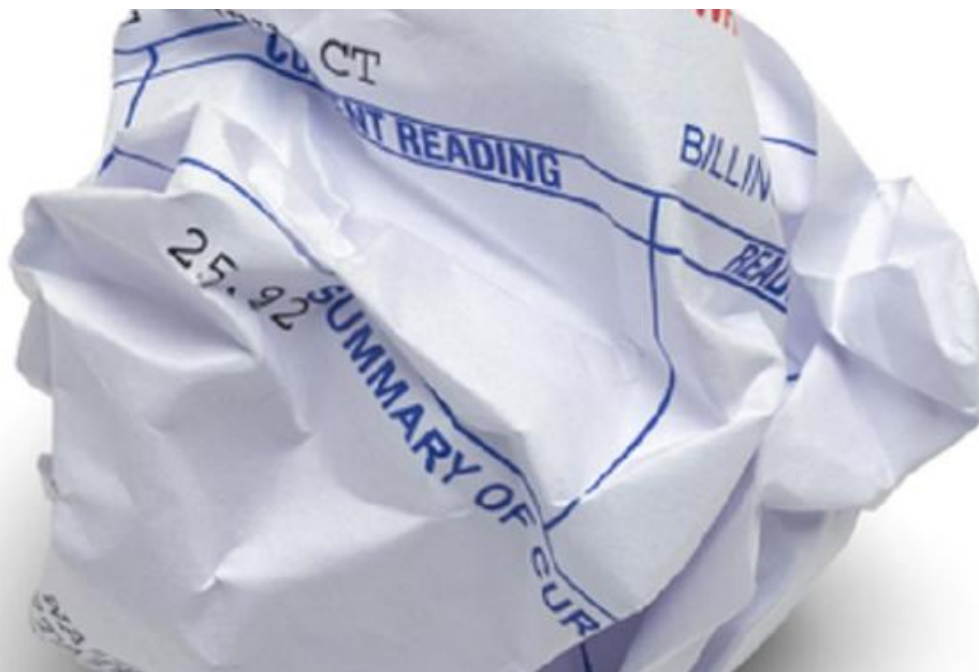


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OACAC Summer Energy Assistance Program opens June 1 for counties across the Ozarks



SPRINGFIELD, Mo. (KY3)—Ozarks Area Community Action Corporation, or OACAC, is opening its summer energy assistance program to help people with their energy bills this summer. The program starts June 1.

If you're at risk of getting your energy shut off, OACAC may be able to help. You just have to apply. You can do that online, in person at their Springfield office, or over the phone. If you're receiving winter assistance, you're eligible for the program and do not need to reapply.

Anyone at risk of getting their energy shut off is allowed to apply for the program, even if you think you won't qualify, according to Tommie Trammell, the program director.

"All people have the right to apply for the energy assistance programs and let staff determine eligibility because some people think because they work, or they may be \$1 over. We give standard deductions. So, I encourage anyone needing help, and we'll see what we can do to determine eligibility or eligibility," said Trammell.

Those standard deductions that can qualify you for the program include several things.

"As some of our standard deductions, we'll take gross income times 80%. If you pay child support, we might deduct that, depending on a month by month. Social Security, we gave \$100 deduction for medical, elderly and disabled. Maybe if you pay an insurance premium for Social Security, we might deduct that also," said Trammell.

According to Trammell, the program helps pay disconnect fees to keep people's air conditioning on during the hottest summer months.

"We will pay what they're in threat of disconnect. So, let's say their disconnect is \$200. We'll go in with \$200, eliminating some of the fees that we won't pay like late fees and taxes and things, but we will go in and stop their termination," said Trammell.

Trammell says a program like this is crucial for public safety.

"We need energy programs like this because it can have deaths. The heat and there have been summers that I've experienced. The heat was so intense over here a hundred, maybe last year or the year before. We have had deaths across Missouri. We need people to have utilities in their homes," said Trammell.

OACAC receives funding for the program through the state, which is handed down by the federal government. A record number applied for winter assistance, and it is expecting the same for summer.

"If we go back to October 1, we've served already over 15,000 households energy assistance. Then we look at the energy crisis that we covered during the winter months, another 5000. So if the heat is intense, and there are cut-off notices, we'll

have probably new people apply. So, I'll see a number of possibly 28,000 households this past season applying for the programs," said Trammell.

OACAC serves the counties of Barry, Christian, Dade, Dallas, Greene, Lawrence Polk, Stone, Taney, and Webster. To apply, you can go to their Springfield office in person, call 417-864-3460, or visit their website here.

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