April 27, 2026

Expand Energy Assistance

SF 486 / HF 771

The Energy Assistance Program provides vital relief during the winter. The Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP or EAP) has helped Minnesota households for over 45 years. Income-qualified renters and homeowners can receive funding to help with heating bills and emergencies. The program helps about 130,000 Minnesota households each season and is a pipeline to the Weatherization Assistance Program, which permanently reduces energy costs. Families that contact service providers about Energy Assistance are also connected with other services, helping to stabilize the whole household.

But Energy Assistance falls far short of the need.

There is not enough funding. Only about 25% of eligible households receive assistance. Facing pressures from inflation and the cost of housing, Minnesotans are more than $100 million past-due to their utilities—and shutoffs for nonpayment have reached new highs. More than 90,000 Minnesotans faced utility shutoffs in each of the past two years.

Assistance is not available when it is most needed to prevent shutoffs. The majority of shutoffs occur between June and September—when Energy Assistance is not typically available to help.

Assistance is not available to help with cooling needs. As our summers become hotter and more unpredictable, the absence of cooling assistance leaves thousands of Minnesotans—elderly residents, young children, and those with pre-existing medical conditions—exposed to severe health risks.

Already, most states provide Energy Assistance in the summer months. 31 US states and territories provide LIHEAP assistance for cooling, including our Midwest neighbors in North Dakota and Nebraska.

CITIZENS UTILITY BOARD

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This bill seeks to help low-income households, who pay a high proportion of household income for home energy, in meeting their immediate home energy needs. The bill will:

Prevent shutoffs by keeping the Energy Assistance Program open through the summer.

Allow a greater number of eligible MN households to receive assistance.

Provide state funding to existing infrastructure and service providers.

Supporters include:

AYADA LEADS
BLACK VISIONS
BUILDING DECARBONIZATION COALITION
cee Center for Energy and Environment
clean energy economy mn
CenterPoint Energy
Ceres
CUB
CITY OF BLOOMINGTON MINNESOTA
St. Louis Park MINNESOTA
COMMUNITY POWER
CONNEXUS ENERGY
CEF COOPERATIVE ENERGY FUTURES
COPAL
CORDIA creating energy solutions
CURE
DISTRICT ENERGY ST. PAUL
EnergyCENTS COALITION
Fresh Energy
Habitat for Humanity of Minnesota
LEGAL AID WORKING TOWARD JUSTICE FOR ALL
MinnCAP MINNESOTA COMMUNITY ACTION PARTNERSHIP America's Poverty Fighting Network
MINNESOTA ENERGY RESOURCES
MINNESOTA COUNCIL ON LATINO AFFAIRS
mhp improving home & community
MMUA Minnesota Municipal Utilities Association
minnesota power AN ALLETE COMPANY
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For more information, contact Megan Verdeja: megan@unitedstrategiesllc.com or 612-382-2292.