

On April 7, the Minnesota Energy Assistance Program (EAP) announced significant, temporary, changes to our Crisis Benefit policy, to ensure low income Minnesotans can access emergency benefits and not fall significantly behind on their energy bills. These changes are effective for the remainder of EAP's program year, starting April 7 and continuing through July 15, 2020.

The changes include:

(1) Change in Crisis Benefit Eligibility Criteria

Previously, EAP Crisis Benefit policy required households with connected utilities to have an active utility disconnection or active disconnect notice to be eligible for Crisis Benefits. For delivered fuels, households had to be running low on fuel (tank at or below 20% full) and not be able to get a fuel delivery (e.g., provided on credit), known colloquially as a "refusal to deliver."

EAP has modified these requirements as follows:

For connected utilities: Income eligible households may be eligible for Crisis Benefits based on any unpaid past due balance, with the Crisis Benefit amount equal to the past due amount plus any current balance on the day verified up to the annual Crisis maximum. Past due is any previously unpaid balance beyond the current month's charges.

For delivered fuels: Income eligible households that are running low on fuel may be eligible for Crisis Benefits without a "refusal to deliver."

(2) Increase Crisis Benefit Maximum Amount

Previously, EAP Crisis Benefit policy allowed for a maximum annual total Crisis Benefit of \$600, regardless of the number of Crisis events. For example, if a household received a Crisis Benefit of \$400 in November, they would only have been eligible for up to \$200 more in Crisis Benefits for subsequent Crisis events during the remainder of the program year.

EAP has modified this amount as follows:

EAP has increased the Crisis Benefit maximum amount to \$1,200 annually.

How households can apply for EAP

- Application deadline is extended to July 1
- To apply for EAP, households contact their local EAP service provider
- Households find their EAP provider:
 - By calling **1-800-657-3710** & entering their zip code, or
 - On this list of service providers by county or tribe at <https://mn.gov/commerce/consumers/consumer-assistance/energy-assistance/eap-provider.jsp>.
- 29 local EAP service providers including Community Action Programs, counties, tribal governments and non-profits serve all areas of the state.
- Find general EAP information at <https://mn.gov/commerce/eap.jsp>.

If you have questions regarding any of these changes, please contact me at the email or phone number below.

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