



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

William Larkin

Larkin Announces Home Heating Assistance For Working Families

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Senator Bill Larkin (R-C, Cornwall-on-Hudson) today reminded working families to see if they are qualified for the state's home heating assistance program.

The Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP) administered through the State Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance (OTDA) is a federally funded program that assists eligible households in meeting their home energy needs. HEAP is now accepting applications which can be filed with the local Department of Social Services.

In Orange County, call: (845) 291-4000. In Ulster County, call: (845) 334-5000.

"With rising gas and oil prices, it is critically important that our most vulnerable residents receive the help they need," said Senator Larkin. "Low-income working families should have the security of knowing that they can heat their homes throughout the winter and meet their basic needs."

Low-income households spend as much as 14 percent of their annual income on energy, compared to less than four percent for other households.

This season, the maximum regular benefit a household can receive will increase by 23 percent to \$540 – up from \$440 last year.

In addition, OTDA has increased eligibility levels to the maximum allowed under law. For example, a family of four with a household income of as much as \$43,308 – up from \$40,716 a year ago – would be eligible for home energy assistance this year.

OTDA designed the HEAP program so that the highest benefits are provided to households that spend a large percentage of their income on energy costs and include vulnerable low-income families. "Vulnerable" individuals are defined as children less than six years of age, adults 60 years of age or older, and disabled individuals.

Income eligible residents in New York can receive one benefit a season, which last year averaged about \$270, and could also be eligible for an emergency benefit if they are in impending danger of running out of fuel or having their utility service shut off. The average emergency benefit was \$371 last year.