

OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
State of Montana

Steve Bullock
Governor



Mike Cooney
Lt. Governor

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CONTACTS:

Martina Perry, Communications Director, Governor's Office, (406) 444-0214

Eric Lomager, Press Secretary, Governor's Office, (406) 444-9721

Jon Dook, Public Information Officer, DPHHS, (406) 444-0976

Governor Bullock Extends Energy Assistance for Thousands of Montanans Impacted by COVID-19

MONTANA - Governor Steve Bullock today announced he is directing \$7 million in federal CARES Act funds to expand assistance to thousands of Montanans struggling to afford their home energy needs due to financial strain caused by COVID-19.

"Montana families shouldn't have to choose between putting food on the table and paying their utility bill," Governor Bullock said. "This funding is critical to keeping families afloat and will give peace of mind to thousands of current LEAP clients, and to thousands more Montanans who will now be eligible for the program."

The \$7 million in federal funding will be used to provide COVID-19 supplemental assistance to approximately 18,000 current Low Income Energy Assistance Program (LEAP) clients. It will also be used to fund the LEAP Emergency COVID-19 Energy Assistance Program, which the Department of Public Health and Human Services (DPHHS) estimates will provide energy assistance to an additional 4,000 Montana households. These funds are not part of the \$1.23 billion Coronavirus Relief Fund allocated to the state.

Current LEAP program recipients will automatically receive the supplemental assistance. The supplemental benefit will be applied toward the recipient's electric bill, since the electricity cost is usually higher during the summer months. Further, current LEAP clients will be able to have any remaining 2019-2020 season benefit applied to their accounts rather than being returned at the end of the heating season as is normally the case.

Individuals who are not current LEAP clients can apply for the new Emergency COVID-19 Energy Assistance program by contacting their local LEAP office. Individuals can also call the