



NICAA



PY26 HOME ENERGY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (LIHEAP)

Northwestern Illinois Community Action Agency, as administrator of the Home Energy Assistance Program in Stephenson and Jo Daviess Counties, is pleased to announce that funds are available to assist income-eligible households with their natural gas, propane and/or electric bills and furnace assistance for inoperable heating systems.

The program will begin accepting applications by appointment on **October 5, 2026** for older adults (60 years +), individuals with a disability, families with children age 5 years and under, and households that are disconnected from their utilities, have a disconnection notice or have less than 25% in their propane tank. All other income eligible households can start applying **November 1, 2026**.

Applications will be taken on a first-come, first-served basis through August 13, 2027, or until funding is exhausted. Households that receive a one-time benefit may return during the program year for a Reconnection Assistance or Furnace Assistance benefit(s), if needed.

Households that are customers of federal funded utilities/energy vendors must be at or below 60% of the State Median Income to receive a benefit from LIHEAP. The income guidelines are as follows: 1- \$3,441, 2- \$4,500, 3- \$5,558, 4- \$6,617. Households that are customers of Ameren Illinois, ComEd, Nicor Gas, North Shore Gas and Peoples Gas must be at or below 300% of the Federal Poverty Guidelines to receive a benefit from LIHEAP. The 30-day income guidelines for LIHEAP are based on either Federal Poverty Guidelines or State Median Income, and the number of persons living in the household. Go to www.nicaa.org or www.liheapillinois.com to know income limits for households with 5 members and more.

The Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) provides one-time benefits to income eligible homeowners and renters to help with energy bills and for reconnection of energy service. Propane customers who are part of the priority group are encouraged to apply when the program opens in October. Propane prices typically increase during the winter months so by applying early propane customers will see their LIHEAP benefit go further.

**** To apply, you MUST submit ALL of the required documents. ****

- Proof of gross income from all household members for the prior 30-day period beginning with the date of application.
- For all customers new to LIHEAP, and/or for new household members of previous customers, proof of Social Security numbers (SSN) for all household members. Individuals without an SSN or Individual Taxpayer Identification Number (ITIN) can still apply and NICAA will advise accordingly.
- A copy of current heat and electric bills issued within the last 30 days.
- Cash assistance is available for renters who can provide a copy of their lease/rental agreement showing their heating costs are included in the rent.
- Other documents may be needed based on your household situation. If you have questions regarding this, please call our office.

Income eligible LIHEAP customers of Ameren Illinois, ComEd, Nicor Gas, North Shore Gas and Peoples Gas will receive a monthly discount on their natural and/or electric bill through the Low Income Discount Rates. Visit powerbilldiscount.com to know more details.

Please call the NICAA Main Office at 815-232-3141 or Toll Free at 800-883-1111 to receive information on outreach locations and schedules, and for information on what documents are needed to apply and different ways to submit your application.



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