

Press Release

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Page 1 of 1

For Immediate Release

Social Services Sees Changes to Low Income Energy Assistance Program (LIEAP)

Citizens affected by changed guidelines and funds availability

(Pitt County) — The Low Income Energy Assistance Program, or LIEAP, administered by the Dept. of Social Services provides a one-time, annual vendor payment to eligible families who need help with heating expenses. The program has seen some recent changes that will affect Pitt County citizens who use the program.

Previously, program guidelines included:

- Automatic Eligibility Notices
- Notices were sent to those not automatically eligible
- Applications were taken November 1, 2010 through November 13, 2010
- The State mailed LIEAP checks directly to recipients beginning Feb 1, 2011
- Total Program Amount equaled **\$1,175,402**

Current fiscal year guidelines have removed the automatic eligibility and initial notices; applications will be taken Dec. 1, 2011 through March 31, 2012; the County mails LIEAP checks directly to the vendor on behalf of approved recipients; and the State will set benefit amounts based on the fuel type. One of the biggest changes is the decrease in the program's funding to **\$276,864**.

Priority groups

Citizens 60 years old and over **OR** those who are disabled and receiving services through the Division of Aging and Adult Services can apply from Dec. 1, 2011 through Jan. 31, 2012.

Applicants who fall outside of that priority group have an application period from Feb. 1, 2012 through March 31, 2012.

Income verification is a must for all applicants. DSS can use online verification, or citizens can bring in earned income wage stubs, or award letters from Social Security or the VA. Funds are available on a first-come, first-served basis.

For more information on the LIEAP programs and its changes, citizens can call **252.902.1110**.