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Area Agency on Aging Alerts Seniors About Ohio's Home Heating Assistance Programs

This holiday season, the high costs of groceries, medicine and gasoline have many senior citizens worried about being able to pay high home heating bills. Residents of the Buckeye Hills Area Agency on Aging District 8 who are age 60+ can find out in minutes if they qualify for Ohio's home heating assistance programs. For an application, call 1-800-331-2644.

Programs that assist low-income seniors include Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP), the Percentage of Income Payment Plans (PIPP) and E-Heap (emergency heat assistance). On a recommendation from the Governor's Anti-poverty Task Force, this year, the state has increased the income eligibility guidelines. Households are eligible if income is at or below 200 percent of the federal poverty guidelines, an increase from the previous level of 175 percent.

The Program, administered by the Department's Office of Community Services, makes a one-time payment for the current winter heating season. Households with elderly or disabled members may qualify for a larger amount of assistance. A special component of HEAP, the Winter Crisis Program, is administered by Community Action agencies throughout the region.

The Winter Crisis Program provides assistance once each heating season to eligible households that are disconnected, threatened with disconnection, or have less than a 10 day supply of bulk fuel. To be eligible for home energy assistance, the total household income of an applicant must be at or below 200 percent of the 2009 federal poverty guidelines listed below: **Size of Household: Total Household Income:** (Twelve Months)

1 up to \$ 21,660; 2 up to \$ 29,140; 3 up to \$ 36,620; 4 up to \$ 44,100; 5 up to \$ 51,580; 6 up to \$ 59,060; 7 up to \$ 66,540; 8 up to \$ 74,020. For households with more than eight members, add \$7,480 per member to the yearly income.

Applications for the 2009 - 2010 Home Energy Assistance Program are now being accepted. Copies are available at www.areaagency8.org. Families and seniors can learn more about these and other Ohio budget saving programs for senior by calling the Area Agency on Aging at 1-800-331-2644.