

LEAP to kick off season providing funds to help Coloradans with bills

Written by Holyoke Enterprise

Colorado's Low-income Energy Assistance Program (LEAP), which provides financial assistance with home heating bills, will begin accepting applications Thursday, Nov. 1 and will continue to do so until April 30, 2013.

LEAP is a federally funded program that provides cash assistance to help families and individuals pay a portion of winter home heating costs. The program pays the highest benefits to those with the highest heating bills and lowest incomes by family size. Applicant income cannot exceed 150 percent of the federal poverty index, which equates to \$2,882 per month for a family of four.

According to Aggie Berens, manager of LEAP, the average LEAP benefit is estimated to be \$302 per household. Last year, more than 125,000 Coloradans applied for LEAP, and 100,794 households received an average benefit of \$344.

To qualify for LEAP, applicants must be responsible for paying heating costs directly to an energy provider, fuel dealer or as part of rent; be a permanent legal resident of the United States and Colorado or have household members that are U.S. citizens.

LEAP applicants must provide a copy of valid identification and a completed affidavit indicating that they are lawfully present in the United States. Valid forms of identification include, but are not limited to:

Colorado driver's license or Colorado identification card; United States military identification card or military dependent's identification card; United States Coast Guard Merchant Mariner card; or Native American tribal document.

As defined by the Colorado Department of Revenue, other forms of identification may be accepted as well. For more information on lawful presence requirements, contact the DOR or visit www.colorado.gov/revenue.

LEAP to kick off season providing funds to help Coloradans with bills

Written by Holyoke Enterprise

Completed LEAP applications can be faxed, mailed or delivered to the appropriate county office. Potential program applicants may obtain an application through the following:

—Call 1-866-HEAT-HELP (1-866-432-8435) to have an application mailed.

—Visit any county department of social/human services across the state. To locate the county's office, visit the program's website at www.colorado.gov/cdhs/leap .

—Download and print an application from www.colorado.gov/cdhs/leap .

LEAP eligible households may also qualify for the Crisis Invention Program CIP and the Colorado Energy Office Weatherization Program.

The CIP operates year-round and provides assistance with a home's primary heating source. The Weatherization Program improves the energy efficiency in homes throughout Colorado, thereby permanently reducing heating costs.

To find out if one qualifies for LEAP, call toll-free, 1-866-HEAT-HELP (1-866-432-8435) or visit www.colorado.gov/cdhs/leap to view the most current program application requirements.

Holyoke Enterprise November 1, 2012