EOC & LEAP BASICS
ENERGY OUTREACH COLORADO’S BILL PAYMENT ASSISTANCE PROGRAM
What will we cover in this section?

• Who we are and our approach to energy affordability
• What is the Bill Payment Assistance program?
• Who should apply?
• Benefits
• Required documentation
• How to apply
• Find an EOC partner agency
• Common pitfalls
Who We Are

- Nonprofit created in 1989, originally with sole focus on bill payment assistance
- Over time expanded into:
  - Efficiency/weatherization
  - Home heating repair/replacement
  - Solar
  - Education
  - Advocacy
ENERGY AFFORDABILITY

A Comprehensive Approach

Strategic Foundation

SUPPORT ► Bill Assistance, Furnace Repair - Short Term
STABILIZE ► Energy Efficiency, Behavior Change - Mid Term
SUSTAIN ► Renewable Subscriptions, Advocacy - Long Term
BILL PAYMENT ASSISTANCE

Powered by Partners

- Helps low-income individuals and families afford their home energy costs by paying past due bills
- Delivered through a statewide network of assistance agencies
- Households may receive assistance once per program year with up to two energy sources
- Program year runs from October 1 through September 30
- Covers most types of home energy
- Applications are accepted year round
Who should apply?

- Gross household income at or below 80% of area median income (AMI)
- Past due/prior balance on utility bill or low/no bulk fuel (coal, firewood, kerosene, propane, oil or pellets).
- Applicant lives at service address on the bill
- If applicant is not account holder, must have proof they are responsible for the bill
- Household has applied for LEAP, if applicable
- Applicant has not received EOC bill payment assistance for the same account within the current program year
BENEFITS

What does EOC’s Bill Payment Assistance cover?

• Maximum assistance - $500 for single energy source (except propane, fuel oil and kerosene – up to $750)
• Combined gas and electric bill - $1,000 maximum
• Up to $250 maximum on Aurora Water
• Must guarantee service for at least 30 additional days from date funds committed
• Assistance cannot create a credit in participant’s account
• No payments to individuals or landlords, only utilities and fuel vendors
• Cannot pay deposits or optional insurance coverage
REQUIRED DOCUMENTATION

Participants will need to provide:

- Completed Bill Payment Assistance application
- Bill to be paid
- Photo ID
  - Does not have to be government-issued
  - Expired is ok
- Signed Consent to Disclose Utility Customer Data form if:
  - Atmos
  - Black Hills
  - Colorado Natural Gas
  - Xcel
HOW TO APPLY

Three steps

1. Find an EOC partner agency that serves the participant’s geographic area.
2. Contact the agency to schedule an appointment and/or request an application.
3. Complete the Bill Payment Assistance application and return it to the assisting agency with the required documentation.

Note: All EOC agencies currently have to option to take applications over the phone due to COVID-19 precautions.
FIND AN AGENCY

How to refer participants to an EOC partner

• To find a partner agency, visit EOC’s online directory at https://www.energyoutreach.org/find-agency/ or call (866) 432-8435
• If you are an AHC Navigator, follow the process for referring to Salvation Army
• Do not refer applicants directly to EOC
PITFALLS

Common reasons why EOC assistance is delayed

- The application was not filled out completely.
- The applicant did not provide required documentation.
- The completed application and documentation was sent to EOC instead of the assisting partner agency.
THE STATE OF COLORADO’S LOW-INCOME ENERGY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (LEAP)
What will we cover in this section?

- What is LEAP?
- Who should apply?
- What are the benefits of LEAP?
- How to apply
- Common pitfalls
What is LEAP?

- LEAP = Low-Income Energy Assistance Program
- Federally-funded subsidy program run by the State of Colorado
- Offers home heating bill assistance November 1 through April 30
- Provides one benefit per heating season
  - Before February 1, benefit may be divided into two payments
  - After February 1, benefit sent as one payment

Note: LEAP is not part of EOC.
ELIGIBILITY

Who should apply?

