

## Utility Assistance Resources List

Low income customers in Massachusetts can get financial assistance and grants to cover utility and heating bills. Below you will find information on the various assistance options offered by energy assistance programs and utility companies across Massachusetts.

### **LIHEAP Energy Assistance Programs**

The Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) is a federally funded energy bill assistance program, and one of the largest fuel assistance providers in MA. More than 180,000 households in MA received fuel assistance through LIHEAP in FY 2015, and the FY 2016 budget for MA is more than \$133 million. LIHEAP provides financial help to applicants that earn less than 60% state median income for household size. Funds are available in all states on a first come, first serve basis. Customers can get help paying for both winter heating and summer cooling bills as the LIHEAP program provides year-round assistance. LIHEAP is available for both renters and homeowners who are responsible for paying their home energy and/or heating bills. Visit [Mass.gov](http://Mass.gov) for a list of agencies that assist with LIHEAP applications, including ABCD.

### **Joe-4-Oil**

This is an oil heat program that offers eligible households a one-time delivery per heating season of 100 gallons oil for free. Applicants must be able to demonstrate financial hardship. There are no citizenship requirements, and applicants are not required to show proof of immigration status.

### **Citizens Energy / Distrigas Heat Assistance Program (CEDHAP)**

This assistance program provides a \$150 utility or heating bill credit to eligible households who heat their homes or apartments with natural gas. Call 1-866-427-9918.

### **City of Boston, Massachusetts**

The City of Boston has a program for seniors to subsidize the cost of winterization. The program is a specialty of DND's Senior Homeowner Services unit. DND is assisted by a number of neighborhood-based agencies, including United South End Settlements, NOAH; ESAC, and Kit Clark. Call 617-635-0600.

### **Columbia Gas**

This energy company operates in several states, including Massachusetts. One of the main programs is the Good Neighbor Energy Fund, which is offered by the Salvation Army.

### **Essex County Gas Company**

Up to a 20% discount is offered for eligible applicants. Residential heating rate will change from R-03 to R-04. Secondary users (non-heat) will change from R-01 to R-02.

### **Good Neighbor Energy Fund**

This is a program that covers the entire state of Massachusetts. The assistance fund is available to any Massachusetts resident or family who, because of temporary financial hardship or difficulty, cannot meet

a month's energy or heating bill expense and if they are not eligible for any other state or federal government energy and heating bill assistance programs. Grants for emergency assistance are available from local Salvation Army Service Centers. Call 1-800-334-3047 for more information.

### **KeySpan Energy Delivery**

For existing customers who receive the R32 and R4 discount rate, KeySpan may offer free weatherization services, including free energy audits, insulation heating system replacement and repairs, and more. Call your local Community Action Agency to apply for help.

### **KeySpan Energy Delivery (On Track)**

Another program known as On Track currently works with 350 low-income heating customers. These customers are currently receiving public government assistance and the program can help them resolve financial difficulties and hardships. Each participant in the On track program receives both a financial and energy home study kit that includes audio tapes and work books and individualized customer services tools like: household financial analysis, information on how to develop an affordable payment plan for past due and future energy bills, information as well as direct referrals to financial assistance programs and non-profit organizations, assistance with applications for government and non-profit benefits and support groups. In addition to those components many customers in the program will also become eligible for bill forgiveness up to \$400 on their monthly heating or energy bill. Dial 1-800-503-5172

### **Littleton Electric Light Department**

Some customers may qualify for the Senior Citizen and Disabled Customer Discounts. This program waives the base customer charge for senior citizens (age 62 and over) and handicapped persons in the company's service area. Dial 978-486-3104

### **Lynn Economic Opportunity**

LEO provides fuel assistance for applicants who live in Lynn, Lynnfield, Nahant, Saugus, Swampscott and Wakefield. The income limits are 60% of the state median income for household size. Applicants are eligible for assistance with whichever energy is used to heat the home, and may be eligible even if utilities are included in the rent. For more information, call 781.581.7220 x 283

### **Massachusetts Electric**

Massachusetts Electric offers qualified customers a monthly discount on their utility bills. The assistance is available to qualified customers who have an income at or below 200% of the federal government poverty level and who receive financial assistance or cash grants from certain public or government benefit programs. They can be reached at 1-800-322-3223.

### **Massachusetts Residential Assistance for Families in Transition (RAFT) Program**

This is a state-funded energy assistance program for individuals and families who are at risk of homelessness or who may be facing an eviction. The assistance program may help people to pay overdue heating bill balances for eligible families. Eligibility requirements include the applicants needs to have sufficient income to support future expenses, homeless families lacking permanent residence or at risk of homelessness, meeting 50% of median household income guideline for household size, current rent or mortgage payment cannot exceed 50% of their income, families of two or more with dependent child under 21 or disabled adult, and they need to be able to document their hardship.

