

## OD Offers Home Energy Assistance Programs: Apply Now for 2010

Each year, more Ohioans find it difficult to pay their electric and natural gas bills. Although following energy efficiency tips may help to reduce the amount of energy used, unless a home has proper insulation or other systems in place to properly control temperatures, energy usage may still be higher and result in more expensive monthly energy bills. The Office of the Ohio Consumers' Counsel (OCC), your residential utility consumer advocate, offers a Home Weatherization Assistance Program (HWAP) for customers who are income eligible.

The Home Weatherization Assistance Program is a federally funded energy efficiency program available to low income residential consumers. The program, administered by the Ohio Department of Development (ODOD), helps to lower energy bills by reducing the amount of energy used to heat and cool a home. Some of the free services included in the program are:

- Attic, wall and basement insulation
- Heating system repairs or replacements
- Reduction of air leakage from major sources such as a chimney or wall
- Personalized energy management plan
- Health and safety testing and inspections

Those accepted into the HWAP program will receive a home weatherization review in order to determine which services will be most cost effective. Consumers are eligible for the program if they are at or below 200 percent of the federal poverty level. They can also apply for HWAP if they participate in or qualify for any of the following:

- Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP)
- Percentage of Income Payment Plan (PIPP)
- Supplemental Security Income
- Temporary Aid to Needy Families

Similarly, ODOD also manages the Home Energy Assistance Program, another federally funded project. It is designed to help qualified customers pay for winter heating costs.

There are two different types of HEAP programs: HEAP and Emergency HEAP (E-HEAP). This program pays a portion of consumers' winter heating bills. Consumers can use HEAP one time per winter heating season. The amount of aid received varies and is determined by the following criteria:

- Household income at or below 200 percent of federal poverty guidelines (income is included for all members 18 years of age or older);
- Number of people in household;
- Cost or primary heating fuel or bulk fuel supplied;
- Amount of aid received from federal grants; and
- Geographic region of the state.

To apply for these programs, consumers must complete the Energy Assistance Program Application. Applications can be obtained by contacting ODOD, OCC or a community action agency. For more information on these and other utility assistance programs, contact the OCC at 877-742-5622 or visit [www.pickocc.org](http://www.pickocc.org). Consumers may also call the ODOD at 800-282-0880, or visit its Web site at [www.odod.state.oh.us](http://www.odod.state.oh.us).

