



News Release

Lifeline, Inc.

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Home Energy Assistance Program Summer Crisis Program Helping Lake Co. Residents Beat the Heat August 17, 2018

PAINESVILLE, Ohio— The HEAP Summer Crisis Program (SCP) began on July 2nd and this year applications have been very steady.

“July and August can be two extremely hot months in Ohio, and that can take a toll on older Ohioans and Ohioans with breathing conditions,” said David Goodman, director of the Ohio Development Services Agency.

So far this summer, over 200 Lake County households have received assistance through the Home Energy Assistance Summer Crisis Program. In 2017 more than 315 families in Lake County were assisted.

“This summer has already been a hot one with several days in the 90s,” said Carrie Dotson, Executive Director at Lifeline. “Our goal with the Summer Crisis Program is always to keep our most vulnerable residents, the elderly and those with health conditions, safe, cool and comfortable in the hot summer months.”

The Summer Crisis Program assists low-income households with an older household member (60 years or older), or households that can provide physician documentation that cooling assistance is needed for a household member's health. Conditions can include lung disease, Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease, or asthma.

Eligible households can receive up to \$300 if they are a customer of a regulated utility, or \$500 if they are a customer of unregulated utilities such as electric cooperatives and municipal utilities. The assistance is applied to their utility bill or applied to central air conditioning repair costs. Eligible customers can also apply to receive a window air conditioner. Window air conditioners are extremely limited and will be available on a first come, first served basis.

Ohioans must have a gross income at or below 175 percent of the federal poverty guidelines to qualify for assistance. For a family of four the annual income must be at or below \$43,925. As the eligibility guidelines have changed from last year's SCP, participants are recommended to contact the Lifeline, Inc. Energy Assistance Office to see if they meet eligibility guidelines at (440) 350-9160. Information is also available on the Lifeline website at www.lclifeline.org

Ohioans enrolled in the Percentage of Income Payment Plan Plus Program (PIPP Plus) are not eligible for bill payment assistance through the program, but are encouraged to contact 2-1-1 Lake County to identify other opportunities for assistance.

Beginning July 2, the Lifeline, Inc. Energy Assistance Office will offer both scheduled appointments and walk-in hours each week. A limited number of walk-ins will be accepted on a first come, first served basis on Monday, Wednesday and Friday mornings at 7:30 a.m. Only customers who meet the eligibility requirements and have all required documentation will be able to complete their application process.

Required documentation includes photo ID, social security cards for all household members, proof of all household gross income for the last 30 days, plus current gas and electric bills and name of your fuel oil carrier, if applicable. Self-employment and seasonal work will require 12-month income, all tax forms including Schedule

C for 2017. If not available, tax transcripts will be required. If applicant is moving, pending account numbers must be provided for new utility accounts. If any utilities are included in applicant's rent, a current lease copy will also be required. Additional documents may be required on a case by case basis.

Appointments can be scheduled by calling our automated appointment line at 1-866-223-1471. This line will also give callers a list of the required documents needed to complete an application. Appointments will be scheduled through August 31, 2018.

Through a partnership with the Lake County Council on Aging, Lifeline will be offering appointments specifically for senior citizens at a variety of Lake County's Senior Centers throughout summer. Lifeline staff will be at the Willoughby Senior Center on August 23. Additional Senior Centers may be scheduled. All appointments will be made between 8:30 a.m. and 12:30 p.m. and can be scheduled by calling the senior centers directly.

For more information on the HEAP Programs, please contact Lifeline, Inc.'s Energy Assistance Office at (440) 350-9160. Lifeline's Energy Assistance Office is located at 54 S. State Street, Suite 303 in Painesville.

Lifeline for the Empowerment and Development of Consumers was founded in 1973 with the mission of helping Lake County residents by providing them assistance and life skills programming that is designed to increase self-sufficiency. In 1980 Lifeline became a participating agency of the United Way of Lake County, UWLC, and in 1987 was designated a community action agency by the Ohio Development Services Agency, ODSA. In 2008, Lifeline was designated as a mental health agency by the Ohio Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services.

Today Lifeline continues with the same mission of helping Lake County's low-income residents break the cycle of poverty and make the transition from agency-dependency to self-sufficiency. Lifeline's current programming includes services in the healthcare, housing & energy assistance, information & referral services and consumer education & job training areas. Our motto is 'helping people, changing lives.' Lifeline is currently funded by the UWLC and by grants through the ODSA, the Lake County Board of Commissioners, the Lake County ADAMHS Board, Lake County Department of Job & Family Services, the City of Mentor, the Western Reserve Junior Service League and through private donors.