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## Time is running for financial help with energy bills

Wendell Hutson

Time is running out for poor families to get help in paying off old energy bills.

The Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP), a federal program to help low-income families pay their gas and electric bills, will stop accepting applications April 30 or until funds are exhausted.

Households with incomes up to 150 percent of the federal poverty level are eligible. For example, a family of four with a monthly income of \$2,420 or less would qualify for LIHEAP assistance, said Brenda Walker, an administrator with the Community and Economic Development Association of Cook County Inc. (CEDA). CEDA also is a LIHEAP site. She added that the average energy assistance payment applicants received in 2007 was \$160 and payments are made directly to the energy provider.

Applicants must show proof of income for the last 30 days, present a photo ID and an original gas or electric bill bearing the name and address when seeking assistance.

For more information, call 1-800-571-2332.

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