DATE: January 19, 2006

TO: Area Agencies on Aging Directors

SUBJECT: HEAP WRAP Information and Referral Sources

PURPOSE: To transmit the Information and Referral Sources to Assist with Heating and Utility Issues Guide.

BACKGROUND: Due to the projected high heating and utility costs for this winter there is much concern about how low income seniors will be able to manage their bills. The information provided in this report is a compilation of senior programs and services offered by utility companies statewide, the Public Service Commission (PSC), NYS Energy Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA), and NYS Division of Housing and Community Renewal (DHCR).

The guide is an ongoing piece and we will continue to update it as new programs are added. If you know of any other services within your area that you feel would be of benefit, please let me know so I can amend the guide and redistribute it to everyone. Comments or suggestions are always welcomed.

PROGRAMS AFFECTED:

- Title III-B
- Title III-C-1
- Title III-C-2
- Title III-D
- Title III-E
- Title III-F
- CSE
- SNAP
- Energy
- EISEP
- NSIP
- Title V
- HIICAP
- LTCOP
- Other:

CONTACT PERSON: Tim Kovarik

TELEPHONE: (518) 474-7252
HEAP/WRAP

Information and Referral Sources to Assist with Heating and Utility Issues

Fall 2005
New York State Office for the Aging
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Introduction

Due to the rise in energy costs, and the winter season ahead, concerns are rising about how senior citizens on fixed incomes will be able to afford their utility bills. This information provided will assist with referral information and programs available to lessen the burden on our senior community. For any additional assistance please contact Tim Kovarik at (518) 474-7252 (tim.kovarik@ofa.state.ny.us) or Eileen Griffin at (518) 474-6091 (eileen.griffin@ofa.state.ny.us).

Here are some steps to take if a senior in your area is having difficulty affording their heating/utility bill.

✓ Educate and inform consumers about conserving energy, and having the right to choose their utility provider. Send the message to:

- Seal gaps around doors, windows, and foundations.
- Insulate attics and walls.
- Have home furnace and hot water heater inspected yearly.
- Set thermostat back - use extra clothes and blankets.
- Use a programmable thermostat if possible - lower heat when you’re not home.
- Buy “Energy Star” energy efficient equipment and appliances. (call 1-877-NY-Smart)
- Use your rights to choose a utility company. (call 1-888-(ASK-PSC) or www.askpsc.com)
- Refer to weatherization program if needed.

✓ Check with the local HEAP representative to ensure all benefits have been accessed. HEAP also has funds available to assist with furnace replacements and cleanings.

✓ Contact utility company to determine if they are on a budget plan, and if any other programs offered would be beneficial. (see pgs 2-9)

✓ Contact New York State Energy Research & Development Authority (NYSERDA) to see if they qualify for their programs. (see Pg 10)

✓ Call the Public Service Commission if they need help managing issues that may arise with utility company. (see Pg 11)

✓ Call local Department of Social Services if health and/or safety are a concern, and if all other sources for financial assistance have been exhausted.
**Central Hudson Utility Company**  
(Albany, Columbia, Dutchess, Greene, Orange, Putnam, Sullivan, Ulster)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Plan</th>
<th>Details</th>
<th>Contact Information</th>
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</table>
| **Extra Security Plan**<br>For senior citizens (60+), blind or disabled | Option to defer payment till the 6\(^{th}\) of the month. Must also be on a budget plan, and can choose to be billed bi-monthly. | Call customer service 1-800-527-2714  
Or Outreach worker at (845) 486-7514 |
| **Powerful Opportunity**<br>Senior citizens 60+ | For customers who are in the arrears with bills, but now able to repay. If they pay $5 to $20 above their monthly bill that amount is matched by CH and applied to the bill. | Call customer service 1-800-527-2714 |
| **Good Neighbor Fund Program**<br>(last resort funds) | If suffering a financial hardship, eligible households may receive a grant up to $125 to help pay gas/electric bill. The customer is in energy emergency (i.e. received a final termination notice) and owes no more that $750. | Program is administered by the local Salvation Army  
Newburgh 1-845-562-0413  
Kingston 1-845-562-0413  
Poughkeepsie 1-845-471-1212  
Beacon 1-845-831-1253 |
| **Medical Emergency or Hospitalization** | Will allow more time to pay bill if in a medical or hospitalization circumstance. | Call customer service 1-800-872-8781 |
### Con Edison

