



## LEAP Basics

The State of Montana, through the Department of Public Health and Human Services, offers two programs to assist low-income households reduce their heating costs.

The Weatherization Program helps participants to improve the heating efficiency of their homes and reduce their energy consumption.

For eligible people, the Low Income Energy Assistance Program (LIEAP) pays part of winter energy costs. Most utilities offer LIEAP recipients discounts on their bills. (The income guidelines and resource limits are shown at the right.)

This office serves residents of Lewis & Clark, Jefferson and Broadwater counties. We are a program of Rocky Mountain Development Council and are located at 648 N. Jackson, next to Capital Laundry off of Helena Ave. Phone: 447-1625.

Eligibility for both programs is based on income and assets of all household members. Both homeowners and renters may apply for these programs. The LIEAP and Weatherization program application is available at our office or at our website at [www.rmdc.net](http://www.rmdc.net) or at the state website at [www.dphs.mt.gov](http://www.dphs.mt.gov). Applications are accepted during the heating season, which is Oct. 1 through April 30 each year.

Records and information provided by you or obtained through verification is confidential and is not available to the public.

After applying for weatherization and/or fuel assistance, you will be sent a letter of notification. It will tell you whether you are eligible for assistance and what benefits you may expect to receive.

### 2011-2012 Income Guidelines

Household Size	Income Limit	Resource Limit
1	\$20,617	\$10,089
2	\$26,960	\$15,137
3	\$33,304	\$16,146
4	\$39,647	\$17,155
5	\$45,991	\$18,164
6	\$52,335	\$19,173
7	\$53,524	\$20,182
8	\$62,175	\$20,182

#### Apply Early

As of Oct. 31, Helena LIEAP office has received nearly 1,000 applications.

#### Inside this issue:

- 2011-12 income and resource limits are at the top right of the page.
- Copies of the following are required: all sources of income, photo ID's or birth certificates of all household members, current heat bill and bank statements. No exceptions.
- A properly signed application with all sections completed and all required documents will result in receiving LIEAP benefits more quickly. Incomplete applications and
- those with missing information are put on hold waiting for the required documentation.
- Contact the LIEAP office if you move any time after submitting an application.
- The deadline to apply for LIEAP this heating season is April 30, 2012.
- We're busier than ever, so please wait 45 days to check on the status of your application.

## Need to Know About LIEAP

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## LIEAP Frequently Asked Questions

<p><b>What types of heat will my LIEAP benefit pay for?</b> The main heat in your home whether that be electric, natural gas, propane, fuel oil, wood, pellets or coal.</p>	<p>teer to help with stacking, splitting or loading wood can call 495-9901.</p>	<p>benefit could be retroactive to heating charges incurred since Oct. 1 of the previous year.</p>
<p><b>If I move, do I need to reapply?</b> Yes! If you move, please notify our office as soon as possible. You must reapply to receive benefits at your new location.</p>	<p><b>Can I apply if my heating costs are included in my rent or in someone else's name?</b> You can. You'll just need to complete an additional form.</p>	
<p><b>I use both natural gas and wood to heat my home, can I apply for both?</b> LIEAP can help with only one heat source. You may choose which to use your benefit on.</p>	<p><b>I was denied last year for being over the liquid resource limits, should I reapply this year?</b> Yes. Resource limits change each year, and your circumstances may have changed, as well.</p>	<p><b>I used up all my LIEAP funds, what can I do now?</b> LIEAP helps with a portion of winter heating bills, but certainly does not cover all heating costs. If you are unable to pay for some of your own heating costs, you can apply for Energy Share if you are in an emergency situation.</p>
<p><b>I received LIEAP last year. Do I need to reapply?</b> Yes. Applications are accepted between Oct. 1 and April 30.</p>	<p><b>When do my benefits expire?</b> Usually April 30, however some years it has been extended to June 30 to use your benefit. Application deadline is still April 30.</p>	<p><b>How is Energy Share different than LIEAP?</b> Energy share is funded by donations and by repayments by prior recipients. Assistance is available for emergency situations only.</p>
<p><b>I heard I can get free firewood from LIEAP/Weatherization. Is that true?</b> At times. The free firewood program is based entirely on donations of wood and labor to cut, split, and manage the wood. Anyone who would like to volun-</p>	<p><b>Should I still apply in April when the season is almost over?</b> Yes. Your</p>	

## More Month Than \$\$\$? Budgeting Tips

Most of us struggle to support ourselves and family, but there are proven ways useful to everyone to extend budgets:

