

Energy Help

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Each day, the newspapers, television and radio are filled with the news of rising energy costs.

What has not been widely publicized is a long-standing year-round program that can help the people who need it most.

This program is the Low Income Energy Assistance Program or LIEAP. It's targeted for low-income residents and especially low income seniors and people with disabilities. As energy prices steadily increase, more and more people are finding it very difficult, if not impossible, to pay their ballooning utility bills. People with limited resources are the most vulnerable. They fall deeper into debt. They live in inadequately lit and heated rooms. Many are threatened with the termination of their electric, gas or water service. In some cases, termination actually occurs.

LIEAP funds are used to pay any type of heating fuel or utility bill. Having this program pay all or a portion of a heating or utility bill can mean the difference between having heat and lights and being "left out in the cold." Residents of "fair market" housing can receive up to \$250, while those in subsidized housing can receive up to \$125.

To be eligible, a recipient's income must be below 60 percent of the region's median income. Currently 60 percent of median income for a single person

is \$14,370 per year. For a family of four it is \$27,060.

This is a less stringent requirement than has been applied in the past, which means that people who didn't qualify before may very well do so now. Energy assistance is not just essential in the winter months. Even when the weather in Oregon is relatively warm in the daytime, the nighttime temperatures often drop down into the 40s and 30s. In addition, utilities are needed to operate the lights in most homes as well as the appliances necessary for cooking and refrigeration. Living in a home in the Portland area without electricity can create serious health hazards for the occupants especially for young children and the elderly.

LIEAP funds are distributed by the following six organizations:

North Portland: YWCA of Greater Portland, 503-721-6770; Northwest Portland: Friendly House, 503-228-4335; Southeast Portland: Portland Impact, 503-988-6000; Southwest Portland: Neighborhood House, 503-246-1663; East Multnomah Co.: Human Solutions, 503-988-5200 and Northeast Portland: Albina Ministerial Alliance, 503-285-0493. If people are unsure which one to contact, they can call the central LIEAP access number at the Multnomah County Department of Community and Family Services: 503-988-3999.



A Right Fit for Glasses

Boise-Eliot students Jonathan Saunderson and Bronson Enos are welcomed by Lisa Sullivan of the LensCrafters Foundation Vision Van that was parked at the Lloyd Center parking lot last week to provide nearly 300 children with free eye exams and fittings for glasses. The LensCrafters' Give the Gift of Sight program provides free vision care to those who cannot afford it.

(PHOTO BY MARK WASHINGTON/PORTLAND OBSERVER)

Laurelhurst Park Named Historic Site

The 26-acre Laurelhurst Park has been named to the National Register of Historic Places.

The southeast Portland park is the first city park listed on the national register, a federal honor usually bestowed on historic buildings, downtown districts or significant houses.

It might also be first of several Portland-area parks to seek a place on the national history list as part of the turn-of-the-century national City Beautiful movement.

"Laurelhurst Park epitomized the planning efforts of the time," said Peter Meijer, director of historic resources for SERA Architects of Portland, a firm that specializes in historic renovation of buildings around the city. "It's also very much intact and unchanged from when it was first constructed around the turn of the century. It's matured now, so one can see the growth that was planned at the beginning."

Laurelhurst Park was nominated to the national register last May by the state Advisory Committee on Historic Preservation. The process required approval by the U.S. Department of Interior, which maintains the national register.



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