



Dollar Energy Fund's Pennsylvania Hardship Program Has Record Program Year Start

Year-End Giving Can Support Increased Demand, Will Be Matched Dollar For Dollar

PITTSBURGH, PA, UNITED STATES, December 29, 2025 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Dollar Energy Fund's 2025-2026 Pennsylvania Hardship Program has seen a record distribution of utility assistance grants to low- and limited-income households since it began accepting applications on October 1. In the first three months of the program year, the number of households who received a grant increased by 131%, compared to the same time frame in the previous year. To date, more than 6,100 households have benefited from \$2.5 million in funds distributed.

With October-through-December record-setting demand for utility assistance, Dollar Energy Fund is urging residents to make a contribution to ensure program funding is available for the most vulnerable members of our community during the coldest months.

"As you are looking to make your year-end charitable contributions, please consider helping those who are at risk of losing the utility services that are essential to keep their homes warm," urged Dollar Energy Fund CEO Chad Quinn. "Support for Dollar Energy Fund has twice the impact because our utility partners provide a dollar-for-dollar match for every donation we receive. And given the recent increase in demand for our service, support will ensure we can continue supporting at-risk households throughout the winter"

Direct donations can be made online at www.dollarenergy.org/donate or by sending a check to Box 42329, Pittsburgh, PA 15203. Utility customers may also be able to contribute a dollar or more to Dollar Energy Fund through their monthly utility bill. Every donation to the organization's Hardship Program is tax deductible and all funds collected from Pennsylvania donors will be used to assist limited-income families residing in the Commonwealth.

Additional support from the utility companies allows for 100 percent of all donations and matching funds to be used as assistance grants to help households in need.

The Hardship Program is designed to help limited-income individuals, families and senior citizens - many of whom have employment income or are receiving retirement or disability benefits yet still struggle to pay for the basic essential. While individuals who may not qualify for state and federal assistance programs, turn to Dollar Energy Fund as a last resort when other options for help are limited.

“We continue to see a rise in the demand for Dollar Energy Fund’s Hardship Program each year,” said Chad Quinn, Chief Executive Officer of Dollar Energy Fund. “More and more families are struggling to afford the costs of basic utility services and a grant from our program can be the difference between maintaining household stability during the coldest months of the year or falling into a utility crisis.”

During the 2024-2025 program year, more than 19,900 households across the state—approximately 5,000 more households than the prior year—received a combined \$7.6 million in utility grants. Throughout 42 years of operation and across its 18-state service area, Dollar Energy Fund has provided more than \$344 million in grants to one million households, positioning itself as a national leader in utility assistance program administration.

Utility partners in Pennsylvania include Columbia Gas, Peoples Gas, Valley Energy, Duquesne Light Company, FirstEnergy (Penn Power, West Penn Power, MetEd, and Penelec), Citizens Electric, Wellsboro Electric, Pennsylvania American Water, Lehigh County Authority, West View Water Authority, Wilkesburg-Penn Joint Water Authority, ALCOSAN, and Pittsburgh Water.

Program eligibility is largely based on income and the level varies by utility company, with most PA households qualifying if they have a household income at or below 250% of the Federal Poverty Income Guidelines. Additional guidelines may include a household demonstrating a sincere effort to pay their utility bills over the past three months and having an outstanding balance on their account. Applicants may also be required to first seek available assistance from federal and state programs if they meet the eligibility criteria. Guidelines for some utility companies may require that services are disconnected or at risk of termination to qualify.

The maximum grant amount varies by utility and the award is determined by the exact amount needed to prevent or restore utility service. For most utility customers in Pennsylvania, a household can receive one grant per program year, per utility.

Guidelines and program details are subject to change during the program year, and the most up-to-date information can be found at www.dollarenergy.org/need-help.

Those seeking assistance should first contact their utility provider to be screened for eligibility and to receive a referral to one of Dollar Energy Fund’s Community-Based Organization partners to complete their application. This process not only provides local, in-person options when applying for utility assistance, but also connects families with a network of agencies that offer additional resources, such as financial counseling, transportation aid, childcare assistance, and housing resources. Additionally, customers of select utility companies may be able to use Dollar Energy Fund’s MyApp portal to complete all or a portion of their application online.

For more information about Dollar Energy Fund, how to apply for utility assistance, or to make a donation, please visit www.dollarenergy.org.

About Dollar Energy Fund, Inc.

Dollar Energy Fund was founded in 1983 and has grown to become the largest hardship fund in Pennsylvania and one of the largest programs of its kind in the United States. Dollar Energy Fund is a 501(c)3 organization in the state of Pennsylvania. Since 1983, the organization has provided \$344 million in utility assistance grants to more than one million limited-income families and individuals. The organization also assists limited-income households in West Virginia, Ohio, Virginia, Tennessee, Maryland, Louisiana, Texas, Arkansas, California, Connecticut, Indiana, Nebraska, Illinois, Hawaii, New Mexico and Washington and Massachusetts. Individuals interested in contributing to Dollar Energy Fund can do so through their utility bills, by sending donations directly to Box 42329, Pittsburgh, PA 15203 or through the organization's website. Additional information can be found on Dollar Energy Fund's website, www.dollarenergy.org.

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