

AN ACT concerning energy assistance.

**Be it enacted by the People of the State of Illinois,
represented in the General Assembly:**

Section 5. The Illinois Economic Opportunity Act is amended by changing Section 2 as follows:

(20 ILCS 625/2) (from Ch. 127, par. 2602)

Sec. 2. (a) The Director of Commerce and Economic Opportunity is authorized to administer the federal community services block program, emergency community services homeless grant program, low-income energy assistance program, weatherization assistance program, supplemental low-income energy assistance fund, and other federal programs that require or give preference to community action agencies for local administration in accordance with federal laws and regulations as amended. The Director shall provide financial assistance to community action agencies from community service block grant funds and other federal funds requiring or giving preference to community action agencies for local administration for the programs described in Section 4. ~~The Director of Healthcare and Family Services is authorized to administer the federal low-income home energy assistance program and weatherization assistance program in accordance with federal laws and regulations as amended.~~

(b) Funds appropriated for use by community action agencies in community action programs shall be allocated annually to existing community action agencies or newly formed community action agencies by the Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity. Allocations will be made consistent with duly enacted departmental rules.

(Source: P.A. 94-773, eff. 5-18-06; 94-793, eff. 5-19-06.)

Section 10. The Energy Assistance Act is amended by changing Sections 3, 4, 6, 8, and 13 as follows:

(305 ILCS 20/3) (from Ch. 111 2/3, par. 1403)

Sec. 3. Definitions. As used in this Act, unless the context otherwise requires:

(a) the terms defined in Sections 3-101 through 3-121 of The Public Utilities Act have the meanings ascribed to them in that Act;

(b) "Department" means the Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity ~~Healthcare and Family Services~~;

(c) "energy provider" means any utility, municipal utility, cooperative utility, or any other corporation or individual which provides winter energy services;

(d) "winter" means the period from November 1 of any year through April 30 of the following year.

(Source: P.A. 94-773, eff. 5-18-06; 94-793, eff. 5-19-06; 95-331, eff. 8-21-07.)

(305 ILCS 20/4) (from Ch. 111 2/3, par. 1404)

Sec. 4. Energy Assistance Program.

(a) The Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity ~~Healthcare and Family Services~~ is hereby authorized to institute a program to ensure the availability and affordability of heating and electric service to low income citizens. The Department shall implement the program by rule promulgated pursuant to the Illinois Administrative Procedure Act. The program shall be consistent with the purposes and objectives of this Act and with all other specific requirements provided herein. The Department may enter into such contracts and other agreements with local agencies as may be necessary for the purpose of administering the energy assistance program.

(b) Nothing in this Act shall be construed as altering or limiting the authority conferred on the Illinois Commerce Commission by the Public Utilities Act to regulate all aspects of the provision of public utility service, including but not limited to the authority to make rules and adjudicate disputes between utilities and customers related to eligibility for utility service, deposits, payment practices, discontinuance of service, and the treatment of arrearages owing for previously rendered utility service.

(c) The Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity ~~Healthcare and Family Services~~ is authorized to institute an outreach program directed at low-income minority heads of

households and heads of households age 60 or older. The Department shall implement the program through rules adopted pursuant to the Illinois Administrative Procedure Act. The program shall be consistent with the purposes and objectives of this Act and with all other specific requirements set forth in this subsection (c).

(Source: P.A. 94-773, eff. 5-18-06; 94-793, eff. 5-19-06; 95-331, eff. 8-21-07; 95-532, eff. 8-28-07.)

(305 ILCS 20/6) (from Ch. 111 2/3, par. 1406)

Sec. 6. Eligibility, Conditions of Participation, and Energy Assistance.

