



Connecting You to Community Services

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## **ELDERCARE LOCATOR AND EPA OUTLINE WAYS FOR OLDER ADULTS TO DEAL WITH HIGH ENERGY COSTS THIS WINTER**

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Holiday Campaign Informs Older Adults and Their Families  
About Actions to Take for Energy Assistance and Home Safety

**Washington, D.C.** -- The Eldercare Locator, a nationwide public service of the U.S. Administration on Aging, today launched a campaign with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), to educate older adults about the community resources available to help them stay warm economically and safely this winter.

Home energy bills, expected to rise almost 50 percent this winter, will be especially challenging for older Americans. Many older adults with low fixed incomes are already stretched with daily living expenses and health care costs. "While some older Americans will be overwhelmed with higher heating bills, the good news is that there are things they can do to help ease this burden," said Josefina G. Carbonell, Assistant Secretary for Aging at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

In cooperation with hundreds of State and Area Agencies on Aging throughout the country, the Eldercare Locator and EPA encourage older adults and their families to take action now to prepare for an economically warm and safe winter, by:

- Finding out about energy assistance programs. Contact your local Area Agency on Aging or the Eldercare Locator at 1-800-677-1116 or [www.eldercare.gov](http://www.eldercare.gov) for details;
- Taking advantage of any monthly budget plans and "no cut off" eligibility programs available through local utility providers;
- Finding ways to cut down on energy with help from the EPA ENERGY STAR program - call toll free 888-782-7937 or visit [www.energystar.gov](http://www.energystar.gov);

(more)

## Eldercare Locator/EPA Energy Tips/2

- Ensuring home safety, such as the proper use of smoke and carbon monoxide detectors, electrical cords and space heaters, and chimneys and fireplaces; and
- Having a back-up plan in case weather conditions require emergency action, such as temporary living arrangements, daily home checks to those living alone, ample supply of medicine, etc.

These tips, along with a home energy quiz and other resource information, are detailed in the free booklet '*Winter Warmth and Safety: Home Energy Tips for Older Adults*' which is available by contacting the Eldercare Locator at 800-677-1116 or EPA at 888-782-7937.

"We encourage family members to help their older loved ones tap into all the energy saving resources that are available to them," said Sandy Markwood, CEO of the National Association of Area Agencies on Aging. "Spending just a few hours addressing these issues now will ensure that they are warm and safe this winter."

In addition to seeking financial assistance, EPA stresses the importance of energy efficiency in the home for cost savings. "EPA encourages consumers to purchase ENERGY STAR-qualified products and to make energy-efficient improvements to save 30% on home energy use. Being energy efficient keeps energy bills under control, improves the comfort of your home, and together we generate less greenhouse gas emissions and that's good for the environment," said Doug Anderson, EPA, The ENERGY STAR Program.

For more information about the campaign, visit [www.eldercare.gov](http://www.eldercare.gov) or [www.energystar.gov](http://www.energystar.gov).

The Eldercare Locator is administered by the National Association of Area Agencies on Aging (n4a) and the National Association of State Units on Aging (NASUA). The EPA ENERGY STAR program helps businesses and individuals protect the environment through superior energy efficiency.

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Attached: Eldercare Locator/EPA's Home Energy Tips for Older Adults



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## Eldercare Locator/EPA's Home Energy Tips for Older Adults

*Older adults and their family caregivers can take the following actions to stay warm economically and safely this winter:*

- Find out about financial energy assistance programs: Many states, counties and cities provide programs that assist older adults with winter heating costs. Your local Area Agency on Aging is a good source of information about available community programs and eligibility requirements. Ask about the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP), the Weatherization Assistance Program, and other energy assistance. To identify your Area Agency on Aging, contact the Eldercare Locator at 800-677-1116 or [www.eldercare.gov](http://www.eldercare.gov).
- Be aware of help available through utility companies: Check with your gas, water and electricity suppliers to see if they offer a monthly budget plan to help spread out those high energy costs this winter over an entire year. Often they maintain special heating assistance funds, as well as “no cut off” guidelines to avoid termination of service for elderly, disabled and ill customers who have difficulty paying their bill. Utility companies also are a great source for energy conservation information. They might be able to refer you to an expert to inspect your home for ways to make it more energy efficient, or provide a list of contractors to tune up your furnace so that it is working at peak efficiency.
- Look for ways to cut down on winter energy use: The ENERGY STAR Program, run by the EPA and the Department of Energy, offers steps to follow to make your home more energy efficient (888-782-7937 or [www.energystar.gov](http://www.energystar.gov)). Other easy steps to take include using storm windows or inexpensive stretch window film to keep out drafts, using a programmable thermostat to lower temperature automatically when you are away from home or asleep, changing furnace filters at least every three months to keep the warm air flowing, and weather stripping or insulating the attic hatch or door to prevent warm air from leaking out of the house. Also, although a log fire in your fireplace is nice, it does not heat your home because heated air drafts up the chimney. When not using your fireplace, close the damper.
- Ensure your health and safety: In addition to addressing the need to stay warm during winter, consider safety as well. For example, make sure that: smoke and carbon monoxide detectors are installed and working properly; water pipes are insulated to avoid freezing and bursting; electrical cords on space heaters are not damaged and do not pose a tripping hazard; batteries and battery-powered flashlights are available; and a fire extinguisher is ready to use.
- Have a back-up plan: Before you need them, consider alternative arrangements should extreme weather conditions require emergency action. These might include: having another place to stay temporarily, asking someone to check on you daily – especially if you live alone, making sure that your medicine and medical needs are met, and sharing contact information with everyone who would need it.

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