

C.E.F.S. Economic Opportunity Corporation

“Community Action Agency”



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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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C.E.F.S. Announces the Start of the Energy Assistance Program

LIHEAP is available for ALL income qualified households beginning September 1, 2022

[Effingham]— The C.E.F.S. Economic Opportunity Corporation, as administrator of the Home Energy Assistance Program in Christian, Clay, Effingham, Fayette, Montgomery, Moultrie, and Shelby counties, is pleased to announce that funds are available to assist income-eligible households with their natural gas, propane and electric bills and furnace assistance.

The program will begin **September 1, 2022**, for all income-eligible households. Applications will be taken on a first-come, first-served basis through May 31, 2023. There will be no priority groups this program year. **Households in need are encouraged to apply.**

Households must be at or below 200% of the federal poverty level to receive a benefit from the LIHEAP Program. The 30-day income guidelines for LIHEAP are based on Federal Poverty Guidelines, State Median Income and the number of persons living in the household. The income guidelines are as follows: 1-\$2,265, 2-\$3,052, 3-\$3,838, 4-\$4,625. Income limits for households with 5 members and more can be found at www.cefseoc.org.

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 are encouraged to apply when the program opens in September to take greater advantage of lower propane prices. Propane prices typically increase during the winter months so by applying early propane customers will see their LIHEAP benefit go further.

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EQUAL OPPORTUNITY EMPLOYER

Appointments can be made by contacting the C.E.F.S. Effingham County Outreach office at 1010 W. Jefferson St. Effingham, phone 217-347-7514 Monday through Friday 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Appointments can be made with the outreach office starting on August 17th. The online C.E.F.S. LIHEAP request for service will be available starting September 1, 2022, at www.cefseoc.org/LIHEAP-application.

In order that no one is denied the opportunity to make an application we will continue to take applications in-person, by phone, or electronically. If you require any special accommodations, please contact the local C.E.F.S. Outreach office in your county to arrange.

Items needed at the time of application include:

1. Proof of gross income from all household members for the prior 30-day period beginning with the date of application.
2. Proof of Social Security numbers or Individual Taxpayer Identification Number (ITIN) for all household members. Individuals without an SSN or ITIN can still apply and C.E.F.S. will advise accordingly.
3. A copy of current heat and electric bills issued within the last 30 days.
4. A copy of rental agreement (if renting) showing that utilities are included, the monthly rental amount and landlord contact.
5. Other documents may be needed based on your household situation. If you have questions regarding this, please call our office.

This year water and sewer cost assistance is available through the Low-Income Household Water Assistance Program (LIHWAP). You can apply for water and sewer assistance during your LIHEAP appointment by bringing your water bill to your LIHEAP appointment. Help with arrearages is available as well as rate reduction assistance of \$100-\$400, depending upon your income level. Prior year recipients are eligible to re-apply.

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