



2024 WINTER PROGRAM GUIDELINES for Fuel Banks

Updated 2/16/2024

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Operation Fuel ensures equitable access to energy for all by providing year-round energy assistance, promoting energy independence, and advocating for affordable energy.

Operation Fuel offers emergency energy assistance and water assistance to qualifying households. We provide emergency grants to CT residents following these guidelines, but with flexibility to meet human needs.

GUIDELINES

Beginning Monday, January 8th, 2024, Operation Fuel will administer an energy assistance program for clients who need aid with meeting their home energy needs (electricity, gas, and deliverable fuels). This program will be for households living up to 75% of state median income. There will not be an assets test. **The maximum grant amount will be up to \$500.**

Operation Fuel expects to close our Winter Season on March 15th, 2024. We will update this information at www.operationfuel.org/gethelp.

GRANT AMOUNT

One time grant up to \$500 per household. Deliverable fuel customers may use this grant for one delivery per award. ***Operation Fuel staff will make all final approvals.**

PROGRAM DATES

The Program opened on Monday, January 8th, 2024, and end Friday, March 15th, 2024. Operation Fuel may shorten or extend the program season, as funding permits.

ELIGIBILITY GUIDELINES

ELECTRIC OR GAS UTILITY: To qualify for a grant toward their electric or gas bills, applicants must have at least one of the following criteria: a shut-off notice, have no utility service, must need assistance with making a required payment to maintain a payment arrangement, or have a past due balance of 30 days or more. Eligible clients earn income up to 75% SMI. Households will be eligible for this program regardless of whether they received a grant for their primary heat through the CT Energy Assistance Program (CEAP). Operation Fuel encourages eligible residents to seek CEAP assistance before applying to Operation Fuel.

DELIVERABLE FUELS: To qualify for a grant for an emergency fuel delivery, applicants must have at or below 1/4 tank of fuel. Operation Fuel deliverable fuel assistance is a one-time per year grant, which can only be applied toward future fuel deliveries. The vendor is required to submit a delivery invoice for payment within 30 days of delivery.

Additional eligibility requirements include:

- Total household income is at or below 75% state median income. For hardship coding, Low-Income Discount Rate, and/or electric and gas hardship programs, household income cannot exceed 60% of state median income.
- Clients may apply for water and energy assistance in the same application, or separately. MDC Water customers qualify up to 75% SMI, and must demonstrate a payment history of at least 4 payments in the past 12 months (they don't have to be consecutive, nor the most recent 4 months). CT Water customers qualify up to 60% SMI, and should demonstrate at least 2 payments in the past 12 months.
- For help with Aquarion Water bills, please see www.operationfuel.org/aquarion where we have the most recent application and requirements. Note: We do not process Aquarion applications in Hancock.

Some emergency examples can include but are not limited to the following:

- Client is suffering from job loss and is collecting unemployment or exhausted unemployment benefits.
- Client's health is threatened (ie needs utility to refrigerate medications or baby formula).
- Client needs utility to keep medical equipment operational.

REQUIRED DOCUMENTATION

Applications must include the following documents:

- *Current* utility bill or shut off notice with a past due balance of 30 days or more. (Utility assistance applications.)
- **Proof of income:** Documentation of all household members with last 4 weeks of income. (Utility and deliverable fuel assistance applications)
 - Operation Fuel will now accept a CEAP award letter as proof of income for eligible clients. If the household has received a CEAP award in the current program season (2023-24), clients and fuel banks may submit the award letter as proof of income.
 - We need an income record for every household member who is over 18 years old. If a minor receives income, we also require clients to provide those income records.
 - If the household has not had income in the last 4 weeks, an Operation Fuel notarized Zero-Income form is required. All questions on the form must be answered. **Subsidies such as housing, SNAP, cash assistance, child care, etc. are not sufficient to demonstrate income.** For example, if an applicant indicates the only source of income in the home is SNAP benefits, the applicant must complete a Zero-Income Form.
 - All forms are available at www.operationfuel.org/gethelp.
 - If the household has adults (18 and older) without income, each should sign and notarize a Zero Income form as part of the application.
- **Operation Fuel zero income, family and friends support, and self-employment worksheets must be notarized.**
 - Copy of the signed application – signatures from the applicant & intake worker. (Utility and deliverable fuel assistance applications.)
 - Operation Fuel Zero Income and Friends & Family support forms are at www.operationfuel.org/gethelp, and in the online application itself.

2023-24 Income Guidelines available at <https://uwc.211ct.org/connecticut-state-median-income-2023/>

Family size	60% State Median For utility hardship coding	75% State Median For Operation Fuel grants
1	41,553	51,941
2	54,338	67,923
3	67,124	83,905
4	79,910	99,888
5	92,695	115,870
6	105,481	131,852
7	107,878	134,848
8	110,275	137,845

An Operation Fuel energy grant is not an entitlement to all CT residents who fall within the income guidelines. Grants to households are approved at the discretion of local fuel banks and Operation Fuel staff. Applicants are asked to first utilize the CT Energy Assistance Program (CEAP) before seeking assistance from Operation Fuel. Guidelines are subject to change based on available funding and capacity.