

**MILLE LACS BAND OF OJIBWE
HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES POLICY & PROCEDURE**

Department: Human Services-Elder Services

Policy Number: HHS-HUM-ES 7203

Policy Title: Elder or Disabled Energy Grant Program

Attachments:

Revision History: 3/22/07; 1/23/13; 7/26/2017

Revised by/Date: Denise Sargent 4/2021

Approved by:

Carmen Kalk, Executive Director of Human Services



Date:

6/21/21

Approved by:

Nicole Anderson, Commissioner of HHS



Date:

6-23-2021

POLICY STATEMENT: The Elder/Disabled program is a financial needs-based program for all Mille Lacs Band (MLB) elders and disabled band members who need assistance with their utility bills. This program is to assist elders and disabled band members who may fall behind financially in basic living needs and need assistance to heat, light or cool their home.

PURPOSE: The purpose of this policy is:

1. To ensure that MLB elder or disabled band members who are in need financial assistance to pay their electric and heat, and have already exhausted all final resource for energy assistance or any other kinds of assistance.
2. To provide eligibility criteria for the elder/disabled energy assistance.

DEFENITIONS:

Mille Lacs Band Elder - Mille Lacs Band defines an elder as an enrolled member age 55 or over.

Mille Lacs Band disabled enrolled member - Mille Lacs Band defines disabled as any enrolled member defined permanently disabled by the Social Security Administration.

PROCEDURE:

State Energy Assistance:

1. The Emergency/Energy Eligibility Technician will assist all elders with completing their application process for the State Energy Assistance Program to determine whether he/she is eligible for the State of Minnesota Energy Assistance Program.
2. A Minnesota state-issued check from the Office of the State Energy Assistance Program will be issued to the member's utility company stated on their bill according to information entered on the E-Heat System.

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Elder/Disabled Assistance Protocols:

1. If an emergency arises that does not meet the eligibility criteria in this policy, the Commissioner of Health and Human Services, will make the final determination of eligibility.
2. To avoid conflicts of interest, the Elder/Disabled Energy Assistance staff will not review or make decisions on Band member applications for persons who are part of their immediate family.
3. Should apply with Minnesota Energy program.
4. All out-of-state applicants must have exhausted all other energy assistance programs and must be able to provide documentation of denial from their residing state energy assistance office.
5. When applying for the Elder Energy Assistance program, all household income must be reported, failing to do so will result in up to two (2) months disqualification of the program.
6. All taxable household income will be counted, this includes, but is not limited to, lottery, gambling winnings, or cash gift or inheritance.
7. The Elder/Disabled Energy Assistance Program will not be responsible for any bills prior to turning age 55 or disability date.
8. The Elder/Disabled Energy Assistance Program will not be responsible for any bills prior to application approval date, which includes but not limited to disconnections notice, late fees, and reconnection fees and testing fees.
9. The Elder/Disabled Energy Assistance Program will not be responsible for any bills after Elder/Disabled grant has ended through application submission of the following year.
10. The Elder/Disabled Energy Assistance Program will not be responsible for any bills after Elder has passed or has moved into Assisted Living Units, Nursing Homes, or any other facilities.
11. Should there be a MLB Elder and a disabled MLB member in the same household, only one may apply for the grant per fiscal year.
12. Elder/Disabled person(s) must be listed on the account as primary resident.
13. Must be 18 years of age determined by the Social Security Administration with a current copy of Social Security Disability Award Letter.
14. A person who receives survivor's benefits and is not deemed disabled or NOT a Mille Lacs Band Elder will not be eligible for the program.

Eligibility Criteria:

1. Applicant must be an enrolled Mille Lacs Band member. Non-enrolled Elder spouses may not apply.
2. Non-enrolled parent(s) or legal guardian(s) of enrolled disabled children are eligible under this policy. The grant money will follow the disabled child.
3. Applicant must provide a copy of their Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe Tribal Identification Card or tribal ID number.
4. Applicant will be offered assistance in applying for the State of Minnesota's Energy Assistance program.
5. All out-of-state applicants must have exhausted all other energy assistance programs and must be able to provide documentation of denial from their residing state energy assistance office.
6. Applicant must fall under the federal poverty guidelines at 200% annual income.