(a) Any person who is a resident of the State of Illinois and whose household income is not greater than an amount determined annually by the Department, in consultation with the Policy Advisory Council, may apply for assistance pursuant to this Act in accordance with regulations promulgated by the Department. In setting the annual eligibility level, the Department shall consider the amount of available funding and may not set a limit higher than 150% of the federal nonfarm poverty level as established by the federal Office of Management and Budget; except that for the period ending June 30, 2012, or until the expenditure of federal resources allocated for energy assistance programs by the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, whichever occurs first, the Department may not establish limits higher than 200% of that

poverty level.

(b) Applicants who qualify for assistance pursuant to subsection (a) of this Section shall, subject to appropriation from the General Assembly and subject to availability of funds to the Department, receive energy assistance as provided by this Act. The Department, upon receipt of monies authorized pursuant to this Act for energy assistance, shall commit funds for each qualified applicant in an amount determined by the Department. In determining the amounts of assistance to be provided to or on behalf of a qualified applicant, the Department shall ensure that the highest amounts of assistance go to households with the greatest energy costs in relation to household income. The Department shall include factors such as energy costs, household size, household income, and region of the State when determining individual household benefits. In setting assistance levels, the Department shall attempt to provide assistance to approximately the same number of households who participated in the 1991 Residential Energy Assistance Partnership Program. Such assistance levels shall be adjusted annually on the basis of funding availability and energy costs. In promulgating rules for the administration of this Section the Department shall assure that a minimum of 1/3 of funds available for benefits to eligible households with the lowest incomes and that elderly and disabled households are offered a priority application period.

(c) If the applicant is not a customer of an energy

provider for winter energy services or an applicant for such service, such applicant shall receive a direct energy assistance payment in an amount established by the Department for all such applicants under this Act; provided, however, that such an applicant must have rental expenses for housing greater than 30% of household income.

(d) If the applicant is a customer of an energy provider, such applicant shall receive energy assistance in an amount established by the Department for all such applicants under this Act, such amount to be paid by the Department to the energy provider supplying winter energy service to such applicant. Such applicant shall:

(i) make all reasonable efforts to apply to any other appropriate source of public energy assistance; and

(ii) sign a waiver permitting the Department to receive income information from any public or private agency providing income or energy assistance and from any employer, whether public or private.

(e) Any qualified applicant pursuant to this Section may receive or have paid on such applicant's behalf an emergency assistance payment to enable such applicant to obtain access to winter energy services. Any such payments shall be made in accordance with regulations of the Department.

(f) The Department may, if sufficient funds are available, provide additional benefits to certain qualified applicants:

(i) for the reduction of past due amounts owed to

energy providers; and

(ii) to assist the household in responding to excessively high summer temperatures or energy costs. Households containing elderly members, children, a person with a disability, or a person with a medical need for conditioned air shall receive priority for receipt of such benefits.

(Source: P.A. 91-936, eff. 1-10-01; 92-690, eff. 7-18-02.)

(305 ILCS 20/8) (from Ch. 111 2/3, par. 1408)

Sec. 8. Program Reports.

(a) The Department of Natural Resources shall prepare and submit to the Governor and the General Assembly reports on September 30 biennially, beginning in 2003, evaluating the effectiveness of the energy assistance and weatherization policies authorized by this Act. The first report shall cover such effects during the first winter during which the program authorized by this Act, is in operation, and successive reports shall cover effects since the issuance of the preceding report.

(1) Reports issued pursuant to this Section shall be limited to, information concerning the effects of the policies authorized by this Act on (1) the ability of eligible applicants to obtain and maintain adequate and affordable winter energy services and (2) changes in the costs and prices of winter energy services for people who do not receive energy assistance pursuant to this Act.

(2) The Department of Natural Resources shall by September 30, 2002, in consultation with the Policy Advisory Council, determine the kinds of numerical and other information needed to conduct the evaluations required by this Section, and shall advise the Policy Advisory Council of such information needs in a timely manner. The Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity ~~Healthcare and Family Services~~, the Department of Human Services, and the Illinois Commerce Commission shall each provide such information as the Department of Natural Resources may require to ensure that the evaluation reporting requirement established by this Section can be met.