*(Portions of New York City, Westchester, Manhattan, Bronx, Queens)*

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Plan Type</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Quarterly billing plan</strong> for senior citizens 62 and over</td>
<td>If your bill is less than $420 a year, you can arrange to receive bills once every three months, instead of monthly. Bills would be due-in March, June, September, and December.</td>
<td>Outreach Specialist 1-800-293-5680</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Concern Program</strong>- Low-income and senior citizens</td>
<td>A specially trained representative will handle your call and provide you with information about government programs, provide safety tips, and explain ways to save money on your bill.</td>
<td>Concern Program Representative 1-800-872-8846</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Third Party Billing</strong></td>
<td>Customer chooses a friend/family member they trust to receive a notice if their bill becomes overdue. This may prevent a shut-off since this person can also help customer resolve their bill.</td>
<td>Outreach Specialist 1-800-293-5680</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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### St. Lawrence Gas

*Serves St. Lawrence and Lewis*

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<tr>
<th>Program</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Seniors Program 62+</strong></td>
<td>St. Lawrence Gas will make every effort to maintain natural gas service to seniors and their households.</td>
<td>Customer service 1-800-673-3301</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Third Party Notification</strong></td>
<td>Customer may choose a friend/relative to receive account information (i.e. shut off notices) so customer can get assistance.</td>
<td>Customer service 1-800-673-3301</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## KeySpan
**(Regions of: Brooklyn, Far Rockaway, Manhattan, Nassau, Queens, Staten Island, Suffolk)**

<table>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Hardship Protection Program</strong></td>
<td>Protected from service being turned off during the cold weather period. (Nov. 1 - April 15)</td>
<td>Call customer service toll free phone number in your region. (located on customer bill)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Neighborhood Heating Fund</strong></td>
<td>Fuel fund administered by HeartShare in NYC for low income customers who have applied for HEAP.</td>
<td>Call customer service toll free phone number in your region. (located on customer bill)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Project Warmth</strong></td>
<td>Fuel fund administered by United Way of Long Island for low income customers who have applied for HEAP.</td>
<td>Call customer service toll free phone number in your region. (located on customer bill)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>GateKeeper Program</strong></td>
<td>KeySpan Energy Delivery employees report any signs of distress among elderly and disabled customers to appropriate NYC or community-based social service agencies so they can provide follow-up.</td>
<td>Call Representative at 1-718-403-2171 in NYC. In Long Island call 1-800-930-5003.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Friendly Follow-up Program</strong></td>
<td>Customer chooses a person they trust (family member, friend) who would receive a notice that bill is overdue. This may prevent a shut-off if a bill has been overlooked. Provisions also made if a customer has been in the hospital.</td>
<td>Call Representative at 1-718-403-2171 in NYC. In Long Island call 1-800-930-5003.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Neighborhood For Neighborhood Heat Fund
(60+, disabled, or medical emergency)

Fund helps qualified households meet basic and emergency energy needs. ($300 grant available)

Call your local Salvation Army. Program is administered through the Salvation Army with Catholic Charities also providing intake assistance.

### Elderly, Blind and Disabled Payment Troubled Residential Assistance Program (EBD PTRA)

Must meet HEAP income guidelines, and be a heating account. Also must have a minimum balance of $100 which customer owes.

Call to speak to a Low Income Residential Assistance Representative – toll free - at 800-433-0177 or 1-716-857-6863

### Public Assistance Cooperative for Energy (PACE)

This is an energy aggregation program administered by Niagara, Erie and Chattaqua County DSS. Participants are on direct voucher. DSS pays National Fuel and the aggregator on a monthly basis. Any arrears owed by the participant are held in abeyance during the customers’ participation in the program.

Call local Department of Social Services who identifies participants.

### Expanded Low Income Residential Assistance (ELIRA) Program

Eligible customers receive approximately $14.16/month discount which is a reduction off regular residential rate. If considered an “exception,” customer may be eligible for emergency heating repair/replacement work. Customers in the ELIRA program are automatically enrolled in Emergency HEAP (must be heating customer and be on a budget plan).

If customer is granted Emergency HEAP after enrollment period they may call toll free-1-800-433-0177 or 1-716-857-6863
National Grid (Formerly Niagara Mohawk)
(Albany, Buffalo, Rochester, Syracuse, Utica, Watertown)

CARE and SHARE Program
(for senior citizens 60+, or disabled, or low income)
If you have already applied for HEAP and you are not qualified for government assistance this fund may be able to assist. Administered by local chapter of American Red Cross. Call your local chapter.

