



## **Trouble Paying Your Bill?**

You or someone you know may need financial help this heating season. New York State is a national leader in assisting lower-income families with their winter heating bills. Consumers are encouraged to apply for this financial assistance early in the heating season.

### **The Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP)**

This program assists lower-income individuals and families with heating costs in the winter. HEAP provides grants for heating bills ranging from \$40 to \$400 depending on a household's income; family size; living arrangement; heating expenses; type of heat; and presence of children under 6, adults aged 60 or over, and disabled individuals. Both renters and homeowners are eligible for assistance. The program is administered on the state level by the Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance (OTDA) and managed locally by county departments of social services and by the Human Resources Administration in New York City.

About 800,000 families in New York receive assistance from the HEAP program each year. Applications for HEAP assistance can be downloaded from [www.otda.state.ny.us](http://www.otda.state.ny.us). Applications and eligibility information can also be obtained by calling the HEAP hotline at 1-800-342-3009, county departments of social services or county offices for the aging. Phone numbers for these agencies are available at: [www.otda.state.ny.us/main/heap](http://www.otda.state.ny.us/main/heap).

### **The Weatherization Assistance Program**

New York State has the largest low-income residential energy conservation program in the nation. The Weatherization Assistance Program reduces the amount of energy required to heat homes and provide hot water, thereby helping save energy costs and increase comfort. This program provides an energy audit and services to weatherize the home. Services might include weather-stripping, repair or replacement of heating systems, replacement or repair of windows and/or doors, addition of insulation, and minor repairs. Eligibility is based on household income relative to federal low-income guidelines. Renters and homeowners are eligible.

For more information, contact your local weatherization provider at:

[www.dhcr.state.ny.us/Programs/WeatherizationAssistance/](http://www.dhcr.state.ny.us/Programs/WeatherizationAssistance/) Call 1-866-275-3427 or (518) 474-5700.

## **Conservation Saves Money!**

A few common sense actions can help you save significant amounts of money on your home heating bill.

**Lower Your Thermostat as Much as Possible.** For each degree you lower your thermostat, you will cut your fuel consumption by approximately 3%. Install a programmable thermostat that will automatically lower and raise the temperature.

**Use Fireplaces and Exhaust Fans Properly.** When not operating fireplaces, keep the flue closed. Use bathroom and kitchen exhaust fans sparingly.

**Improve the Efficiency of Your Water Heater.** Water heating accounts for about 14% of your energy bill. Wrap your water heater in insulation, lower your water temperature, insulate hot water pipes and limit hot water use.

**Weatherize and Insulate Your Home.** Ensure that your attic and outside walls are well-insulated, heating ducts are properly sealed and insulated, window air conditioners are removed, wall air conditioners are well wrapped, and cracks around walls and windows are sealed.

**Get Your Heating System Tested and Tuned.** Annual checkups should be conducted. Your furnace filter should be replaced once a month or as needed.

## **NYSERDA Assistance Programs**

New York State, through the New York State Energy Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA), is a national leader in developing energy efficiency and conservation programs. NYSERDA has numerous programs that can help consumers reduce home heating costs. These programs include:

**Home Performance with Energy Star.** A certified home performance contractor will inspect your home and provide recommendations for energy improvements. Homeowners may be eligible for low-interest financing for energy efficiency improvements.

**Assisted Home Performance with Energy Star.** Provides affordable energy efficiency improvements to low and moderate income households.

**Smart Meters.** Financial assistance is available for advanced meters and energy management equipment which allow customers to take advantage of prices that vary according to the time of day, rather than paying an average price.

**Weatherization Initiative Network (WNI).** Provides cost effective reductions of electricity use for low income households.

**New York Energy Smart Loan Fund.** This fund makes low-cost loans available for energy efficiency improvements to 1-4 family homes.

To obtain more information on these programs, determine if you are eligible, and to obtain more ideas on how to conserve energy and reduce your home heating bill, visit [www.getenergysmart.org](http://www.getenergysmart.org).

## **Choose Efficient Heating Equipment**

One of the easiest ways to save money on your heating bill is to use heating equipment that has received the ENERGY STAR rating. By upgrading to an ENERGY STAR rated furnace or boiler, you can reduce heating bills by almost 30%. In addition, ENERGY STAR products also help preserve the environment. A list of burners and furnaces that have earned the ENERGY STAR rating can be found at [www.energystar.gov](http://www.energystar.gov).

The following signs may indicate that your heating system needs upgrading:

- Un-even heating throughout the home
- Time lag between turning the heat on and feeling heat
- More frequent breakdowns and service calls
- Noticeable soot or dirt