

If You Need Help With Your Winter Heating Cost...



Help Is Available!

Winter heating bills can be a challenge for a household budget. **Columbia Gas of Massachusetts** wants you to know that help is available. Fuel Assistance and energy efficiency programs provide income-eligible households with financial assistance to help pay winter heating bills.

If your income falls within the limits shown, call your local Fuel Assistance office for information on payment assistance and energy-saving products and services that may be available to you.

2012/2013 Fuel Assistance and Weatherization Assistance Program Eligibility

Weekly Income Limits	
Household Size	Maximum Income
1	\$ 601
2	786
3	971
4	1,156
5	1,342
6	1,527
7	1,561
8	1,596

To apply, call your local Fuel Assistance office:

- **Brockton area:** (508) 588-5440
- **Springfield:** (413) 272-2209
- **Taunton area:** (508) 823-6346
- **Hampden County:** (413) 552-1548
- **Plymouth area:** (508) 746-6707
- **Northampton area:** (800) 370-0940
- **Framlingham area:** (508) 620-1230
- **Lawrence area:** (978) 681-4950

Or visit: www.ColumbiaGasMA.com

Valuable information is also available at:

- www.MassSave.com
- www.magoodneighbor.org

Por favor tenga esta información traducida si necesita ayuda con sus facturas de calefacción.

Veuillez avoir traduits ces renseignements si vous avez besoin de l'aide avec vos factures de chauffage.

Caso necessite ajuda com a sua conta de aquecimento, por favor arranje alguém que lhe traduza esta informação.

Columbia Gas[®]
of Massachusetts

A NiSource Company

Michael F. Kane
Director
Government Affairs

Reggie)
Can we get these
on the town website?
9/18/12

Columbia Gas[®]
of Massachusetts

A NiSource Company

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September 6, 2012

Mr. Joseph Feaster
Town of Stoughton
10 Pearl Street
Stoughton, MA 02072

Dear Mr. Feaster:

I'm sure you have seen the media coverage, or otherwise heard that natural gas prices are at their lowest levels in nearly a decade. That's good for consumers.

But despite strong expectations for lower heating bills this winter, Columbia Gas of Massachusetts continues to remind customers to take steps today to secure payment assistance, if necessary. Now is also the time to ensure that heating equipment works properly before winter sets in. While natural gas prices are lower, many households continue to struggle to make ends meet in light of current economic conditions.

We are increasing our efforts to communicate with our customers, your constituents, that help is available. We realize that for some people, this may be the first time they ever needed to ask for help. Through media advertising, bill inserts, press coverage and other avenues, we are encouraging customers to contact us *early on* if having trouble paying bills, as we can make special payment arrangements. We also urge customers to contact their local fuel assistance agencies.

The enclosed fuel assistance brochures and posters highlight the income guidelines in weekly, rather than the typical annual household income levels.

With the growing number of people on unemployment, a household that had a substantial annual income last year may now be eligible for fuel assistance. Even if the wage earner has been unemployed for only the last month or two, the fuel assistance agency may now look at as little as the last 4 weeks of income to determine eligibility. For that reason it's important that we encourage people to look at the guidelines and apply.

Qualifying for fuel assistance doesn't end there – customers receiving public assistance may also qualify for our discounted *Low Income Gas Rate*, as well as the Residential Arrearage Management Program designed to eliminate past due balances. In addition to the fuel assistance agencies, the brochure also lists other assistance resources, such as the Good Neighbor Energy Fund and the Citizens Energy/Distrigas Heat Assistance Program

For many people this is the first time they have ever had to even consider seeking assistance – and many of them don't even realize are eligible. Your help promoting this effort may be a welcome relief for struggling families who may be facing a financial crisis.

At the first sign they may have problems paying their natural gas bills, customers should contact Columbia Gas at 1-800-688-6160. There are payment plans and options available to assist with winter heating bills.

Please help us by encouraging your constituents to call the resources in the brochure/poster, and hopefully bring some relief to a struggling family.

Sincerely,

Michael F. Kane