(b) On or before December 31, 2002, 2004, 2006, and 2007, the Department shall prepare a report for the General Assembly on the expenditure of funds appropriated for the programs authorized under this Act.

(c) On or before December 31 of each year in 2004, 2006, and 2007, the Department shall, in consultation with the Council, prepare and submit evaluation reports to the Governor and the General Assembly outlining the effects of the program designed under this Act on the following as it relates to the propriety of continuing the program:

(1) the definition of an eligible low income residential customer;

(2) access of low income residential customers to

essential energy services;

(3) past due amounts owed to utilities by low income persons in Illinois;

(4) appropriate measures to encourage energy conservation, efficiency, and responsibility among low income residential customers;

(5) the activities of the Department in the development and implementation of energy assistance and related policies and programs, which characterizes progress toward meeting the objectives and requirements of this Act, and which recommends any statutory changes which might be needed to further such progress.

(d) The Department shall by September 30, 2002 in consultation with the Council determine the kinds of numerical and other information needed to conduct the evaluations required by this Section.

(e) The Illinois Commerce Commission shall require each public utility providing heating or electric service to compile and submit any numerical and other information needed by the Department of Natural Resources to meet its reporting obligations.

(Source: P.A. 94-773, eff. 5-18-06; 94-793, eff. 5-19-06; 95-331, eff. 8-21-07.)

(305 ILCS 20/13)

(Section scheduled to be repealed on December 31, 2013)

Sec. 13. Supplemental Low-Income Energy Assistance Fund.

(a) The Supplemental Low-Income Energy Assistance Fund is hereby created as a special fund in the State Treasury. The Supplemental Low-Income Energy Assistance Fund is authorized to receive moneys from voluntary donations from individuals, foundations, corporations, and other sources, moneys received pursuant to Section 17, and, by statutory deposit, the moneys collected pursuant to this Section. The Fund is also authorized to receive voluntary donations from individuals, foundations, corporations, and other sources, as well as contributions made in accordance with Section 507MM of the Illinois Income Tax Act. Subject to appropriation, the Department shall use moneys from the Supplemental Low-Income Energy Assistance Fund for payments to electric or gas public utilities, municipal electric or gas utilities, and electric cooperatives on behalf of their customers who are participants in the program authorized by Section 4 of this Act, for the provision of weatherization services and for administration of the Supplemental Low-Income Energy Assistance Fund. The yearly expenditures for weatherization may not exceed 10% of the amount collected during the year pursuant to this Section. The yearly administrative expenses of the Supplemental Low-Income Energy Assistance Fund may not exceed 10% of the amount collected during that year pursuant to this Section.

(b) Notwithstanding the provisions of Section 16-111 of the Public Utilities Act but subject to subsection (k) of this

Section, each public utility, electric cooperative, as defined in Section 3.4 of the Electric Supplier Act, and municipal utility, as referenced in Section 3-105 of the Public Utilities Act, that is engaged in the delivery of electricity or the distribution of natural gas within the State of Illinois shall, effective January 1, 1998, assess each of its customer accounts a monthly Energy Assistance Charge for the Supplemental Low-Income Energy Assistance Fund. The delivering public utility, municipal electric or gas utility, or electric or gas cooperative for a self-assessing purchaser remains subject to the collection of the fee imposed by this Section. The monthly charge shall be as follows:

(1) \$0.40 per month on each account for residential electric service;

(2) \$0.40 per month on each account for residential gas service;

(3) \$4 per month on each account for non-residential electric service which had less than 10 megawatts of peak demand during the previous calendar year;

(4) \$4 per month on each account for non-residential gas service which had distributed to it less than 4,000,000 therms of gas during the previous calendar year;

(5) \$300 per month on each account for non-residential electric service which had 10 megawatts or greater of peak demand during the previous calendar year; and

(6) \$300 per month on each account for non-residential

gas service which had 4,000,000 or more therms of gas distributed to it during the previous calendar year.

