

# 2023-2024 Winter Heating Season Resources

Energy prices going into this winter are forecasted to be lower than the previous two years; however, prices remain elevated above historical averages due to a number of factors, including volatility in global energy markets. This guide contains resources for Maine people to help stay warm and find heating assistance if needed.



GOVERNOR'S  
Energy Office

## BE INFORMED

### Track Prices

The Governor's Energy Office tracks heating fuel prices weekly and compares costs of heating sources to help you make informed energy decisions. Track fuel prices [here](#).

### Review Electric Rates

Track Maine's standard offer electricity rates at [GEO's website](#), or find information about electricity providers through the [Office of the Public Advocate](#) or [Public Utilities Commission](#). Higher-usage households may also qualify for new alternative rates from Central Maine Power or Versant. Contact the utility for details.

## GET EFFICIENT

### Tune Up

Schedule your annual heating system maintenance as soon as possible to ensure it is operating most efficiently. Schedule a chimney cleaning for wood and oil burning systems to ensure safe operation during winter. Stay comfortable and save money by keeping your heat pump tuned up. Learn more from [Efficiency Maine](#).

### Weatherize

Numerous financial incentives and low-cost financing options exist to help consumers and businesses improve energy efficiency to reduce energy usage. Learn about incentives for heat pumps, heat pump water heaters, and weatherization improvements from [Efficiency Maine](#) and [MaineHousing](#).

### Heat Pumps

Electric heat pumps are the most cost-efficient heating source available and are proven to work in cold weather. Multiple incentive programs exist to reduce the cost of installing a heat pump for low-and-moderate-income Maine households. Learn more about heat pump programs from [Efficiency Maine](#) and [MaineHousing](#).

## Emergency Fuel Assistance

If you are very low on fuel, and can't afford to fill your tank, you may qualify for an emergency delivery. Emergency funds are available at non-profits, churches, municipalities, and other organizations. Call 2-1-1, or contact the Community Action Agency in your area for more information.

COMMUNITY ACTION AGENCY

# Heating Fuel Guidance

## Automatic Delivery

Ask your heating fuel provider about automatic delivery. Your provider will monitor your fuel usage, so you won't accidentally run out of fuel. Automatic delivery also offers added security in the unlikely event of supply disruptions or very cold/inclement weather.

## Fixed-Price Contracts

Some consumers may elect to lock a heating fuel price to have price predictability and guard against rising prices. If your dealer offers a contract, and you decide to lock in a price, please read the contract terms carefully and understand all parts of the contract before signing. Fixed-price contracts between a customer and dealer are binding once signed.

## Propane Heat

If you heat with propane, read our Propane Consumer Guide, which includes information on obtaining a good price, changing suppliers and potential start-up fees and closing account fees.

[PROPANE GUIDE](#)

## Wood Heat

If you use wood to heat your home, read the firewood guide prepared by the Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry, and remember to schedule a chimney cleaning to ensure safe heating during winter.

[FIREWOOD GUIDE](#)

# Energy Agencies

## Governor's Energy Office (GEO)

The GEO conducts a weekly survey of heating fuel prices, obtained from fuel retailers statewide. This survey provides the current Maine cash prices, in dollars, rounded to the nearest penny. This site also contains information to assist consumers in obtaining the best propane price for their household and location, a comparison of heating fuel prices (e.g., cord wood, natural gas, wood pellets, heating oil, etc.), and monthly heating fuel price trends.

Contacts:

Lisa Smith (Senior Planner)

[lisa.j.smith@maine.gov](mailto:lisa.j.smith@maine.gov), (207) 557-4439

Ross Anthony (Buildings and Energy Efficiency Analyst)

[ross.anthony@maine.gov](mailto:ross.anthony@maine.gov), (207) 629-8449

**Learn More by visiting [GEO's Website](#)**

## MaineHousing

The Maine State Housing Authority (MaineHousing) is an independent authority that addresses problems of unsafe, unsuitable, overcrowded, and unaffordable housing. Working with Community Action Agencies around the state, MaineHousing administers home heating assistance and weatherization programs for Maine people to stay warm during the winter.

**Call (800) 452-4668 or visit [MaineHousing](#)**

## Public Utilities Commission (PUC)

The Maine Public Utilities Commission (PUC) is the state's governing body that regulates the rates and services of Maine's utilities. If you have contacted your utility and still need help, contact the PUC's Consumer Assistance Division. They can help resolve disputes and help negotiate a mutually-agreeable payment arrangement.

**Call (800) 452-4699 or visit [Public Utilities Commission](#)**

## Efficiency Maine Trust

Efficiency Maine is the independent administrator for programs to improve the efficiency of energy use and reduce greenhouse gases in Maine's homes. It does this primarily by delivering financial incentives on the purchase of high-efficiency equipment that help customers save electricity, natural gas and other fuels throughout the Maine economy. **Call (866) 376-2463 or visit**

**[Efficiency Maine](#)**

## Office of the Public Advocate (OPA)

The Office of the Public Advocate's (OPA) primary responsibility is to represent the interests of Maine utility consumers. The OPA has multiple sources of information and resources for energy consumers in Maine. **Call (207) 624-3687 or visit [Office of the Public Advocate](#)**

# Energy Assistance Programs

## MAINEHOUSING PROGRAMS

If you cannot afford to heat your home, pay electric bills, or would benefit from energy improvements such as new insulation or a new heating system, help may be available from MaineHousing programs. Lower income households may qualify for heating assistance and energy improvements at no cost to them. Moderate-income households may qualify for low-cost energy loans. **To learn more, call (207) 626-4600**

To get started with programs offered by MaineHousing, check the income eligibility requirements or contact your local Community Action Agency.

### Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP)

The Home Energy Assistance Program (commonly called HEAP Fuel Assistance) provides money to low-income homeowners and renters to help pay heating costs. The funds are distributed throughout Maine by nine (9) Community Action Agencies, in most cases directly to the fuel vendors. The program is not intended to pay for all heating costs, but to assist in paying the heating bills.

### Weatherization Program

MaineHousing's Weatherization Program provides grants to low-income homeowners and renters to reduce energy costs by improving home energy efficiency. MaineHousing offers this program to consumers through Community Action Agencies, who screen people for eligibility as part of the HEAP application process.

## EFFICIENCY MAINE PROGRAMS

Efficiency Maine offers a variety of (1) incentives and rebates for technologies that will improve your home's energy efficiency and (2) home energy loans to help income-eligible Maine homeowners pay for Efficiency Maine incentive-eligible energy upgrades. Call 866-376-2463 or visit [Efficiency Maine](#) to learn more.

### Residential Energy Efficiency Rebates and Incentives

Incentives for households are available for weatherization, heat pumps, heat pump water heaters, and more. Enhanced incentives are available for income-eligible households.

### Residential Home Energy Loans

Efficiency Maine offers home energy loans to help income-eligible Maine homeowners pay for Efficiency Maine incentive-eligible energy upgrades. Qualifying homeowners can borrow up to \$7,500 over 10 years with no fees and interest rates as low as 5.99% APR. Electric vehicles are not eligible.

### Heat Pump Program

MaineHousing's heat pump program pays for the cost and installation of a heat pump for eligible Maine homeowners. Heat pumps are a popular and efficient tool to help heat homes in cold climates. They can help save on heating costs if used in the correct way.

### Central Heating Improvement Program

MaineHousing's Central Heating Improvement Program (CHIP) provides grants to repair or replace central heating systems that serve low-income households.

### Low Income Assistance Program

Low Income Assistance Plan (LIAP) helps low-income homeowners and renters with their electric utility bills. MaineHousing, through Community Action Agencies, accepts customer applications for LIAP as part of the HEAP application process.

### Non-Residential Programs

If you are a commercial, industrial, municipal, educational, or multifamily (i.e., three or more units) customer, review the available non-residential energy efficiency initiatives offered by Efficiency Maine.

### Federal Credits and Incentives

The Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) invests over \$350 billion to help fight the causes and impacts of climate change. Tax credits, rebates, and other incentives directly help individuals and businesses transition to cleaner technologies, from electric cars to heat pumps to rooftop solar panels. Visit Efficiency Maine's Federal Funding [webpage](#) to stay up-to-date on IRA and other federal programs.

## OTHER PROGRAMS

### Natural Gas Customer Discounts

If you are a natural gas customer, receiving service under the residential heating and non-heating rates, you may be eligible to receive a 30% discount on your delivery and gas supply rates.

The discount applies to any customer identified by the Maine State Housing Authority (MaineHousing) as eligible for HEAP. Once enrolled, customers will receive the discount for 12 consecutive months. You should call your gas utility to enroll.

### Electricity Bill Assistance

Find programs and support for managing your electricity bill through the Maine Public Utilities Commission's online resource guide, [MaineElectricHelp.com](http://MaineElectricHelp.com).

CMP and Versant Power each operate an Arrearage Management Program (AMP) that assists eligible low-income residential customers who are in arrears on their electricity bills.

Customers who are eligible for HEAP and have an arrearage of \$500 or more that is at least 90 days old are eligible to participate in the program.

Optional electricity rates are available for customers of CMP and Versant Power that may save you money if you heat with electricity, such as a heat pump. To learn more, contact your electric utility.

Participating customers will have 1/12 of their arrearage amount, up to a maximum of \$300, forgiven every month that they pay their current bill on time. To enroll in an AMP, customers should contact either their local Community Action Agency or their utility.

### Maine Emergency Management Agency's Alternative Heat Source Safety Guide

During a power outage, or when one source of fuel such as propane or heating oil is in short supply, we may turn to another way to heat our homes. There are a number of safety considerations when you are using an alternate heat source. Click [here](#) to read the guide.

### DIY Energy Efficiency Ideas

Leaky windows or ducts, old appliances, or inefficient heating and cooling systems can cost families money during winter heating seasons. The Energy Saver Do-It-Yourself (DIY) Savings Projects from the U.S. Department of Energy offers easy, step-by-step instructions to home energy efficiency improvements that will save you energy and money. Click [here](#) for more.



GOVERNOR'S  
Energy Office

[maine.gov/energy](http://maine.gov/energy)