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GOVERNOR KATHY HOCHUL

AS WASHINGTON REPUBLICANS CUT OFF FEDERAL FUNDS FOR HOME HEATING ASSISTANCE, GOVERNOR HOCHUL ANNOUNCES PROTECTIONS AND RESOURCES TO HELP NEW YORKERS WITH MONTHLY ENERGY BILLS

Takes Action To Ensure All New Yorkers Already Enrolled in New York's Energy Affordability Program (EAP) Will Continue Receiving Their Monthly Discount While Washington Republicans Block Federal Heat Assistance Funds

Urges More Eligible New Yorkers To Sign Up for EAP That Provides Discounts on Monthly Energy Bills To Over One Million Households

New Yorkers Can Visit [State's EAP Website](#) To Learn About Eligibility and Enroll

Reinforces New York State Law Preventing Energy Companies From Shutting Off Power To Vulnerable Households Between November 1 and April 15

Slams Washington Republicans for Leaving New Yorkers Out in the Cold, Calls on Republicans to Immediately Provide Federal Heat Assistance Funds

Governor Hochul today announced new protections and resources for New Yorkers who will struggle with higher home heating costs due to the decision by Washington Republicans to cut off federal funding to the Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP) — which serves around 1.5 million low-income New York households — as part of the federal government shutdown. Even if the federal government reopens in the coming days, Washington Republicans' decision to force a shutdown resulted in the indefinite delay of federal funding for HEAP, and Republicans in Congress have not yet committed to immediately restoring federal heat assistance as cold weather approaches. Even as Governor Hochul took steps today to protect and support New Yorkers, she called on Washington Republicans to immediately deliver the federal heating assistance New Yorkers need.

"It's shameful that Washington Republicans want to leave New Yorkers out in the cold by cutting off federal funds for heating assistance," **Governor Hochul said.** "While Republicans continue to inhumanely ignore the needs of our most vulnerable citizens by allowing this already record-long federal government shutdown to continue, New York is stepping up by enrolling as many households as possible in our state programs to help them receive monthly discounts on their energy bills. But as I've said before, no state can fully backfill these devastating federal cuts — and with colder weather on the way, I'm calling on Washington Republicans to immediately provide the federal heat assistance New Yorkers need."

New York State Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance Commissioner Barbara C. Guinn said, “The ongoing lack of federal funds for the Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP), continues to put more than 1.5 million New York households at risk of being unable to pay the high cost of heating their homes this winter. We are grateful to Governor Hochul and our partners at the Department of Public Service for taking action to protect utility customers through the Energy Affordability Program. But with colder temperatures on their way and energy costs continuing to rise, the need for federal funding for HEAP has never been more urgent.”

New York State Department of Public Service Commission Chair Rory M. Christian said, “Over the last decade, the Commission has undertaken a series of actions to advance affordability protections for low-income consumers across New York State. The Utility discount programs, which are directly tied to the federally-funded HEAP program, are the foundation of these protections. The federal government’s delay in funding HEAP not only removed a critical lifeline for helping New Yorkers keep their heat on as cold weather approaches, it also put at risk the State program benefits as well. That is why we are partnering with the Governor and OTDA to ensure that utilities pause any disenrollment in the State discount programs and that vulnerable households are protected.”

At the Governor’s direction, the New York State Department of Public Service (DPS) will require New York’s major utility companies to ensure that any New Yorkers enrolled in the State’s Energy Affordability Program (EAP) will continue to receive their discount, despite the lack of federal funds for the separate HEAP program. This action will ensure that New Yorkers struggling to pay their bills this winter will continue receiving bill discounts regardless of Washington Republicans’ cruelty. Without the Governor’s action, thousands of those households would have automatically lost their November EAP discount, since enrollment in EAP is tied to enrollment in HEAP for many households across the state.

The Governor urged New Yorkers to go to [the State’s EAP website](#) to check their eligibility and learn how to enroll as soon as possible. Through the state’s website, eligible New Yorkers can follow the steps to enroll in State EAP discount based on their utility service territory. The State’s website also includes guidance on how New Yorkers struggling with higher heating costs can work with their energy provider to defer payments. It also includes details on how New York State’s laws are holding energy providers accountable and protecting consumers, as well as other key information.

The State-funded EAPs provide customers with direct discounts on utility bills. The size of discount varies by utility and is designed to ensure that eligible households do not pay more than six percent of their household income on energy utilities. Bill credits are automatically applied to customer bills when households receive a benefit from the federally funded HEAP.