(c) For purposes of this Section:

(1) "residential electric service" means electric utility service for household purposes delivered to a dwelling of 2 or fewer units which is billed under a residential rate, or electric utility service for household purposes delivered to a dwelling unit or units which is billed under a residential rate and is registered by a separate meter for each dwelling unit;

(2) "residential gas service" means gas utility service for household purposes distributed to a dwelling of 2 or fewer units which is billed under a residential rate, or gas utility service for household purposes distributed to a dwelling unit or units which is billed under a residential rate and is registered by a separate meter for each dwelling unit;

(3) "non-residential electric service" means electric utility service which is not residential electric service; and

(4) "non-residential gas service" means gas utility service which is not residential gas service.

(d) At least 45 days prior to the date on which it must begin assessing Energy Assistance Charges, each public utility engaged in the delivery of electricity or the distribution of natural gas shall file with the Illinois Commerce Commission

tariffs incorporating the Energy Assistance Charge in other charges stated in such tariffs.

(e) The Energy Assistance Charge assessed by electric and gas public utilities shall be considered a charge for public utility service.

(f) By the 20th day of the month following the month in which the charges imposed by the Section were collected, each public utility, municipal utility, and electric cooperative shall remit to the Department of Revenue all moneys received as payment of the Energy Assistance Charge on a return prescribed and furnished by the Department of Revenue showing such information as the Department of Revenue may reasonably require. If a customer makes a partial payment, a public utility, municipal utility, or electric cooperative may elect either: (i) to apply such partial payments first to amounts owed to the utility or cooperative for its services and then to payment for the Energy Assistance Charge or (ii) to apply such partial payments on a pro-rata basis between amounts owed to the utility or cooperative for its services and to payment for the Energy Assistance Charge.

(g) The Department of Revenue shall deposit into the Supplemental Low-Income Energy Assistance Fund all moneys remitted to it in accordance with subsection (f) of this Section.

(h) (Blank).

On or before December 31, 2002, the Department shall

prepare a report for the General Assembly on the expenditure of funds appropriated from the Low-Income Energy Assistance Block Grant Fund for the program authorized under Section 4 of this Act.

(i) The Department of Revenue may establish such rules as it deems necessary to implement this Section.

(j) The Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity ~~Healthcare and Family Services~~ may establish such rules as it deems necessary to implement this Section.

(k) The charges imposed by this Section shall only apply to customers of municipal electric or gas utilities and electric or gas cooperatives if the municipal electric or gas utility or electric or gas cooperative makes an affirmative decision to impose the charge. If a municipal electric or gas utility or an electric cooperative makes an affirmative decision to impose the charge provided by this Section, the municipal electric or gas utility or electric cooperative shall inform the Department of Revenue in writing of such decision when it begins to impose the charge. If a municipal electric or gas utility or electric or gas cooperative does not assess this charge, the Department may not use funds from the Supplemental Low-Income Energy Assistance Fund to provide benefits to its customers under the program authorized by Section 4 of this Act.

In its use of federal funds under this Act, the Department may not cause a disproportionate share of those federal funds to benefit customers of systems which do not assess the charge

provided by this Section.

This Section is repealed effective December 31, 2013 unless renewed by action of the General Assembly. The General Assembly shall consider the results of the evaluations described in Section 8 in its deliberations.

(Source: P.A. 94-773, eff. 5-18-06; 94-793, eff. 5-19-06; 94-817, eff. 5-30-06; 95-48, eff. 8-10-07; 95-331, eff. 8-21-07.)

Section 15. The Good Samaritan Energy Plan Act is amended by changing Section 5 as follows:

(305 ILCS 22/5)

Sec. 5. Definitions. In this Act:

"Department" means the Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity ~~Healthcare and Family Services~~.

"LIHEAP" means the energy assistance program established under the Energy Assistance Act.

(Source: P.A. 94-773, eff. 5-18-06; 95-331, eff. 8-21-07.)