

# C.E.F.S. Economic Opportunity Corporation

“Community Action Agency”



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## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## C.E.F.S. Announces the Start of the Energy Assistance Program

*The Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) is available for income qualified households*

*beginning October 1, 2024*

**[Effingham]**— The C.E.F.S. Economic Opportunity Corporation, as administrator of the Energy Assistance Program in Christian, Clay, Effingham, Fayette, Montgomery, Moultrie, and Shelby counties, is pleased to announce that funds are available to assist income-eligible households with their natural gas, propane and/or electric bills and furnace assistance for inoperable heating systems.

The Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) provides one-time benefits to income eligible homeowners and renters to help with energy bills and for reconnection of energy service.

The program will begin taking applications on **October 1, 2024**, for older adults (60 years +), individuals with a disability, families with children five and under, and households that are disconnected from their utilities, have a disconnection notice or have less than 25% in their propane tank. All other income eligible households can start applying November 1, 2024.

Applications will be taken on a first-come, first-served basis through August 15, 2025, or until funding is exhausted. Households that receive a one-time benefit may return during the program year for a Reconnection Assistance or Furnace Assistance benefit(s), if needed.

Households must be at or below 200% of the federal poverty level to receive a benefit from LIHEAP. The 30-day income guidelines for LIHEAP are based on Federal Poverty Guidelines, State Median Income and the number of persons living in the household. The income guidelines are as follows: 1- \$2,510, 2- \$3,407, 3- \$4,303, 4- \$5,200. Go to [www.cefseoc.org](http://www.cefseoc.org) or [liheapillinois.com](http://liheapillinois.com) to know income limits for households with 5 members and more.

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Required items to apply include:

1. Proof of gross income from all household members for the prior 30-day period beginning with the date of application.
2. For all customers new to LIHEAP, and/or for new household members of previous customers, proof of Social Security numbers (SSN) or Individual Taxpayer Identification Number (ITIN) for all household members. Individuals without an SSN or ITIN can still apply and C.E.F.S. will advise accordingly.
3. A copy of current heat and electric bills issued within the last 30 days.
4. A copy of rental agreement (if renting) showing that utilities are included, the monthly rental amount and landlord contact.
5. Other documents may be needed based on your household situation. If you have questions regarding this, please call our office.

Appointments can be made by contacting the C.E.F.S. Effingham County Outreach office at 1010 W. Jefferson St. Effingham, phone 217-347-7514 Monday through Friday 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Appointments can be made with the outreach office starting on September 17<sup>th</sup>.

In order that no one is denied the opportunity to make an application we will continue take applications in-person or by phone. Required documentation can be submitted in-person, mail or electronically. If you require any special accommodations, please contact the local C.E.F.S. Outreach office in your county to arrange.

Beginning October 1, 2024, income eligible LIHEAP customers of Ameren Illinois will receive a monthly discount on their natural gas bill through the new Low Income Discount Rates. Visit [liheapillinois.com](http://liheapillinois.com) or [www.cefseoc.org](http://www.cefseoc.org) to know more details.

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