



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Patty Ritchie

Helping People Stay Warm This Winter

Senator Patty Ritchie

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Senator Ritchie's Weekly Column

Winter is just around the corner, and as the temperature drops, our home heating costs go up. Unfortunately, the decision to turn the heat on is not so simple for many people in our region. The winter months hit many of our family, friends and neighbors with the troubling task of deciding to pay for heat, or prioritize other needs, such as food or medication. It is essential that those asking themselves that very question, know there is a way to pay for heat, without completely sacrificing those critical needs.

Starting November 12th, people can begin to apply for New York State's Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP). I encourage all New Yorkers needing a little bit of help to fill out an application as soon as possible.

This year, depending on income, household size and the type of heating source you use, eligible applicants can receive a one-time benefit of up to \$675, plus potential add-on benefits. However, I urge you to apply as soon as possible as funding through this program is only available until it runs out.

In addition to applying for the one-time benefit, households can also apply for an emergency benefit—beginning on Thursday, January 2, 2020—if they are in danger of having their heat turned off, or they are running out of their heating source.

This winter join me in ensuring our seniors, family, friends and neighbors by sharing this lifesaving information and helping them apply for this key program helping people stay warm as the temperatures drops.

To learn more about HEAP, program changes for this winter and to fill out an application, you can visit <https://otda.ny.gov/programs/heap/> or obtain an application at your local Department of Social Services office (listed below):

- ***Jefferson County Department of Social Services***

250 Arsenal Street, Watertown, NY -- (315) 785-3000

- ***Oswego County Department of Social Services***

100 Spring Street, Mexico, NY -- (315) 963-5031

- ***St. Lawrence County Department of Social Services***

6 Judson Street, Canton, NY -- (315) 379-2303