

# 2008-2009 FUEL ASSISTANCE FACTS

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

- WHO?** The NEFWC Fuel Assistance Program serves households who meet income guidelines. Eligibility is based solely on household size and gross income. 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. Assistance toward a secondary heat source is provided only in certain emergency situations. **This assistance is not intended to pay all of your heating costs.**
- You will receive a discount rate on utility bills, if you receive service from a public utility, i.e., National Grid or Unitil. Households may receive a Lifeline rate from Verizon on basic telephone service, if you have a basic plan; 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 until May 15<sup>th</sup>.**
- 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, Fitchburg, Gardner, Hardwick, Harvard, Hubbardston, Lancaster, Leominster, Lunenburg, New Braintree, Petersham, Phillipston, Princeton, Royalston, Shirley, Sterling, Templeton, Townsend, Westminster, and Winchendon.
- HOW?** If you were on Fuel Assistance with NEFWC last year, you should have received your application in the mail by the the end of October. 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 documentation of your household's income to the appointment will speed up the process of determining whether or not you will be eligible for assistance. We will also need to bring a copy of a picture ID as proof of identification, as well as address verification for the person whose name is on the heating bill. We also need Social Security numbers and dates-of-birth for all household members.

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 1<sup>st</sup> through May 15<sup>th</sup> can be paid for with Fuel Assistance funds. If you pay for fuel delivered on or after November 1<sup>st</sup> through May 15<sup>th</sup> 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 1<sup>st</sup> through April 30<sup>th</sup>, 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 1<sup>st</sup> or your move in date, whichever is later. Payment then goes through April 30<sup>th</sup> or your move out date, whichever is earlier. A percentage 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 a signed agency form. **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. The first payments probably will not go out until late December or early January.

**SERVICE CANNOT BE PROVIDED BEFORE November 1<sup>st</sup>!!!**

If you are facing a no heat situation, call our office Monday - Friday, 9:00 - 4:00. **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.