

AN ACT concerning public aid.

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

Section 5. The Energy Assistance Act is amended by changing Section 6 as follows:

(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.

(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 record 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.

(c-1) This subsection shall apply only in cases where: (1) the applicant is not a customer of record of an energy provider because energy services are provided by the owner of the unit as a portion of the rent; (2) the applicant resides in housing subsidized or developed with funds provided under the Rental Housing Support Program Act or under a similar locally funded rent subsidy program, or is the voucher holder who resides in a rental unit within the State of Illinois and whose monthly rent is subsidized by the tenant-based Housing Choice Voucher Program under Section 8 of the U.S. Housing Act of 1937; and (3) the rental expenses for housing are no more than 30% of household income. In such cases, the household may apply for an energy assistance payment under this Act and the owner of the housing unit shall cooperate with the applicant by providing documentation of the energy costs for that unit. Any compensation paid to the energy provider who supplied energy services to the household shall be paid on behalf of the owner of the housing unit providing energy services to the household. The Department shall report annually to the General Assembly on the number of households receiving energy assistance under this subsection and the cost of such assistance. The provisions of this subsection (c-1), other than this sentence, are inoperative after August 31, 2012.

(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.)

Section 99. Effective date. This Act takes effect September

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1, 2009.