



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

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Home Heating Applications Now Available

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| ISSUE: **HOME HEATING, HEAP, FAMILIES**



As winter approaches here in Central and Northern New York, many of us are preparing for the drop in temperatures—and an increase in our home heating bills.

The cold can take a toll on many of our most vulnerable—including senior citizens and those on low or fixed incomes—who find themselves struggling with the decision of whether to keep the heat on, or have the money to pay for other necessities.

For those who find it difficult to manage home heating costs during winter, there is help. Recently it was announced that more than \$327 million in funding is available to assist elderly and low to moderate income New Yorkers with staying warm during the colder months.

To apply for 'HEAP', residents can visit www.myBenefits.ny.gov or obtain an application at their local Department of Social Services office (listed below):

- *St. Lawrence County Department of Social Services, 6 Judson Street, Canton, NY, (315) 379-2297*
- *Jefferson County Department of Social Services, 250 Arsenal Street, Watertown, NY, (315) 785-3229*
- *Oswego County Department of Social Services, 100 Spring Street, Mexico, NY, (315) 963-5031*

?In addition to applying for the one-time benefit, households can also apply for an emergency benefit—beginning on Tuesday, January 2, 2018—if in danger of having their heat turned off, or running out of fuel.

I have also compiled some tips you can use to help you and your home stay warm this fall and winter, and save some money on your heating bills.

- **Make the annual call for maintenance** – Electric & oil heaters should be checked by a professional once a year. Also, check your filters. Dirty filters can run up a heating bill fast.

- **Turn down your thermostat** – Even just a few degrees can lower your bill by as much as 10%. Lowering your water heater just a few degrees could also have a big impact.
- **The sun can provide free heat** – Make sure to allow sunlight into your home through your windows. At night, when the sun goes down, cover those windows back up to keep the heat inside.
- **Ceiling fans can actually circulate heat** – You can run your ceiling fan clockwise to keep warm air from rising. Use a low setting and it pushes air back down towards the floor.
- **Use more insulation** – Studies have shown a lack of proper insulation is a major reason heating bills are so high. Small fixes, such as weather stripping doors and windows could have a big impact on how much energy you use.

As we know, winter can be brutally cold throughout our region. If you, or someone you know needs assistance with covering the cost of heating bills this winter, please take the time to see if any of these tips work for you and also find out if you or someone you know could potentially qualify for the HEAP program.