



Press Release

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For More Information
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LEAP Helps With High Cost of Utilities

Denver, Co Seniors and other low income individuals often are faced with high utility bills during the winter. This year, many seniors who are on fixed incomes will find paying for heating bills very daunting, especially given the recent increases in the cost of fuel.

The LEAP program is available to individuals who make less than \$1,574 (\$2,111 for couples) who need assistance paying for heating costs from November 1, 2007 to April 30, 2008. There are no resource requirements, thus individuals who have some savings can still apply for LEAP.

To be eligible for LEAP, a senior citizen is considered "vulnerable" if they are paying home heating costs and live in a traditional home, trailer, apartment, townhouse, or condominium. Electricity is countable only if it is used as the primary source for heating the home.

Individuals are eligible for LEAP if they rent a non-subsidized housing unit and are paying home heating costs either as part of the rent or as a separate charge.

Individuals who live in subsidized housing may be eligible for LEAP if the household has a separate meter and/or the individual pays an additional charge for home heating costs. Those who live in subsidized housing and do not pay an additional charge for utilities either to the utility company or to the property owner are not eligible.

To receive benefits, individuals must be lawfully present in the United States. To prove lawful presence, individuals must complete the LEAP application and attach a copy of one of the following: a Colorado driver's license or identification card; a military card; a US merchant mariner card; or a Native American tribal document. In addition, the applicant must sign an affidavit stating he or she is a US citizen or legal permanent resident when submitting the application.

Another benefit of LEAP is weatherization. Individuals receiving LEAP, must agree to an energy audit and weatherization repairs. Weatherization provides assistance with such things as attic, wall and crawl space insulation; furnace repairs; and broken windows.

Those receiving Old Age Pension and Supplemental Security Income, as well as those who have received LEAP payments previously will automatically receive an application in the mail.

Individuals who need a LEAP application, a contact with the local weatherization provider, or other assistance in applying for utility assistance, can call 303-333-3482. Applications are also available at <http://www.energyoutreach.org/help.asp> or through the county department of social/human services.

Eileen Doherty, MS is the Executive Director of Senior Answers and Services and the Colorado Gerontological Society, 3006 East Colfax, Denver CO 80206. She has more than 30 years of experience in education and training, clinical practice, research, and public policy in gerontology. You may reach her at 303-333-3482 or Doherty001@att.net.