1. **Avoid eating out.** Dining out frequently is not a wise decision for most families. Instead, use money in your budget to plan better meals at home.
2. **Drink water.** Purchasing soda and fruit punch is a waste of money. Learn to drink water with your meals and improve your grocery budget. Your health will also improve.
3. **Buy in bulk.** Food items with a long shelf life are cheaper purchased in large packages. Buy rice, beans and dry pasta in large packages. Buy household products such as laundry detergent, bath soap and bathroom tissue in bulk.
4. **Use coupons.** Coupons help stretch your grocery budget up to 50 percent or more. The benefits are even greater when coupons are used during sales. Coupons are essentially free money.
5. **Shop used.** Check out thrift stores for quality, brand name used household items, clothing, toys, etc. Shopping second-hand can reduce the clothing budget by 80 percent.
6. **Use free DVDs.** Your local library has a great supply of DVDs, CDs and books to borrow and enjoy at your family's leisure.
7. **Stop playing the lottery.** The dollars you spend on a long, long shot to get rich quick may be able to pay your portion of your energy bill.
8. **Conserve energy and save money.** Turn down your thermostat 5 degrees and save 10% on your heat bill. Unplug appliances/electronic equipment when not in use. Air dry clothes when possible, indoors or out.
9. **Know where your money is going.** It's easy to fall into "helplessness" thinking. (You believe you can't improve things so you don't even try and you just keep going in deeper.) It's painful, but write down the numbers. Make a list of what you bring in and where the money is going and how much you owe. Then make a plan.
10. **Pay yourself first.** A good budget includes money for savings. Have money automatically taken from each paycheck and deposited into a savings account. Even \$25 per month will add up to thousands of dollars over time.

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## How to Give Back — Repay Assistance from Energy Share

It's a good idea to pay back your Energy Share assistance when you can. Your repayment will "pay" it forward" by helping another household in a similar situation. It also gives you a chance to receive Energy Share assistance again if the need arises. Lifetime benefits from Energy Share are limited unless repayment is made. Make your check payable to Energy Share. Include your name, contact information and note you are making a repayment. Mail your check to:

Energy Share of Montana  
PO Box 5959  
Helena, MT 59604

### Spend Some Time, Save Money

**1. Replace your showerhead.**

Estimated time: 15 minutes  
Install a low-flow shower head and save money twice.  
Use less water that you pay to heat and save on your water consumption bill or pumping costs. Low-flow shower heads use 1/3 to 1/2 as much water.

**2. Switch to fluorescent light bulbs.**

Estimated time: 15 minutes  
ENERGY STAR-rated CFLs use 75% less electricity and last as much as 10 times longer. Replace 5 incandescent bulbs that you use the most, and you could save \$65 in one year.



**3. Install a programmable thermostat.**

Estimated time: 30 minutes or less  
You can preset temperatures for your home and adjust heating and cooling systems to match when you are not at home or sleeping. Savings can be as much as \$180 annually and pay for the thermostat in a few months.

**4. Unplug electronic devices.**

Estimated time: minutes a day  
Use a power strip or simply unplug. When cell phones, digital cameras or laptops are done charging, the charger still draws energy unless you unplug it. Americans spend more money powering electronic devices when they are off than when they are on. Savings varies, but is substantial.

### Social Security Benefits Increase in January SAVE YOUR LETTER

Social Security recipients will get a 3.6 percent increase in benefits next year, their first raise since 2009, the government announced recently.

The increase, which starts in January, is tied to a [measure of inflation released in October](#). About 8 million people who receive Supplemental Security Income will also receive the 3.6 percent cost-of-living adjustment, or COLA, meaning the increase will affect about one in five U.S. residents.

There was no COLA in 2010 or 2011 because inflation was too low. Those were the first two years without a COLA since automatic increases were adopted in 1975.

Monthly Social Security payments average \$1,082, or about \$13,000 a year. A 3.6 percent increase will amount to about \$39 a month, or just over \$467 a year, on average.

For those applying for LEAP, please remember to save your benefit letter once you receive it. This will be required if you apply after December or next heating season.

### Save Energy and Money



Information on conserving energy and weatherization materials are available at no charge to LEAP clients. You must contact Jane, the LEAP Outreach & Education Coordinator, first (441-3960) to discuss your specific weatherization material needs.