Anyone who would like assistance with their heating costs and meets the following basic qualifications:

- At least one household member is a permanent, legal resident of the United States and a Colorado resident
- Pays home heating costs directly to a utility/fuel vendor or as part of rent*
- Gross monthly household income at or below 60% state median income

*Not eligible if rent is subsidized and heat is included in rent.
BENEFITS

More than just heating assistance

➢ Between $250 - $1,000 in heating bill assistance
➢ Prerequisite or income qualifier for several programs including:
  ✓ EOC’s Bill Payment Assistance program
  ✓ Crisis Intervention Program (CIP)
  ✓ Percentage of Income Payment Plan (PIPP) program for customers of:
      • Atmos
      • Black Hills
      • Colorado Natural Gas
      • Xcel
  ✓ Weatherization Assistance Program (WAP)
  ✓ Colorado’s Property Tax/Rent/Heat Credit (PTC) rebate
  ✓ Lifeline cell phone service program
REQUIRED DOCUMENTATION

Applicants will need to provide

- Readable copy of government-issued photo ID (applicant only)
- Social security numbers (if applicable) and birthdates for all household members
- Proof of all monthly household income including:
  - Pay stubs
  - Benefit award letters (SSI, SSDI, OAP, etc.)
  - Loans
  - Profit & loss statement (if self-employed)
- Most recent heating bill or rent receipt if heat included in rent
HOW TO APPLY

Three ways

- Phone: Call the HEAT HELP line at (866) 432-8435
- Online: [www.colorado.gov/peak](http://www.colorado.gov/peak)
- Email, mail or fax: Download an application from [https://www.colorado.gov/pacific/cdhs/leap](https://www.colorado.gov/pacific/cdhs/leap)
  - Send to the LEAP processor for that county
  - Refer to LEAP Application Contact Information sheet to determine the processor for a particular county
PITFALLS

Common reasons why an application might be denied

• Missing required signature(s):
  o Affidavit on pg. 3 (all applicants who meet residency requirement must sign)
  o Signature & Consent on pg. 4 (all applicants must sign)
• Failure to provide proof of income
• Not including SSNs and birthdates for all household members
• No response to Question E on pg. 2 if expenses exceed income:
  o E. How did you pay for these following costs if your household income does not cover your basic living expenses?
QUESTIONS?

Get in Touch

Enrique Hernandez
Program Manager
(303) 226-5054

Katharine Keenan
Program Coordinator
(303) 226-7060

energyassistance@energyoutreach.org
Please take a moment to complete a brief survey.
FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS
FAQS

What support is available for non-English speakers?
• LEAP applications and info sheets available in Spanish.
• HEAT HELP line has Spanish speakers.
• Counties have access to translation services.
• Many EOC partner agencies have bilingual case workers.
• Lutheran Family Services is an EOC partner agency that works with refugees and asylees.

What if someone is worried about how LEAP might affect their chances to become a citizen in the future?
• Tell them not to apply if they are concerned.
• Encourage them to apply in the future if/when public charge is no longer an issue.

How does full-time student status affect eligibility for LEAP and EOC?
• Students are eligible as long as they pay their own bill in the State of Colorado
• Loans do not considered income
Participants with disabilities often don’t respond to mailed notices. Will they have to reapply for LEAP if they don’t respond to requests for information by the deadline?

- No, if they provide the requested items within the same program year, the case will be reopened.
- Participants can call HEAT HELP at (866) 432-8435 to check the status of their application and find out if anything is missing.

Are participants eligible for LEAP and/or EOC if the energy bill is not in their name?

- They are eligible for both programs but additional documentation may be requested if needed.

Does eligibility change depending on which county someone lives in?

- No, the eligibility for LEAP and EOC is the same statewide.
- However, some EOC partner agencies may have their own internal requirements regarding who they serve, etc.
FAQS

What is the easiest way for someone to check their application status?
• For LEAP, call HEAT HELP at (866) 432-8435.
• For EOC, call or email the partner agency that is providing the assistance.

My client believes they were wrongfully denied LEAP. What should they do?
• Contact the state LEAP office at (303) 861-0269 or cdhs_leap_program@state.co.us.
• If an error was made, it will be corrected.
• If no error is found, applicant can go to court.

Does eligibility change depending on which county someone lives in?
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• However, some EOC partner agencies may have their own internal requirements regarding who they serve, etc.
FAQS

Is the Temporary Rent and Utility Assistance (TRUA) program connected with EOC?
• No, TRUA is a City and County of Denver program administered by Brothers Redevelopment and Northeast Denver Housing Center.
• However, both TRUA agencies also administer EOC’s Bill Payment Assistance Program.

Why doesn’t EOC’s online agency directory include all EOC partner agencies?
• It is up to the agency whether or not they are included.
• Agencies that only serve participants of their other programs often choose not to be listed.

What might disqualify an applicant after they have been approved?
• The applicant didn’t respond truthfully on their application and it is later discovered.
• The application was approved in error.

How can I request printed copies of the LEAP application and info sheet for my agency?
• Contact the state LEAP office at (303) 861-0269 or cdhs_leap_program@state.co.us.