Because of the federal government shutdown, the State has not received its anticipated federal funding to administer HEAP, which the Department of Public Service estimates would lead to tens of thousands of customers being automatically disenrolled from receiving EAP benefits every month without State action. This is because most residential customers in EAPs are automatically enrolled in the program after their heating utility receives a HEAP grant on the customer’s behalf, which the utility credits

to those customers' utility bills. Generally, most utilities provide that those customers will remain enrolled in the utilities' EAPs as long as they received a HEAP grant within the preceding 12 months.

This delay in federal benefits and concurrent loss of EAP bill discounts would make utility services far more expensive for those customers during the coming winter heating season. The loss of EAP benefits by so many customers at the time when their need for heat is the greatest would undoubtedly undermine public health, safety, and general welfare, thus justifying emergency action by New York State. Temperatures in many parts of the state have plunged below freezing, highlighting the need for heating assistance for families and households statewide.

At the Governor's direction, DPS has initially [directed](#) the utilities for at least the next month to not disenroll New York households who were receiving HEAP from the state EAPs, while the agency considers a longer pause on disenrollments. That means the credits through the state program will continue for the time being.

While this action will protect tens of thousands of New Yorkers from losing critical support at the beginning of cold season, Governor Hochul has been clear that [Washington Republicans must end their prolonged federal government shutdown and act quickly to approve funding to support New York's federally funded Home Energy Assistance Program \(HEAP\)](#).

New York offers a robust set of programs and policies to support eligible New Yorkers facing energy-related emergencies this winter. The New York State Home Energy Fair Practices Act (HEFPA) provides special protections for consumers with medical emergencies; or who are elderly, blind or disabled; and to all consumers who may encounter health or safety issues due to a shut-off during the cold weather period between November 1 and April 15.

If you qualify for the elderly, blind or disabled protections, you should immediately notify your utility so it can code your account with this information should it be needed in the future. This information will be kept in strict confidence.

If you are threatened with a residential electric or natural gas shutoff, contact the NYS Department of Public Service at 800-342-3355 Monday through Friday, 7:30 a.m. to 7:30 p.m. For more information, please visit the Department of Public Service website at: <https://dps.ny.gov/your-rights-residential-gas-electric-or-steam-customer-under-hefpa>.

Additional Alternative Resources Available to New Yorkers in Need of Heating Assistance

- Households lacking resources that can't afford a fuel delivery or are facing a utility shutoff can [apply for Emergency Assistance](#) through [their local department of social services](#). Anyone facing a heating emergency should contact their local department of social services as soon as possible, so they can be interviewed and informed in writing about the decision on their emergency the same day they apply.

- While this emergency assistance is provided through the Temporary Assistance program, applicants are not required to be eligible for ongoing Temporary Assistance in order to qualify.
- New Yorkers unable to pay for heating fuel or the cost of delivery that qualify for assistance can expect to get a delivery of fuel as quickly as the same day. This would include households that heat with oil, kerosene, propane, wood, or other deliverable fuels.
- New Yorkers facing a utility shutoff that qualify for assistance would have their utility arrears addressed to avoid a shutoff.
- Districts are required to allow phone interviews to accommodate homebound seniors, with applications accepted during regular business hours.
- Households are expected to first use available resources that are not otherwise needed to make an essential payment such as rent.

Senator Kirsten Gillibrand said, “Washington Republicans have needlessly shut down the government, denying New Yorkers the heating assistance they depend on to stay safe through the winter. I'm grateful to Governor Hochul for taking action to protect New York families, and I'll keep fighting to make sure our state gets the federal resources we deserve.”

Representative Jerrold Nadler said, “By cutting off funding for the Home Energy Assistance Program during their government shutdown, Donald Trump and Congressional Republicans are choosing to inflict cruelty on the hundreds of thousands of New Yorkers who rely on heating assistance. I am grateful for Governor Hochul's relentless work to ensure New Yorkers have access to the assistance they need to stay warm this winter. It's time for House Republicans to return to Washington, D.C. and work to end this shutdown.”

Representative Joseph Morelle said, “Every family deserves to know they can afford to stay warm this holiday season. While Republicans in Washington refuse to put working people first, I'm proud to stand with Governor Hochul and our state and local partners to prioritize New Yorkers' safety.”

Representative John W. Mannion said, “Instead of working toward bipartisan solutions to reopen the government, we're seeing a refusal to negotiate, a refusal to return to work, a refusal to abide by court orders, and the abhorrent weaponization of the social safety net — all while careening the country toward a costly health care crisis just as open enrollment begins. Blocking heating assistance as winter sets in will endanger the health and safety of millions of vulnerable Americans, including seniors, children, and veterans. I commend Governor Hochul for her leadership and compassion and stepping up as Trump and his enablers in Congress fail the American people.”