

Mainlines

NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 2009

A newsletter for the customers of the Holyoke Gas & Electric Department



Winter

is just around the corner...

Let HG&E help you prepare for the cold weather ahead.

Winter weather is now upon us. And this year, many families will be struggling to find a way to cope with winter heating costs. Although HG&E will continue to diligently work to keep our rates low, many Holyoke residents will still be unable to pay their bills. We ask that you take action now, and seek the many sources of aid available. A comprehensive list of contacts is contained in this newsletter, and we ask that you consider requesting aid if you are eligible.

Summary of Low-Income Programs

Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) / 413-552-1548 / www.valleyopp.com
 Funded by the Federal Government, the LIHEAP program assists low-income individuals and families with the cost of heating their homes during the winter season. Homeowners and renters including households whose cost of heat is included in the rent can apply.

First-time applicants must apply in person at the fuel assistance agency in their area. In Holyoke, this is the Valley Opportunity Council at 300 High St. Households must re-apply each year. It is recommended that you apply for aid early, as funding for this program is often depleted before the heating season ends.

Weatherization Assistance Program (WAP) / 413-263-6500 / www.springfieldpartnersinc.com
 Funded by the Federal Government, WAP is the nation's core program for delivering energy efficiency services to low-income households. Both homeowners and tenants who have their landlord's permission are eligible to apply. In addition to low-income households, those receiving SSI (supplemental social security) or TAFDC/Welfare are also eligible.

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2009/2010 Fuel Aid Eligibility Chart

LIHEAP / WAP / HEARTWAP Programs - 60% of the Massachusetts State Median Income

# of people in Household / Maximum Annual Household Income			
1 PERSON	2 PEOPLE	3 PEOPLE	4 PEOPLE
\$29,126	\$38,087	\$47,049	\$56,011
5 PEOPLE	6 PEOPLE	7 PEOPLE	8 PEOPLE
\$64,973	\$73,935	\$75,615	\$77,295

Summary of Aid Programs

	Fuel Assistance <small>Help with paying heating bills.</small>	Weatherization <small>Help with home insulation.</small>	Heating System <small>Help with heating equipment.</small>
Annual Income Below 60% of State Median Income	LIHEAP Benefits received range from \$700 to \$1400 per heating season.	WAP Benefit varies based upon need. Maximum benefit of \$6500 per home.	HEARTWAP Emergency repair aid range is \$150-\$200. System replacement aid \$3,000+
Annual Income Above 60% of State Median Income	Salvation Army Good Neighbor Energy Fund Citizens Energy (Distrigas / Oil Heat Program)	MuniHELPS Line / Free In-Home Energy Audits HG&E Energy Conservation Assistance Program HG&E Digital Setback Thermostat Installation	

▲ **Above:** These charts will help you determine eligibility for various aid programs. Additional information about each aid program is contained throughout this newsletter.

Electric Rate Comparison

October 2009 - Residential customer consuming 500 kwh per month. Amounts shown include all discounts and use the fixed default generation supply price.

HG&E	\$60.06	
National Grid	\$77.72	+29%
Western Mass Electric	\$78.53	+31%



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Summary of Low Income Programs (continued)

Professionally trained weatherization crews perform on-site home energy audits using state of the art equipment. These crews install insulation, seal off air leaks, and make modifications to (or replace) existing heating systems. Once installed, these energy saving measures will help to reduce your heating and cooling costs for years to come.

Heating Emergency Assistance Retrofit Task Weatherization Assistance (HEARTWAP) /

413-552-1548 / www.valleyopp.com

HEARTWAP provides emergency heating system repair and replacement services to low-income households. The program contracts with licensed and insured heating repair technicians to fix the problem. The program is designed to primarily serve homeowners.

Households will be required to verify their income, household characteristics, address and home ownership. In some instances, households may be required to provide a co-payment. The program prioritizes services to the elderly, people with disabilities, and families with children.

MuniHELPS Conservation Helpline

888-333-7525

Call with any questions about home energy conservation. You can also qualify for a free in-home energy audit.

a reminder:

Please make sure that the sewer and storm drain basins near your property are clean of leaves and debris.

Standing water on city streets can quickly become dangerous ice slicks.

Summary of Other Programs

HG&E Winter Payment Plans / 413-536-9300 - If you think you will have trouble paying your utility bills this winter, contact our customer service department now. We can help you set-up a payment plan so that you won't fall behind on your bills during the cold winter season.

MuniHELPS Conservation Helpline / 888-333-7525

www.hged.com/conserves - Call this toll-free number with any questions about home energy conservation. Homeowners can inquire to see if they qualify for a free in-home energy audit.

Distrigas (Citizens Energy) / 866-GAS-9918

www.citizensenergy.com - This program provides up to \$150 per heating season to natural gas customers who have exhausted their fuel assistance benefits or those who are ineligible to receive federal fuel assistance.

Citizens Energy Oil Heat Program / 877-JOE-4-OIL

www.citizensenergy.com - Eligible households who are facing financial hardship are allowed a one-time delivery per heating season of 100 gallons of home heating oil at a reduced price.

Salvation Army Good Neighbor Energy Fund

800-262-1320 / www.magoodneighbor.org - This program provides up to \$275 per heating season to needy families who otherwise don't qualify for fuel assistance programs. (60%-80% of State Median Income Level)

HG&E Home Energy Conservation Assistance

413-536-9300 / www.hged.com/conserves - This energy conservation program provides homeowners with interest-free assistance on an expanded range of conservation measures. Homeowners can receive up to \$5,000 in interest-free assistance to insulate your walls or attic, install high-efficiency replacement windows or skylights or install a new gas-fired water heater, boiler or furnace. Certain conditions apply.

HG&E Digital Thermostat Installation - Customers who heat with natural gas can have HG&E install a digital setback thermostat for just \$80. Studies show that turning back your thermostat from 72° to 62° each night can save you 10%. And if you set back the temperature while you're away at work, those savings can climb to 15% off your winter heating bills. Contact our service department at (413)536-9300 (option 1) to schedule an appointment.