

# Rental Assistance Corporation of Buffalo

## TENANT & FSS UPDATE

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VISIT OUR NEW WEBSITE AT WWW.RACBNY.ORG

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### UTILITY ASSISTANCE...

The issue of budgeting is extremely important to people with low incomes because there is just not enough money to go around. The goal is to *set priorities* and determine the difference between “*a want*” and “*a need*”. Then you must plan your spending accordingly. Relevant to the struggle of meeting your financial obligations is the need to maintain your utilities, particularly during the cold weather season.

If you are experiencing difficulty in paying your utility bills, you should contact your utility service providers to make payment arrangements or work out a budget payment plan. Most companies are willing to stretch out payments based upon your income. Try to negotiate a **Deferred Payment Agreement (DPA)**, allowing you to pay off your entire bill over time, while keeping your utilities on. If payment arrangements are made, it is important for you to make the payments as agreed upon to avoid termination of your service.

Perhaps the most well known program for utility assistance is the federally funded **Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP)**. The Federally funded **HEAP** program can help with your home heating costs. If you meet the program guidelines **HEAP** will provide a *one-time regular grant*, and may also provide a *one-time only emergency crisis grant*.

**Households receiving public assistance, Supplemental Security Income (SSI), or food stamps** are probably eligible for HEAP benefits, and will have their eligibility automatically calculated for a regular HEAP grant only. These households, however, will have to apply for emergency benefits at the Rath Building, 158 Pearl St. Rm. 210, M-F 8:00am- 4:30pm.

**Households not receiving public assistance** may be eligible for benefits if their gross monthly household income is at or below the income guidelines for their household size. These households would apply for both regular and emergency benefits at the 478 Main Street, and various outreach locations.

For more information contact the **HEAP** office at 858-7870 or 858-7644.

### HEAP INCOME GUIDELINES

HOUSEHOLD SIZE	MAXIMUM INCOME
1	\$0-\$1,963
2	\$0-\$2,567
3	\$0-\$3,172
4	\$0-\$3,776
5	\$0-\$4,380
6	\$0-\$4,984
7	\$0-\$5,097
8	\$0-\$5,210

*The HEAP office officially opened 11/03/08 for regular benefits. Emergency grants are expected to be available beginning 11/03/08.*

### UTILITY RESPONSIBILITY AND LEASE OBLIGATIONS

Remember if your lease lists *the tenant* as being responsible for the utilities, *the tenant must* maintain utilities for that unit. Failure to maintain your utility service is a violation of your lease, as well as, Housing Quality Standards and **may be cause for termination.**

### **IMPORTANT NOTICE REGARDING UTILITY REIMBURSEMENT CHECKS.**

**EFFECTIVE JANUARY 1, 2009, ALL UTILITY REIMBURSEMENT CHECKS WILL BE SENT DIRECTLY TO THE UTILITY COMPANY. PARTICIPANTS WILL NO LONGER RECEIVE THESE CHECKS IN THE MAIL.**

## OTHER UTILITY ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS

### NATIONAL FUEL

#### NEIGHBOR – FOR - NEIGHBOR HEAT FUND

If you are **over 60, disabled** or have a **medical emergency** and have exhausted regular and emergency HEAP, please call the following agencies to find out **if** you meet the specific **eligibility requirements**.

- ◆ *Catholic Charities*                **856-4494**
- ◆ *Salvation Army,*                    **883-9800**

### NATIONAL GRID

#### CARE & SHARE

Eligible individuals and households in the National Grid service area may receive assistance after exhausting other means of emergency assistance. You may be eligible if you are **over 60, have had a medical emergency, or are disabled**. Applications are taken in person at your local **American Red Cross**. Please call **(716) 886-7500** for more information.

### VERIZON

#### LIFELINE PHONE DISCOUNT

Eligible clients will be provided with discounted phone service. You are eligible if you receive TANF (public assistance), HEAP, Food Stamps, Medicaid or SSI. For more information please Contact **VERIZON at 1-800-555-5000**.

### In The Community ...

**The Ways To Work Family Loan Program**, offered by Child and Family Services is an innovative, effective approach to assisting low-income families as they move towards self-sufficiency.

Many barriers may prevent a family from achieving its' goals. Child and Family Services' Ways To Work Family Loan program seeks to address many of those barriers by providing loans to eligible families. Loans are available for the following purposes:

- To purchase a vehicle or make needed repairs
- To make rental security payment, mortgage payment/down payment, or housing repairs
- To pay for child care; or to purchase needed equipment such as computers or tools for employment or school.

### Eligibility Criteria:

1. resident of Erie County;
2. custodial parent of a child under the age of 18;
3. not eligible for conventional credit (unable to borrow from a bank, savings and loan, or a credit union);
4. employed at least 20 hours a week for six months or longer at the current job, or enrolled in a post-secondary education program, beyond a GED, having completed nine credits in the immediate preceding term and enrolled in nine credit hours the current term;
5. monthly disposable income enough to repay the loan.

*For more info. call Child and Family Services at (716) 882-0555 ext. 111,112.*



### FOR THE HOLIDAYS

**During the Holiday season, many community agencies offer help through various clothing drives, food basket offers, and toy drives. For more information contact your local church or community agency. You may also contact *The Community Services Central Referral Line at (716) 851-5555.***