

2016-2017 FUEL ASSISTANCE FACTS

NEW ENGLAND FARM WORKERS' COUNCIL (NEFWC)
473 Main St., 3rd Floor , Fitchburg, MA 01420 (978) 342-4520

- WHO?** The NEFWC Fuel Assistance Program serves households who meet income guidelines. Eligibility is based on household size and **gross** (before taxes and deductions) income though some other factors may play a role in eligibility. Whether you own your home or rent you can apply. Whether you pay for your heat or your heat is included in your rent you can apply. You may not be eligible if you live in subsidized housing **AND** your heat is included in your rent.
- WHAT?** Assistance is provided to eligible households toward their primary source of heat, or rent, if the heat-is-included in the rent. **This assistance is *not* intended to pay *all* of your heating costs.** Assistance toward a secondary heat source is provided only in certain emergency situations, or at the end of the heating season in some years.
- You will receive a discount rate on your utility bills, if you receive service from a public utility, i.e., National Grid or Unitil. You may receive weatherization of your home or apartment; and burner repair or replacement if you are a homeowner.
- WHEN?** Applications are taken by **APPOINTMENT ONLY**. Call, write or stop in at NEFWC to make an appointment. **Applications will be taken through April 30.**
- WHERE?** Intake sites are scattered throughout the region. No telephone calls are accepted at the intake sites. ***You must call NEFWC to make all appointments.***
- The NEFWC Fuel Assistance Program in north central Massachusetts serves the following cities and towns:
- Ashburnham, Ashby, Athol, Ayer, Barre, Berlin, Bolton, Clinton, Devens, Fitchburg, Gardner, Hardwick, Harvard, Hubbardston, Lancaster, Leominster, Lunenburg, New Braintree, Petersham, Phillipston, Princeton, Royalston, Shirley, Sterling, Templeton, Townsend, Westminster, and Winchendon.
- HOW?** If you applied for Fuel Assistance with NEFWC last year, you should have received your application in the mail by the the end of October unless your heat is included in your rent. Those applications will be mailed in January. If you have not received your application by then, call and another will be mailed to you. If you have a scheduled appointment, be sure to **arrive on time** at the correct intake site. You must document **ALL household income for the four weeks prior to your date of application.** When you schedule your appointment, you will be told what documentation to bring. Bringing income documentation of everyone living in your housing unit to the appointment will speed up the process of determining whether or not you will be eligible for assistance. Bring a copy of a picture ID as proof of identification for each adult living in the housing unit, as well as address verification for the person whose name is on the heating bill. Also bring copies of Social Security cards and dates-of-birth for everyone.

Turn over for more information

IF YOU HEAT WITH OIL, WOOD KEROSENE OR COAL

Once you are approved, your fuel vendor will be notified of the amount of your assistance at the same time you are. Then, when you need fuel, simply call your vendor. Only fuel deliveries made from November 1st through April 30th can be paid for with Fuel Assistance funds. If you pay for fuel delivered on or after November 1st through April 30th before you become eligible, you can receive a credit for that payment after you become eligible. **THE ASSISTANCE WILL END WHEN YOU HAVE RECEIVED ALL YOUR BENEFITS, WHEN PROGRAM FUNDS ARE EXHAUSTED, OR WHEN ALL ALLOWABLE PAYMENTS HAVE BEEN MADE ON YOUR BEHALF, WHICHEVER OCCURS FIRST.**

IF YOU HEAT WITH NATURAL GAS, ELECTRICITY, or PROPANE

Once you are approved, your vendor will be notified of the amount of your assistance at the same time you are. Your vendor will bill NEFWC directly while continuing to send a bill to you. If you are billed for gas and electricity on the same bill, NEFWC will only pay for your **primary** source of heat. If you pay for energy usage on or after November 1st through April 30th, you will receive a credit for that payment if you are approved. It may take several weeks before a payment is credited to your utility account, and up to two months for our payment to show on your bill. **THE ASSISTANCE WILL END WHEN YOU HAVE RECEIVED ALL YOUR BENEFITS, WHEN PROGRAM FUNDS ARE EXHAUSTED, OR WHEN ALL ALLOWABLE PAYMENTS HAVE BEEN MADE ON YOUR BEHALF, WHICHEVER OCCURS FIRST.**

IF YOUR HEAT-IS-INCLUDED IN YOUR RENT

Once you are approved, payment will go back to November 1st or your move-in date, whichever is later. Payment then goes through April 30th or your move-out date, whichever is earlier. 30% of your rent is paid to you. Before a payment is issued to you, you will be required to submit proof of your address along with signing an agency rental information form to be completed by your landlord. **THE ASSISTANCE WILL END WHEN YOU HAVE RECEIVED ALL YOUR BENEFITS, WHEN PROGRAM FUNDS ARE EXHAUSTED, OR WHEN ALL ALLOWABLE PAYMENTS HAVE BEEN MADE ON YOUR BEHALF, WHICHEVER OCCURS FIRST.**

Payments will not be made on a monthly basis. Payments will be made once per season sometime after February 1st.

SERVICE CANNOT BE PROVIDED BEFORE November 1st

If you are facing having no heat, call our office Monday - Friday, 9:00 – 3:30 or come to the office between 8:30 – 4:30. **DO NOT WAIT UNTIL YOU ARE SHUT OFF OR OUT OF FUEL TO CALL!** If you have not applied for Fuel Assistance, and it appears you will meet the income requirements, you will be instructed to go to an intake site to fill out an application. **APPLICATIONS MUST BE COMPLETE WITH ALL INCOME DOCUMENTATION BEFORE EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE CAN BE GIVEN.** If you have applied, but have not been approved for Fuel Assistance, you must call our office to see if all your documentation has been received, and, if it has not, what we still need. If your application is incomplete, you must provide the necessary documentation to complete it before service will be given.