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Family Size	200% of Federal Poverty Guidelines	200% of Federal Poverty Guidelines
	MONTHLY	YEARLY
1	\$2,010	\$24,120
2	\$2,706	\$32,472
3	\$3,406	\$40,872
4	\$4,100	\$49,200
5	\$4,796	\$57,552
6	\$5,492	\$65,904
EACH ADDITIONAL	ADD \$696	ADD \$8,352

7. Tribal Per Capita payments will not be counted as income for elder members within the household.
8. Tribal Per Capita payments, wages, TANF, self-employment income, and other miscellaneous income will be counted as income for all adult members within the household.
9. SSI/SSA payments for disabled children and adults will be counted as income for the household.
10. Elder Supplemental Assistance will not be counted as income for all family members within the household.

Application Process:

Applicant must complete and sign the Elder/Disabled application form. Re-certification is an annual process. Form are available at the following locations:

District 1 – Assisted Living Unit, 2nd floor Elder Services Office

District 2A – Isle Community Center, receptions

District 2 – Assisted Living Unit, Head Cook, East Lake Community Center receptions.

District 3 – Hinckley Assisted Living Unit, receptions, Lake Lena Community Center, & clinic receptions.

1. Applicant must complete all necessary “Release of Information” forms.
2. Applicant must provide proof of all household income.
3. All disabled applicants must provide a copy of the Social Security Disability Award/Benefit letter.
4. Applicant must provide copy of tribal identification card.
5. Elder/Disabled Energy Assistance staff will verify information on application and approve or deny the application.
6. Incomplete applications will not be processed until all information is received. If the application is not complete within 30 days of its original submission it will be voided.
7. Applicants will receive eligibility notices in writing or by phone explaining the decision and reasons why the application is being denied or if additional information is needed for processing.

Maximum Assistance Amounts

1. All eligible applicants will be approved for up to \$1,875 per year for electricity, which equals to \$156.25 per month for electricity, unless a change be requested in writing.

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2. All eligible applicants will be approved for up to \$1,875 per year for heating fuel, which equals to \$156.25 per month for heating assistance, unless a change be requested in writing.

Process of Payment

1. Eligible applicants must immediately submit their energy bills to the office in order to pay the utility bill on time. Utility bills can be hand delivered, faxed or mailed in or have a responsible adult deliver the utility bill.
2. This office needs at least at least two weeks to fully process an invoice for payment to the Office of Management and Budget.
3. This program will pay for kilowatts for electrical usage, gallons of propane delivered into a tank, and an amount of thermos used with the usage of natural gas.
4. All approved utility payments will be paid directly to the utility vendor by check.

Change Notice

1. Applicant must report any income, address or household member changes within 10 business days.
2. Failure to report any changes may result in ineligibility of the program.
3. All changes will be reviewed and determined if the household is still eligible for services or if the file should be closed.

Referrals

1. The Office of Energy Services may make referrals to county, tribal, and state programs, which may be appropriate for the client.

Services Not Covered

The following services are not covered.

1. This program will not be responsible for any late fees, disconnection fees, reconnection fees, same day delivery fees, leak tests, decoupling and coupling valves or other miscellaneous charges.
2. This program will not be responsible to pay phone bills, cable, satellite television, internet services, water, sewage, trash, maintenance service fees, or any other miscellaneous charges that may be included on the utility invoice.

Appeals Process

1. All persons applying for assistance under the Mille lacs Band of Ojibwe Elder / Disabled Assistance program may appeal an adverse decision by completing the following.
2. The first appeal should be made in writing to the Elder Services Coordinator. Additional information or back up documentation of the need should be submitted to the Elder Services Coordinator for reconsideration.
3. If the Elder Services Coordinator upholds the original decision, the applicant may make a final appeal to the Commissioner of Health & Human Services and/or his/her designee Commissioner for a final decision. The appeal should also be in writing to the Commissioner of Health and Human Services. The Commissioner of Health and Human Services decision is final.

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After Hours Emergencies:

1. Emergency utility requests after 5:00 p.m. weekdays and on weekends and holidays should contact the toll-free Office of Emergency / Energy Services number listed below.

Emergency Services after hours, call: 320-362-4536 or 320-361-4418

2. If the request is approved, only utility vendors will be contacted by phone for services. However, no cash of any kind may be requested from any Tribal enterprise.

Falsification of Information/Misuse of Funds:

1. Applicants who falsify information on their application will be ineligible for Elder / Disabled Energy assistance for two calendar months from the date of the application.

Internal and/or External References	
Compliance - Posting Date	06/3/2021
Replaces – Policy Number	
Next Review - Due Date	06/3/2024