

COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES ENERGY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM FACT SHEET

What is the Energy Assistance Program?

The Energy Assistance Program consists of three components:

Fuel Assistance: This component helps eligible households with the costs of heating their homes.

Crisis Assistance: This component helps households in heating emergency situations with primary heat security deposits, utility heating bills, repair/replacement of heating equipment, primary heating fuel, or emergency shelter.

Cooling Assistance: This component helps with cooling equipment repairs or purchases and with payment of the electric bill to operate cooling equipment.

Who is eligible for the Energy Assistance Program?

In order to be eligible for any of the components, certain citizenship criteria must be met and a household's **income must be less than the maximum** allowed for the number of people in the home.

Other requirements are as follows:

Fuel Assistance: You must be responsible for paying the heating bill.

Crisis Assistance: You must have a heating emergency.

Cooling Assistance: You must have or be in need of cooling equipment and there must be an elderly person, disabled person, or a child under 6 living in the home.

When is Energy Assistance Available?

Applications are accepted online (at <https://commonhelp.virginia.gov/access/>) and at the local department of social services as follows:

Fuel Assistance: the second Tuesday in October through the second Friday in November.

Crisis Assistance: November 1 through March 15 for equipment related assistance, security deposits, and emergency shelter.

First workday in January through March 15 for purchase of primary home heating fuel and payment of primary heat utility bills.

Cooling Assistance: June 15 through August 15.

ALL BENEFITS ARE BASED ON AVAILABILITY OF FUNDS.

How long will it take to process my application?

Fuel Assistance: as soon as possible but no later than late December.

Crisis Assistance: as soon as all requested information is provided.

Cooling Assistance: as soon as all requested information is provided.

What if I'm dissatisfied?

You may request an agency conference to discuss any action with which you disagree. You may also request an administrative hearing by the State Department of Social Services when funds are available and your application is denied, or you are refused the right to apply during the application period, or your application is not acted on or is closed prior to benefit determination. A hearing must be requested within 30 days of the negative action.

The hearing request may be submitted to the local agency or to:

Hearing and Legal Services Manager
Appeals and Fair Hearings Unit
Virginia Department of Social Services
801 East Main Street,
Richmond, VA 23219-3301

If you suspect Fraud or Abuse of any kind, report it to your Local Department of Social Services or call 1-800-552-3431.