Hospital & Customer Assistance Program
Allows customers who are temporarily disabled due to hospitalization to extend payment of their bill 30 days from date it is due. Customer Service 1-800-443-1837

Third Party Notification
Allows customer to designate another person to receive notification of such customer’s bill and service status. Customer Service 1-800-443-1837
**New York State Electric and Gas (NYSEG)**

43 Counties throughout NYS and regions of: (Auburn, Binghamton, Brewster, Elmira, Geneva, Hornell, Ithaca, Lancaster, Liberty, Lockport, Mechanicville, Chatham, Oneonta and Plattsburgh)

**Project Share**

(age 60+, currently enrolled in SSI, SSDI, Veteran’s Disability, Workers’ Compensation, or have a medical emergency)

Project Share will pay NYSEG up to $200 a year on behalf of customer. Eligible if you have a disconnect notice. There are no economic guidelines. Customer must be in the process of applying for HEAP and have exhausted all other heat benefits.

Contact your local Red Cross which oversees program application.

**Power Partner**

(eligible if NYSEG electric or electric and gas account is in their name for their primary residence and certain household gross income limits apply)

Eligible customers can save at least $114 per year on electric bill by lowering monthly basic service charge. They can save $30 to $70 per year on their monthly basic service if they are natural gas customer. Program also identifies community – based energy saving programs that customer may be eligible for. If there is a past due balance, NYSEG may place account on hold and payments can be made toward balance without imposition of late payment charges. Also, eligible customers may have their account balance reduced through a matching program where NYSEG matches, dollar for dollar, what customer pays above regular monthly bill.

Call NYSEG customer service at 1-800-284 -7988
### Orange and Rockland Gas and Electric

**Neighborhood Fund**
For consumers who have exhausted all governmental resources and who can provide documented proof of an emergency or crisis circumstances (i.e. medical bills, unemployment)  
Administered by the Salvation Army. Call local Salvation Army.

**Get Well First Program**
If you have been in the hospital for a minimum of 10 days you may qualify for a 30-day extension on your payment date.  
Call customer service at 1-877-434-4100

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### Corning Gas

**Portions of: Steuben and Chemung**

**Budget Payment Plan**
Customer must request plan by 6/30/06. Corning Gas will analyze several times a year to adjust budget. No fee for budget plan.  
Call customer service 607-936-3755

**Gift Certificate Program**
Gift certificates can be purchased from Corning Gas cashiers in any amount and can be applied towards a gas bill.  
Customer service 607-936-3755
### Rochester Gas and Electric
(Serving Portions of: Allegany, Cattaraugus, Genesee, Lewis, Livingston, Oneida, Ontario, Monroe, Wayne, Wyoming)

<table>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Red Cross/RG&amp;E Heating Fund</strong></td>
<td>Emergency assistance for those who do not qualify for government assistance such as HEAP or DSS aid. Grant funds given to eligible customers during heating season or until funds are exhausted. This provides one-time emergency assistance if in a heating emergency such as no oil, or potential for disconnection of gas. Customer must reside in service territory, but does NOT have to be RG&amp;E customer.</td>
<td>Call local chapter of the Red Cross.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Senior Safeguard Program</strong></td>
<td>RG&amp;E will contact you at least 3 days before a scheduled shut off to work out payment plan. If an agreement cannot be reached, RG&amp;E contacts DSS and will service for an additional 15 days. If service is already disconnected RG&amp;E will try to reconnect in 10 days. Participants can get bill in large print. Participants will receive a Senior Newsletter.</td>
<td>Call customer service at 1-877-266-3492.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Quarterly Billing for Senior Citizens</strong></td>
<td>RG&amp;E will allow you to pay bill on a quarterly basis (instead of monthly) if you are a residential customer whose annual bill is $150 or less.</td>
<td>Call customer service at 1-877-266-3492.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Extended Bill Payment</strong></td>
<td>Extends your payment due date 11 days so you can wait until you get your benefit check.</td>
<td>Call customer service at 1-877-266-3492.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Third Party Notification</strong></td>
<td>You can choose a friend/relative, or social service agencies to receive account information (i.e. shut off notice) so you can get additional assistance before power is turned off.</td>
<td>Call customer service at 1-877-266-3492.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Public Service Commission (PSC)  
of New York State

Toll Free Hotline for Gas, Electric Shut Offs 1-800-342-3355  
Toll Free Help Line (complaints, inquiries on service or bills) 1-800-342-3377

www.dps.state.ny.us/seniors or www.askpsc.com (for “Have an Energy Smart Winter”)

Elderly utility customers in NYS are protected by rules enforced by the PSC. Rules apply to gas, electric, steam and telephone companies. The Home Energy Fair Practices Act (HEFPA), know as “The Utility Consumer Bill of Rights” is a law to help customers keep their gas, electric, and steam services on while either paying overdue bills, or having a disputed amount investigated.