### **Massachusetts state wide low-income rate assistance program**

Over a dozen electric, gas, and heating companies offer utility rate discounts totaling nearly \$40 million per year to customers. In total the discounts can range from 20% to 42% off the low-income customers energy bill. Low income households earning less than 175% of Federal Poverty Guidelines, or receiving

one of several means federal or state government tested programs, including LIHEAP, Food Stamps, TANF and SSI are eligible for this discount. Call your utility company and refer to it.

### **Massachusetts statewide program: Energy Bucks**

This program may be able to help qualified Massachusetts customers with providing them fuel assistance, energy discounts, grants for paying heating and energy bills and efficiency services for their home or apartment. Call 866-537-7267 to apply for help or to get more information.

### **Massachusetts statewide energy conservation program**

Customers of electric and gas companies that are regulated by the state of Massachusetts who currently receive the low-income discount rate on their energy bills may also be eligible for free energy efficiency or conservation services that may include appliance efficiency services, energy audits, electric baseload measures, floor, attic and wall insulation, air sealing and heating system repairs and/or replacement. Contact your local Community Action agencies or call 1-800-632-8175 to learn more.

### **Middleborough Gas and Electric Department**

They offer elderly customers a Senior Discount. This discount is for customers who are 60 years of age and older. These individuals can apply for an additional 5% senior discount on their gas bills, which will be in addition to the 10% prompt payment discount that is provided to a customer when the energy bill is paid within 10 days and the account is current. Call 508-947-1371

### **National Grid**

National Grid operates in many northeastern states, including Massachusetts. If you are struggling with paying your utility bill, call them to learn about options available to you. They can provide qualified customers with payment plans, help people pay older energy bills, offer weatherization, and much more. Massachusetts residents who demonstrate need may also qualify for shut off protection, as well as a lower rate on energy (R2 discount rate, available for customers who qualify for Medicaid, SNAP, and other public benefits.) National Grid can also help Massachusetts families apply for government programs such as LIHEAP.

### **North Attleborough Electric Department**

A discount rate is available for residential customers. The reduced bill is available to customers upon verification of a customer's receipt of any means tested government program or public benefit. Or if the customer is determined to be eligible for the federal government low income home energy assistance program the discount can be provided. To learn more or to apply for help call 508-643-6300 or dial toll free 1-800-394-2662.

### **North Shore Community Action Program**

Located in Peabody, NSCAP offers fuel assistance for qualifying applicants who live in Beverly, Danvers, Peabody, Salem, Topsfield, Middleton, or Marblehead, all located in Essex County. Applicants can qualify for aid if they can demonstrate residency and earn less than 60% of the state median income.

### **NSTAR**

A free energy saving consultation may be offered to low income and customers who are currently receiving an NSTAR Discount Rate. The consultation may even include the installation of conservation measures and refrigerator metering, among other services. If you think you may be able to qualify for this program and would like more information on how to get help, please contact your local Community Action or Heating Assistance Program in your town or city.

**NSTAR**

A program known as R2 Discount Rate is available for Massachusetts customers. It will provide them with a discount rate for customers who receive certain government means-tested benefits or who qualify for government fuel assistance programs. Call 800-592-2000 to apply or learn more NSTAR also provides grants, discounts and payment plans for paying bills.

**NUStart**

This program has an arrearage management program to help with older unpaid energy bills. The program was created to help customers pay their current and past electric bills. Western Massachusetts Electric (WMECo) will help you develop a monthly budget to get back on track. Each month the customer will need to make a timely payment, and when they do they will earn credits to pay off your outstanding energy bill and WMECo will take a portion of what you owe off your old balance on past unpaid bills. The customer must have a balance of at least \$100 on their bill and be 60 days overdue. Call the NUStart team at 800-286-5844 (toll-free) for more information or to enroll for help.

**Unitil (Fitchburg Gas and Electric Light Company)**

Energy conserving measures may be offered to families and individuals who currently receive the low-income discount rate on their energy bills. Some of the free energy conservation measures offered may include energy audits, attic and wall insulation, electric baseload measures, appliance efficiency services, air sealing and heating system repairs and replacement. Call 1-800-632-8175 or contact your local Community Action agencies.

**Unitil (Fitchburg Gas and Electric Light Company)**

This is another Massachusetts energy company that runs the Discount Rate Program for residential customers. Applications are available online in English and Spanish. The program is for people who receive other government aid. They can arrange payment plans and help customers apply for government assistance. Other services may include budget billing and waivers on a past due balance for qualified Massachusetts customers. Call 1-888-301-7700.

**Western Massachusetts Electric**

This electric company offers customers a Residential Discount Rate assistance program. The electric company offers a discount rate on energy bills for low to moderate income-eligible residential customers who participate in certain state government and/ federal government assistance programs. For more information or an application, call at 781-4300. You can also call your local community action agency.