
THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

HOUSE BILL

No. 158 Session of
2001

INTRODUCED BY GEORGE, DeWEESE, YOUNGBLOOD, CAPPABIANCA,
LESCOVITZ, MELIO, SANTONI, BELARDI, READSHAW, CALTAGIRONE,
CORRIGAN, ORIE, WALKO, MANDERINO, WANSACZ, CLARK, COY,
SHANER, TRAVAGLIO, DeLUCA, GRUCELA, LAUGHLIN, BELFANTI,
BUXTON, SOLOBAY, RUBLEY, FRANKEL, STURLA, KIRKLAND, TIGUE,
RUFFING, FEESE, TRICH, McILHATTAN, STABACK, KELLER,
SCRIMENTI, TANGRETTI, HARHAI, CURRY, SURRA, LUCYK, MICHLOVIC,
M. COHEN, LEVDANSKY, COSTA, PETRARCA, SAINATO, WATERS,
D. EVANS, HALUSKA, LEH, WOJNAROSKI, BISHOP, PISTELLA, BOYES,
YUDICHAK AND GRUITZA, JANUARY 23, 2001

REFERRED TO COMMITTEE ON HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES,
JANUARY 23, 2001

AN ACT

1 Authorizing the Department of Public Welfare to issue Low-Income
2 Home Energy Assistance Grants; and establishing the Emergency
3 Energy Fund.

4 The General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania
5 hereby enacts as follows:

6 Section 1. Short title.

7 This act shall be known and may be cited as the Low-Income
8 Home Energy Assistance Grant Act.

9 Section 2. Definitions.

10 The following words and phrases when used in this act shall
11 have the meanings given to them in this section unless the
12 context clearly indicates otherwise:

13 "Department." The Department of Public Welfare of the
14 Commonwealth.

1 "Household." An individual or group of individuals,
2 including related roomers, who live together as one economic
3 unit that customarily pays for its home heating energy either
4 directly to a vendor or indirectly as an undesignated part of
5 rent.

6 "LIHEAP." The Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program
7 authorized by the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Act of 1981
8 (Public Law 97-35, 42 U.S.C. § 8621 et seq.) and administered by
9 the Department of Public Welfare.

10 Section 3. Low-Income Home Energy Assistance.

11 (a) Authorization.--The department shall apply for and
12 expend Federal funds for LIHEAP and shall establish the
13 Pennsylvania Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Cash, Crisis and
14 Weatherization Program.

15 (b) Income eligibility requirements.--

16 (1) Except as otherwise provided for in paragraph (2), a
17 household may apply for benefits under the programs
18 established in subsection (a) and shall receive benefits if
19 the household meets the following income eligibility
20 requirements: the household has a dwelling unit occupied by
21 one or more persons with an income at or below 150% of the
22 Federal poverty guideline amount.

23 (2) The Governor may, by regulation, raise the income
24 eligibility requirements set forth in paragraph (1) above
25 150% of the Federal poverty guideline amount for the
26 following reasons:

27 (i) weather conditions;

28 (ii) energy costs; or

29 (iii) manmade or natural disasters.

30 (c) Prebuying.--The department shall develop strategies for

1 prebuying and making bulk purchases of fuel in order to reduce
2 the adverse effects of market fluctuations and minimize the
3 overall cost to the Commonwealth.

4 (d) Amount of grants.--

5 (1) Except as provided for in paragraph (2):

6 (i) The department shall make crisis and cash awards
7 from the Emergency Energy Fund on a sliding scale based
8 on household income with grants for each program ranging
9 from a minimum of \$50 for each type of grant to a maximum
10 of \$400.

11 (ii) The department shall establish guidelines to
12 prioritize available funds for potential eligible
13 households of a weatherization component.

14 (iii) If any LIHEAP recipient is not eligible under
15 Federal eligibility guidelines for a LIHEAP cash or
16 crisis grant or if there are not enough Federal funds to
17 assist all eligible households under Federal rules and
18 regulations, then the department shall issue State grants
19 up to the maximum level under subparagraph (i).

20 (2) The Governor may, by regulation, increase the grant
21 amounts set forth in paragraph (1) for the following reasons:

22 (i) weather conditions;

23 (ii) energy costs; or

24 (iii) manmade or natural disasters.

25 Section 4. Emergency Energy Fund.

26 (a) Established.--A fund is hereby established in the State
27 Treasury to be known as the Emergency Energy Fund. The moneys of
28 the fund are hereby appropriated on a continuing basis to carry
29 out the provisions of this act.

30 (b) Source of funding.--Twenty-five percent of the rebate

1 money remaining unclaimed as of December 31, 2000, out of the
2 appropriation for the payment of homeowners' property tax rebate
3 made to the Department of Revenue for fiscal year 2000-2001
4 under section 220 of the act of May 24, 2000 (P.L. , No.21A),
5 known as the General Appropriation Act of 2000, shall be
6 transferred to the Emergency Energy Fund to be used for the
7 purposes set forth in this act.

8 (c) Utilization of emergency Federal funds.--

9 (1) Federal funds available for and resulting from
10 emergency, supplemental or additional allocations of Federal
11 grants for low-income home energy assistance may be added to
12 the moneys transferred under subsection (b) or to funds
13 appropriated or that may be used for the purposes prescribed
14 by the Federal Government.

15 (2) In addition to the moneys appropriated under the act
16 of May 24, 2000 (P.L. , No. 21A), known as the General
17 Appropriation Act of 2000, all moneys received from the
18 Federal Government for the purpose of low-income home energy
19 assistance shall be paid into the Emergency Energy Fund and
20 are hereby appropriated out of the Emergency Energy Fund to
21 the departments, boards, commissions or agencies designated
22 by the Governor.

23 (3) In the event the General Assembly fails to act in
24 sufficient time, the Governor is authorized through executive
25 authorization to provide up to \$60,000,000 in Federal funds
26 to implement the provisions of this act.

27 Section 5. Regulations.

28 The department shall promulgate rules and regulations
29 necessary to implement this act.

30 Section 6. Effective date.

1 This act shall take effect immediately.