



For Immediate Release:
March 26, 2020

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Ohio Updates Application Process for Energy Assistance Programs in response to COVID-19

The Ohio Development Services Agency (Development) and Community Action Wayne/Medina are working to help keep Ohioans safe during this time of emergency. Recently, Governor Mike DeWine declared a state of emergency regarding COVID-19, and Ohio Department of Health Director Amy Acton, M.D., MPH has issued orders to limit social interactions to prevent the spread of COVID-19.

Effective immediately, Ohioans who are enrolling in the Percentage of Income Payment Plan Plus (PIPP) for the first time, applying for Home Energy Assistance Winter Crisis Program, or have limited income, are no longer required to visit a local Energy Assistance Provider in order to complete an application. Residents of Wayne and Medina County can complete an application for HEAP, PIPP or the Winter Crisis Program online or make a phone appointment by calling 844-493-1196.

Ohioans can visit www.energyhelp.ohio.gov to complete their application online or to start their application and upload the required documents prior to their appointment. If you do not have access to the internet and/or cannot upload your documentation, Community Action Wayne/Medina will complete your application over the phone.

“Working with our local providers, we have been providing Ohio families with the support they need to manage their energy bills, and now this support is even more important,” said Lydia Mihalik, Director of the Ohio Development Services Agency. “The online application, in a normal scenario, makes it easier to apply and reduces the length of an in-person appointment, but now it is providing a bridge to assistance during an incredibly difficult time.”

Development will also extend the Winter Crisis Program (WCP) until May 1, 2020 to align with the Public Utilities Commission of Ohio’s extended Winter Reconnect Order and the regular Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP) will be extended until June 1, 2020.

The Home Energy Assistance Winter Crisis Program helps income-eligible Ohioans pay their heating bills and can assist with fuel tank placement, fuel tank testing and furnace repair. Ohioans must have a gross income at or below 175% of the federal poverty guidelines to qualify for WCP and HEAP assistance. For a family of four the annual income must be at or below \$45,062.50. Ohioans must have a gross income at or below 150% of the federal poverty guidelines to qualify for PIPP. For a family of four the annual income must be at or below \$38,625.00.

Ohioans that have a regulated utility and have been issued a disconnect notice are eligible for a one-time WCP benefit if they have not already received a WCP or regular HEAP benefit.

For more information about the features of the Winter Crisis Program locally and what is needed to apply, contact Community Action Wayne/Medina at 330-264-8677. Additional information can also be found at www.energyhelp.ohio.gov or by calling (800) 282-0880.

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