



News Release

Lifeline, Inc.

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Home Energy Assistance Program Summer Crisis Program Concludes September 30 September 14, 2021

PAINESVILLE, Ohio— On July 1, the Ohio Department of Development and Lifeline, Inc. began assisting income-eligible Ohioans maintain their utility service through the Home Energy Assistance Summer Crisis Program. The program helps eligible Ohioans pay an electric bill, purchase an air conditioning unit or fan, or pay for central air conditioning repairs. This year, the program will run from July 1 until September 30, 2021.

In 2020 more than 320 families in Lake County were assisted through the Home Energy Assistance Summer Crisis Program. Since July 1 already over 390 Lake County households have applied for assistance. To date, 256 households have been approved for assistance, with seven receiving fans and 51 receiving air conditioners. Over \$58,000 in federal HEAP funding has been expended.

“It was a fairly hot start to summer and with the expanded guidelines, we knew we would be busy this summer. September has continued to be hot, so we’re grateful the season was extended through September 30 this year,” 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. Examples of conditions can include lung disease, Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease, asthma, etc. This year, households that were diagnosed with COVID-19 in the past 12 months, have a disconnect notice, have been shut off, or are trying to establish new service on their electric bill are also eligible for assistance.

Eligible households can receive up to \$500 if they are a customer of a regulated utility, or up to \$800 if they are a customer of unregulated utilities such as electric cooperatives and municipal utilities. The assistance is applied to their utility bill, or to purchase an air conditioning unit or fan, or pay for central air conditioning repairs. Ohioans must have a gross income at or below 175% of the federal poverty guidelines to qualify for assistance. For a family of four the annual income must be at or below \$46,375.

Ohioans enrolled in the Percentage of Income Payment Plan Plus Program (PIPP) who meet the above criteria may be eligible for assistance towards their default PIPP payment, first PIPP payment, or may receive an air conditioning unit and/or fan.

Ohioans can visit energyhelp.ohio.gov to start their application prior to their required appointment. This year appointments will be held in person at Lifeline. To schedule an appointment call, 1-440-381-8230 or visit <https://app.capappointments.com/> All walk-in sessions will be held by appointment only. Appointments will

be added daily for the following business day to accommodate critical circumstances and walk-in appointments. Appointments will be for Summer Crisis Program applicants only. Customers applying for HEAP and PIPP will not be given an appointment, but have the options to apply online or to drop off, fax or mail applications and all verifications to our office for processing.

For more information about the features of the Summer Crisis Program locally and what is needed to apply, contact Lifeline's Energy Assistance Office at 440-350-9160 or visiting our website at www.lclifeline.org. Lifeline's office re-located in June 2020 and is now located at One Victoria Place, Suite 265A in Painesville. Additional information can also be found at www.energyhelp.ohio.gov or by calling (800) 282-0880.

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 Department of Development, ODOD. In 2008, Lifeline was designated as a mental health agency by the Ohio Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services. Lifeline received interim designation as Geauga County's community action agency in 2020.

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, guardianship, and consumer education & job training areas. Our motto is 'helping people, changing lives.' Lifeline is currently funded by grants through the ODOD, 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, the Lake County Board of Developmental Disabilities, Lake Health, UWLC and through private donors.