**Deposits**
- If you are 62 years of age or older, a utility company cannot require a deposit, unless your service has been shut off for nonpayment in the last 6 months.
- Even if your service has been shut off you can pay deposit by monthly installments.

**Protections Against Shut Offs**
- Utility may not send a final shut off notice until at least 23 days after your bill was mailed.
- Shut off notice must give you 15 days to pay bill so you can work out a payment plan.

**Deferred Payment Agreement**
- Utility company must offer you a deferred payment plan, in writing at least 5 days (8 days if mailed) before shut off. This plan must be fair and take your financial circumstances into consideration.

**Personal Contact**
- Utility company must call you or make a personal visit 72 hours before - and the day of - the scheduled shut off to work out payment plan if you are elderly, or if a shut off would take place between Nov 1- April 15.
- 15 day extension must be given if a Social Service investigation is warranted.

**Medical Emergencies/Life Support Systems**
- If medical emergency exists, the shut off will be postponed for 30 days, if doctor notifies utility company.
- If you have life support device (i.e. dialysis machine or respirator) the certification will remain in effect as long as the device is needed, but you must demonstrate your inability to pay your bill.
NYSERDA administers a number of programs to assist the low income sector as a part of the New York Energy Smart Program.

**Assisted Home Performance with Energy Star**

- Program reduces energy costs for low and moderate income households by providing energy efficient improvements to the home. These are households NOT eligible for the federally-funded Weatherization Assistance Programs (WAP). Assisted Home Performance will cover up to 50% of the costs associated with improvements, and up to a maximum of $5,000 per household or $10,000 for a two-to-four family building. Low interest financing would be available to help pay for the balance of the work.

**EmPower New York**

- This program works closely with the Weatherization Assistance Program (WAP) to provide funding and coordinate efforts to shorten the waiting periods for assistance to low income residents.

New York Energy Smart also is sponsoring free workshops which are open to the public and provide materials and money management to make homes more energy efficient. These workshops are conducted by Cornell Cooperative Extension and are being held in 21 counties throughout NYS. To see where the workshops will be held go to:

www.cornell.edu/Tompkins/EmPowerNY

**Low Income Buying Power**

- NYSERDA, in partnership with the New York State Office of Temporary Disability Assistance (OTDA) and with cooperation of the local DSS, have started pilot projects in Dutchess, Monroe, Onondaga, Orange, and Tioga counties. With nearly one hundred heating oil companies participating, the State was able to extend the buying power for HEAP households which resulted in more heating oil for low income households.
The Housing Trust Fund Corporation receives a legislative appropriation to administer the Residential Emergency Services to Offer (Home) Repairs to the Elderly Program (RESTORE), and Access to Home Program.

**RESTORE**
- Funds may be used to pay for the cost of emergency repairs to eliminate hazardous conditions in homes owned by elderly residents when they cannot make repairs in a timely manner. Work cannot exceed $5,000 per building.

**Access to Home Program**
- Will provide up to $10 million to not-for-profit organizations to administer local programs to make the homes and apartments of low to moderate income New Yorkers with disabilities (including the frail elderly) more accessible (i.e. installation of ramps, lifts, modifications to kitchens).

Any county interested should call DHCR regional office for more information and an application. Any local not-for-profit entity or team that includes a not-for-profit, having substantial experience in adapting and or retrofitting homes for persons with disabilities may apply.

**Weatherization Assistance Program (WAP)**
- Assists income eligible families and individuals by reducing their heating/cooling costs and by making the home safer through energy efficiency improvements. Priority given to senior citizens, the disabled, and families with children. For more information call the regional offices.

**Capital District Regional Office**
- Debra A. Devine, Regional Director
- Hampton Plaza
- 38-40 State Street, 9th Floor
- Albany, NY 12207
- (518) 486-5012

**New York City Regional Office**
- Deborah Boatright, regional Director
- 25 Beaver St., 7th Floor
- New York, New York 10004
- (212) 480-7644

**Buffalo Regional Office**
- Thomas Van Nortwick, Regional Director
- Statler Towers
- 107 Delaware Avenue, Suite 600
- Buffalo, NY 14202

**Syracuse Regional Office**
- Vernita King, Regional Director
- P.O. Box 1127
- Syracuse, NY 13201
- (315) 473-6930