioning.

TANF & FOOD STAMP RECIPIENTS - Please check with your caseworker regarding the automatic benefit application.

Clients who received heating/cooling assistance the previous year will only be required to complete a recertification form. Recertification forms are annually mailed at the beginning of the heating season (November 1). Recertification forms can also be obtained from the Mercer County Housing office.

Additional Utility Assistance Agencies:

Crisis Ministry

123 E. Hanover Street—Trenton

(609) 396-9355

61 Nassau Street - Princeton

(609) 921-2135

Mount Carmel Guild

73 N. Clinton Ave - Trenton

(609) 392-3402

United Progress Inc. (UPI)

162 W. State Street - Trenton

(609) 392-2161

Catholic Charities

132 N. Warren Street - Trenton

(609) 394-8847

NJ Shares 1-866-NJSHARES (657-4273)

NJ Lifeline Credit Program 1-800-792-9745

PSE&G Equal Payment Plan (EPP)

1-888-275-PSEG (7734)

For additional information please contact:

Mercer County Housing Office:
640 South Broad Street, Room 420
Trenton, NJ (609) 989-6858
(609) 989-6959 Heating office
(609) 989-0306 fax