

**APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS AND FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS**

At your appointment, household income and additional information will be documented. Please be sure to bring as much documentation as you can for your appointment. The head of household and all adults 18 and older who are not full time students must sign the application. Once completed, your application will be forwarded to NSCAP where it will be processed. If you are missing any items, you will receive a letter that explains what is needed to complete your application. After all of the information is received, your application will be reviewed by NSCAP and you will receive a determination letter within 4 to 6 weeks. If eligible, you and your heating vendor will receive a letter indicating the maximum benefit for your household. Fuel Assistance only pays for deliveries made from November 1<sup>st</sup> to April 30<sup>th</sup>. If applicable, National Grid will be notified if you are eligible for a discount.

**WHAT IS FUEL ASSISTANCE?** Fuel Assistance is a program created to help elderly and income eligible households heat their home during the winter months. Benefits are based on the number of household members and total annual gross income.

**WHAT ARE THE INCOME GUIDELINES FOR FUEL ASSISTANCE?** Please call our **978-531-8810** or visit [nscap.org](http://nscap.org) to view the Income Eligibility Chart for your household size.

**WHAT IS THE PROCESS FOR APPLYING?** You will be given a list of required documents you will need to bring in for your appointment. All household members 18 and older must document all sources of income and sign the application. The list is also available online at [nscap.org](http://nscap.org)

**WHAT DOCUMENTS ARE REQUIRED TO APPLY?** When you call to schedule an appointment, a list will be mailed to you. A list of requirements is also available at [nscap.org](http://nscap.org). Review the list and submit all items that apply to your household.

**HOW DOES FUEL ASSISTANCE WORK?** Fuel Assistance makes direct payments to your heating vendor for services between November 1 and April 30 up to your eligible benefit. For Oil, Kerosene and Propane clients, Fuel Assistance pays your vendor directly for fuel delivered. For clients who heat with Gas or Electricity, we make payments based on bills provided by your Utility. Eligible clients whose heat is included in their rent *may* be eligible for a one-time payment based on their benefit level.

**HOW DO I KEEP TRACK OF THE STATUS OF MY APPLICATION?** Please call **978-531-8810** before contacting your worker. You will learn when your Application was received, the current status (RECEIVED, INCOMPLETE, PENDING DETERMINATION, DENIED OR ELIGIBLE), the amount of your benefit (if eligible) and all payments made to your vendor.

**I AM UNABLE TO REACH MY WORKER. WHAT SHOULD I DO?** It is important to understand that our staff works very hard to complete applications in a timely manner. Clients should call **978-531-8810** to confirm the status of their application *before* they call their worker and should allow 48 hours for a return call. Multiple calls will only delay our ability to respond to your inquiry.

**I BELIEVE I SENT IN ALL THE REQUIRED DOCUMENTS AND THE STATUS LINE SAYS MY APPLICATION IS STILL INCOMPLETE or PENDING.WHY?** We are required to follow Mass DHCD guidelines when processing your application. It is important that you send in all the documents you have been asked to provide since your application cannot be completed without them. Once we have received all the required documents, your application will be checked by a Certifier and you will be notified of your eligibility. The process can take several weeks, so it is important that you provide all the required documents as quickly as possible so that your vendor can be notified and payments can be made on your account

**HOW SOON WILL I KNOW IF I AM ELIGIBLE?** If you are missing documents, you will receive a letter telling you what is needed to complete your application. If you have provided all the necessary documents, you will be notified within 45 days of the receipt of your application. You will receive a letter confirming determination of eligibility, and, if eligible, the amount of your benefit.

**HOW ARE BENEFITS PAID?** Payments are made directly to your **heating vendor only**. Once you are determined eligible, we will notify your heating vendor of the amount. Your vendor sends NSCAP delivery tickets for deliveries made between November 1, 2014 and April 30, 2015. We will make payments on those bills up to the amount of your benefit. Any balance not paid by Fuel Assistance is your responsibility. Again, call **978-531-8810** to keep track of payments made and remaining balance of your benefit.

**I HEAT WITH OIL, KEROSENE, PROPANE. HOW ARE PAYMENTS MADE?** Once determined eligible, your vendor will be instructed to make deliveries up to the amount of your benefit. If you have an outstanding bill for a delivery made during the heating season (11/1/14 to 4/30/15) the payment will be applied to that balance first, then to any future deliveries.

**WHEN CAN I CALL MY OIL VENDOR TO REQUEST A DELIVERY?** When you receive your eligibility notice

**HOW LONG BEFORE A FUEL ASSISTANCE PAYMENT WILL APPEAR ON MY GAS or ELECTRIC BILL?** The payment on your NGRID GAS or ELECTRIC bills will often take 2-3 statements before they appear as a HEAP CREDIT. Payments are made retroactive to November 1<sup>st</sup>, regardless of when you are determined eligible.

**SHOULD I CONTINUE TO PAY MY GAS or ELECTRIC BILL ONCE DETERMINED ELIGIBLE?** We encourage clients to make at least some payment towards their balance if they are able to. It shows good faith and may prevent a shut off in the future if your Utility sees that an effort has been made to keep current. If you have been paying your monthly bill, your Fuel Assistance benefit for any usage from November, 1 2014 to April 30, 2015 will be applied to your account as a credit towards future months' usage.

**HOW DO I BECOME ELIGIBLE FOR NATIONAL GRID GAS or ELECTRIC DISCOUNTS?** We notify National Grid of your eligibility for Fuel Assistance and the discount, if applicable, will be applied retroactively to November 1<sup>st</sup>.

**I AM INTERESTED IN WEATHERIZATION SERVICES. WHO SHOULD I CONTACT?** Please (978)531-0767 Ext 118

**WHAT OTHER OPTIONS ARE AVAILABLE TO HELP PAY HIGH HOME HEATING BILLS?** Contact your local Salvation Army or Catholic Charities in your area. Visit [massresources.org](http://massresources.org) for additional services available in your area.

**FUEL ASSISTANCE APPLICATION STATUS LINE: (978)531-8810**