



VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF
SOCIAL SERVICES

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Media Contact: Cletisha Lovelace

Cletisha.Lovelace@dss.virginia.gov

New Energy Assistance Program Will Provide Expanded Relief to Virginia Households Affected by COVID-19

Richmond, VA (September 10, 2020) – Households in need of assistance meeting energy needs may be eligible to receive aid through the Virginia COVID-19 Energy Assistance Program. The new program will assist low-income households that would not typically be eligible for other energy assistance programs offered by the Virginia Department of Social Services (VDSS) due to financial or vulnerable individual (*a household member who is age 60 or over, disabled, or under age six*) criteria. Eligible households will receive a one-time payment of \$300 to address their immediate energy costs, including energy debt accumulated during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act of 2020 provided \$900 million of supplemental Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) funding to assist households impacted by COVID-19. Through this federal funding, VDSS received \$23,356,803, to support the establishment of the Virginia COVID-19 Energy Assistance Program and provide other energy assistance resources to eligible households.

“I am thrilled that expanded home emergency relief will be extended to Virginia households most in need,” said VDSS Commissioner S. Duke Storen. “With the moratorium on service cut-offs ending on September 16 and the financial impact of COVID-19 continuing to affect communities both across the Commonwealth and nation, it’s critical that we bolster support for families navigating this crisis with limited income or dependent household members. The Virginia COVID-19 Energy Assistance Program will accomplish this and make the greatest use of the remaining LIHEAP funds.”

Applications can be submitted [online](#), through the [COVID-19 Virginia Resources](#) mobile app or by phone through Friday, November 20, 2020, or until funds are exhausted. Eligibility criteria for assistance includes:

- Must be a resident of Virginia
- Must have a heating or cooling expense responsibility
- Must be either a United States citizen or an eligible immigrant
- A household’s monthly gross income must be less than the maximum allowed for the number of people in the home as follows:

Household Size	Maximum Income
1	\$2,720
2	\$3,558
3	\$4,395
4	\$5,232
5	\$6,069
6	\$6,907
Each Additional Member	Add \$156

Households that have previously received crisis, fuel or cooling assistance (*except equipment-related services*) from VDSS within the 12 months are not eligible to receive Virginia COVID-19 Energy Assistance Program benefits. However, households may qualify for other heating assistance through VDSS’ normal fuel assistance application process, which begins Tuesday, October 13 and ends Friday, November 13.

For additional assistance regarding the Virginia COVID-19 Energy Assistance Program, visit <http://www.dss.virginia.gov/covideap> or contact the dedicated energy assistance line at 1-833-829-2767. Additional information regarding other energy assistance resources is available at dss.virginia.gov/benefit/ea/.

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