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GOVERNOR KATHY HOCHUL

**GOVERNOR HOCHUL ANNOUNCES \$150 MILLION IN HEATING UTILITY ASSISTANCE FOR CONSUMERS**

***Supplement to Aid Low-Income Households and Those Not Eligible for Utility Arrears Through New York's Emergency Rental Assistance Program***

***Funding through the Home Energy Assistance Program to Help New Yorkers Avoid Disconnection Once Utility Moratorium Ends***

Governor Kathy Hochul today announced that funding is now available to help low-income households that have fallen behind on their utility bills during the COVID-19 pandemic. Administered by the New York State Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance, the regular arrears supplement is available to households who are eligible for the Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP) and behind on their heating utility bills, but that do not qualify for the utility assistance offered by New York's Emergency Rental Assistance Program.

"The global health crisis has brought into focus the struggles of so many New Yorkers, including tens of thousands of households that fell drastically behind on utility bills," **Governor Hochul said**. "This critical assistance will help these households pay down utility bills that accumulated at the height of the pandemic and help them avoid potential disconnection in the coming months."

There is \$150 million available for one-time payments to HEAP-eligible households through the regular arrears supplement from now until September 2022, or until funding is exhausted. Secured through the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021, the federal funding will cover all accumulated heating utility arrears up to \$10,000 and comes as the end of the moratorium on utility disconnections approaches in late December.

About 83,000 HEAP recipients had fallen behind on their utility bills as of March 2021, with these households owing an average arrears of about \$1,370, or roughly \$113 million statewide. While the Emergency Rental Assistance Program is providing utility arrears assistance for eligible renters, homeowners and those who do not owe rent arrears do not qualify for this assistance, including customers of municipally owned utilities.

**OTDA Commissioner Mike Hein said,** "Many low-income New Yorkers were struggling to bear the financial burden of utility bills even before the onset of the global pandemic. This critical assistance will help alleviate some of this burden and help these households avoid the grim potential of utility disconnection."

Applicants must meet all [eligibility requirements](#) to receive a regular HEAP benefit, which vary by income and household size, and be in active collections or otherwise facing disconnection or termination of service. Applicants must also be the utility customer of record or pay a utility directly.

Applications for assistance are accepted at local departments of social services in person or by telephone, with funding provided on a first-come, first-served basis. A list of local offices by county can be found [here](#). Residents outside of New York City may also [apply online](#) for regular heating assistance benefits. New York City residents may download an application and obtain program information [here](#).

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