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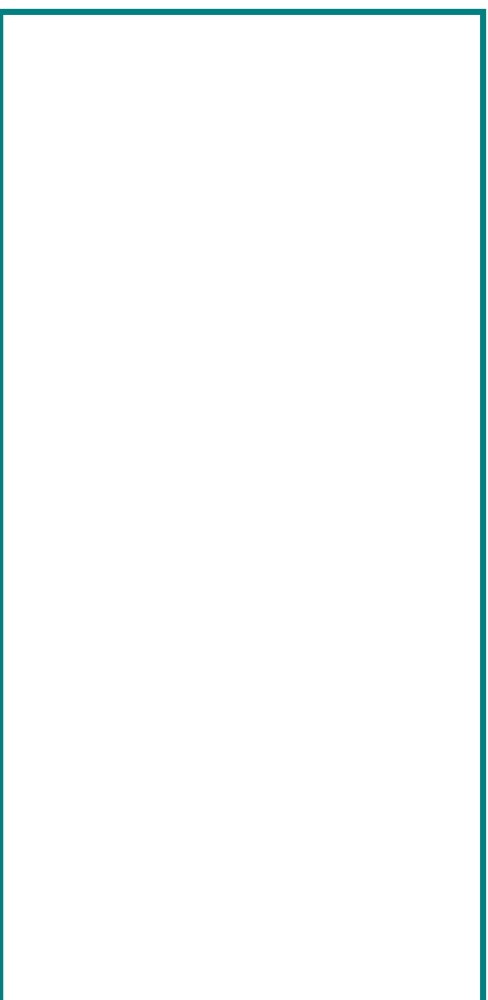
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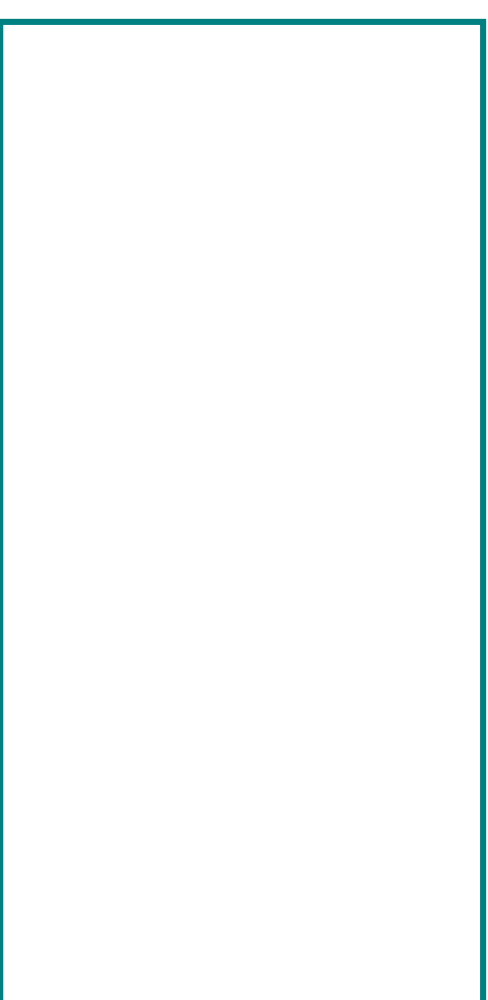


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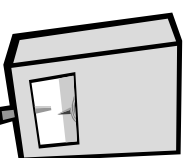


## LAST CHANCE!!

### Take Control of Your Energy Costs

Attend one of the final two Home Energy Saver Workshops. Attendance is 100% FREE

- Learn about energy use in your home.
- Receive a free weatherization kit and learn how to install.
- Apply to have a FREE ENERGY MONITOR SYSTEM installed in your home.
- Learn where your energy dollars are going and what you can do to save money.



**East Helena: Tuesday, Dec. 6, 6-8 p.m., E. Helena Fire Hall, 2 E. Pacific**

**Helena: Tuesday, Dec. 13, 6-8 p.m., Lewis & Clark Library, 120 S. Last Chance Gulch**

**Registration is not required for attendance, but you can preregister and learn more at: [www.ncat.org/workshops](http://www.ncat.org/workshops) or by calling NCAAT at 406-723-7581.**

These workshops are available through a Sustainable Energy Resource Consumers (SERC) Grant and funded by The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) of 2009. Sponsored by Rocky Mountain Development Council and presented by the National Center for Appropriate Technology.

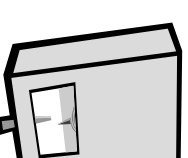


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