



## Wyoming Department of Education

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### MEMORANDUM NO. 2008 - 153

**TO:** School District Superintendents

**FROM:** Dr. Jim McBride 

**DATE:** October 3, 2008

**SUBJECT:** Low Income Energy Assistance Available

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#### Important – Please Share

Energy Wise Wyoming is a campaign by a coalition of state agencies including the Department of Family Services, the Wyoming Public Service Commission, the State Energy office, the Governor's Office and the private non-profit Wyoming Energy Council.

Their goal is to raise awareness of anticipated higher heating costs and to educate consumers about what they can do to reduce their utility bills, as well as the assistance that is available. The coalition has been hearing that students are expressing to their teachers concerns over high winter heating prices and their family's ability to pay them. There is help available for all incomes. For more information please see:

[governor.wy.gov/blog/energy/regional-energy-assitance-resources-in-wyoming-.html](http://governor.wy.gov/blog/energy/regional-energy-assitance-resources-in-wyoming-.html)

An effective way to help students is to educate them about things they can do to conserve energy. The Wyoming Business Council and the Alliance to Save Energy has developed lesson plans, student guides, online educational games and other resources appropriate for grades K-eight. Each student can become an Official Energy Hog Buster upon completion of the lessons. [www.energyhog.org](http://www.energyhog.org).

JM:tcl

Attachment

# **Worried about your heating bill?**

Maybe we can help.

The Wyoming LIEAP (*lee-ap*) program can lower your home heating bill.

Get an application at your local senior center, from your utility company, a Department of Family Services office or online.

To learn more:

Call 1-800-246-4221 or <http://dfswweb.state.wy.us/lieap/lieap>.

# **Get help with your utility bill today.**

You qualify for LIEAP credits if your income is less than:

- o Single people - \$1,863 a month
- o Two-person households - \$2,508 a month
- o Family of four - \$3,798 a month

It's easy to apply.

Call 1-800-246-4221 or <http://dfsweb.state.wy.us/lieap/lieap>

## LIEAP Fact Sheet

### What does LIEAP mean?

LIEAP is short for Low-income Energy Assistance Program. In some states, it's called HEAP, which is short for Heat and Energy Assistance Program. It's pronounced *lee-ap*.

### What does LIEAP do?

LIEAP helps people, including senior citizens and families, pay heating costs for Wyoming's coldest months -- October, November, December, January, February, March, April and May. Clients still get bills, but they're not responsible for the entire amount due.

### Who gets LIEAP?

Single people earning less than \$1,863 a month qualify as do two-person households with less than \$2,508 coming in each month. A family of four qualifies if the income is less than \$3,798 a month.

### How does LIEAP work?

The program works like this: You apply by calling 800-246-4221 to get an application (or visit your local Department of Family Services field office) and if you qualify, your bill is paid using federal and state money. The bill for your main source of heat is paid in full until your LIEAP grant is exhausted. The utility company sends a copy of your bill to the Wyoming Department of Family Services and the payment is sent directly to the utility company so your bill is paid on time and for the exact amount every month until your LIEAP benefit is exhausted.

### Can I just sign up?

Sort of. You have to fill out an application first. Get an application by calling 800-246-4221 or go to your local DFS field office and ask a benefits specialist for an application.

### Where can I get a LIEAP application?

LIEAP applications always can be found at your local DFS office, local LIEAP and Weatherization office. You can get them from your utility company, senior center, and public health. You can also get one in the mail by calling 800-246-4221. On Sept. 8, the new application also will be on DFS' home page.

### Where does LIEAP money come from?

LIEAP is a federally- and state-funded program, meaning your tax dollars contribute to LIEAP.

### What's the application deadline? Does it matter when I apply?

Applications aren't available until late August and they will be processed starting Sept. 8.

### Will LIEAP pay my air conditioning bill?

Air conditioning bills aren't part of LIEAP in Wyoming because air conditioning isn't as important as keeping warm during our cold winters. (Some states do have what's called a cooling program. That includes states known for long, hot summers and warmer winters.)

### Can I just ask my social worker for an application?

Sure. Your caseworker might have an application, but caseworkers aren't as familiar with the program as benefits specialists at DFS. Your caseworker probably can't answer all your questions, so for the best help, call 800-246-4221 or see a benefits specialist at DFS.

### I'm worried my parents won't be able to heat their home this winter. What can I do?

Kids should tell their parents they're worried and let their parents know about LIEAP. Adult children should do the same thing and encourage their parent(s) to apply for LIEAP and offer help filling out the application if they need it.

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### My parents don't want to apply. They say it's too time consuming and the government is too nosey and wants to know how big their pension is every month. What can I do?

The application is easier than ever to fill out this year. And lots of people feel weird telling anyone how much money they have. It's perfectly normal, and DFS benefits specialists understand that. Because the money only can be spent to heat homes for some people, it's important to know who is really deserving of that help. Not everyone qualifies, after all. DFS benefits specialists see a lot of confidential information and in fact, they can be fired if they talk about it with anyone else.

### It doesn't matter. My parents don't want a handout. Can I apply for them?

Sorry, you can't apply for anyone but yourself. There might be some surprisingly simple things you can do to make your parents' and your own home warmer this winter. One of the simplest things people do is tack a fleece blanket over windows – it's a surprisingly efficient way to keep cold air out and warm air in. If you're handy at all or know someone who is, think about replacing doors and windows. Too costly? Try sealing window drafts with caulk and replacing door sweeps or placing weather stripping around doors.

### Geez, that seems like a lot of work. Can I just hire someone to do it?

Sure, you can hire someone to weatherize your home. To find someone who can do that work in your area, call your local LIEAP and Weatherization office or call 800-246-4221. Some utility companies offer a rebate for the cost of your energy audit, so be sure to ask about that, too.

### I can't afford the energy audit. Is there help available for that?

There sure is help for those who qualify. In fact, if you qualify for LIEAP, you qualify for a free energy audit and the weatherization is done free, too. It doesn't matter if you own or rent your home, either. Priority is given to elderly, disabled and children younger than age 6.

### What does the Weatherization Program look at?

This is a whole house audit looking at what can be done to reduce your energy use and bill. Some of the things done include: a look at your hot water heater and pipes. They wrap special blankets around them if they need it. They test your home's carbon monoxide levels and fix the leaks if there are any. (Breathing carbon monoxide can make people and pets very sick, so this is a good thing to check especially since it doesn't smell.) Weatherization pros also seal gaps around windows and doors. They add extra insulation inside walls and attics. If you live in a mobile home, they add extra insulation to the walls, ceiling and belly.

### Are there resources online?

Sure. Go to <http://lieap.state.wy.us> and click on the Tips for Weatherization link (*to be considered for development*).

### Where can I get the phone numbers I need for my local LIEAP and Weatherization office?

Go online to <http://dfsweb.state.wy.us/fieldop/briefing5b.htm>. (Or go to the DFS web site, click on programs and services, click on weatherization.)