

CAN I GET HELP WITH MY HEAT BILLS THROUGH THE HOME HEATING CREDIT?

Yes. The Home Heating Credit (HHC) provides heat assistance to low income families. The amount of the credit is based on income, family size and heat costs. If you received a credit in the last year, an application will be mailed to you near the end of the year. You can also get an application from the Michigan Department of Treasury and other agencies in your community.

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DHS-Pub 631 (Rev. 7-07) Previous edition may be used.



You and Your Energy Bills

No one needs to tell you that paying heat and electric bills is not easy. This pamphlet tells how you can get help to

- use only the energy you can pay for, and
- pay for the energy you use.

For more information, visit www.michigan.gov/heatingassistance



STATE OF MICHIGAN
Department of Human Services

WHO IS RESPONSIBLE FOR MY HEAT AND ELECTRIC COSTS?

YOU are. DHS can help, but you must read your bills, be careful how you use energy, and keep your costs as low as possible to avoid shutoff. Your heat and electricity providers want to keep you as a customer. Don't let them be the last to know if you are having problems. Call them about setting up a payment plan **before** you get shut off.

WHAT HELP IS AVAILABLE FROM DHS?

If you are in danger of shutoff, DHS may be able to assist with crisis money. However, there is an annual limit on how much can be paid depending on the type of heating fuel used.

WHAT IS VENDORING?

Vendoring is a voluntary payment system where DHS sends part of your FIP/SDA grant directly to the provider(s) of heat and/or electricity. The amount vendored is a set amount based on your group size. With regular vendoring, DHS gets no bill and sends only your vendored amount to the company. You must bring your shutoff notice to DHS to apply for crisis money.

DOES VENDORING GIVE ME SHUTOFF PROTECTION?

No. You are responsible for paying bills that are more than your vendored payments. Talk to your provider to see what you must do to have service all year.

WHAT HAPPENS IF MY BILLS ARE LESS THAN WHAT I VENDORED?

If your heat and electric bills together are less than the total you vendored for heat and electricity, the difference will be sent to your company if you owe money for past-due bills. If you do not have past-due bills, it will be sent to you. This is done once a year or within 90 days of vendoring termination.

HOW CAN I REDUCE MY ENERGY USE?

You can do several things to reduce your usage and lower your energy bills.

- Turn down the heat. You'll typically save 1-3 percent on your heating costs for every degree you dial down. Don't use space heaters.
- Set your water heater temperature at 120 degrees.
- Close heat registers and turn off radiators in unused rooms, such as a spare bedroom, attic basement and storage areas to save 5 to 10 percent on your heating costs.

- Close your attic basement, garage and exterior doors to prevent cold drafts and keep in heat. Seal places where cold air gets into your home with caulk or plastic.
- Clean or replace the furnace filter often during the heating season.
- Keep furniture, carpeting and curtains from blocking heat registers and air return ducts.
- Apply for weatherization with your local Weatherization Operator Agency. See the DHS public website <http://www.michigan.gov/dhs> for a statewide listing of local Weatherization Operators.
- Ask your utility providers about their conservation programs.



*Weatherization
Works*