



News Release

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Home Energy Assistance Program Summer Crisis Program Set to Start July 1, 2022

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PAINESVILLE, Ohio— Beginning July 1, the Ohio Department of Development and Lifeline, Inc. will help 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, 2022.

In 2021 more than 360 families in Lake County were assisted through the Home Energy Assistance Summer Crisis Program. In just the first two weeks of the program, already over 40 families have applied for assistance, with 21 households being approved for assistance, including the distribution of 8 air conditioners and 6 fans.

“We always help so many families through the Summer Crisis Program and we expect this year to be no exception, especially with the expanded eligibility guidelines and longer program period,” said Carrie Dotson, Executive Director at Lifeline. “It’s already been a very hot start to summer and 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), that can provide physician documentation that cooling assistance is needed for a household member's health, have a disconnect notice, have been shut off, are trying to establish new service on their electric bill, or require air conditioning. Conditions can include such things as lung disease, Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease, or asthma.

Eligible households can receive up to \$500 if they are a customer of a regulated utility, or \$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 \$48,562.50.

Also, 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, central air conditioning repairs, or may receive an air conditioning unit and/or fan.

Clients need to bring copies of the following documents to their appointment:

- Copies of their most recent energy bills;
- A list of all household members and proof of income for the last 30 days or 12 months for each member, along with social security cards;

- Proof of U.S. citizenship or legal residency for all household members;
- Proof of disability (if applicable);
- Physician documentation that cooling assistance is needed for a household member's health (if there isn't a household member over the age of 60), or facing disconnect.

Ohioans can visit energyhelp.ohio.gov to start their application prior to their required appointment. Appointments will be held in person at Lifeline. To schedule an appointment call, 1-440-381-8230 or visit <https://app.capappointments.com/>. Appointments will be added daily for the following business day to accommodate those whose electric is already disconnected. 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. A Lifeline drop box is located in the first-floor lobby at 8 N. State Street.

Appointments will also be offered at some of Lake County's senior citizens centers throughout the summer crisis season. Currently appointments are available at Eastlake Senior Center on July 19, Perry Senior Center on August 2, Madison Senior Center on August 11, Wickliffe Senior Center on August 18 and Kirtland Senior Center on August 23. We expect more appointments may become available at other centers as we move later into the summer.

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 2022 and is now located at 8 North State Street Suite 300 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 & Geauga Counties' 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 the UWLC and 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 and through private donors.