

# Demand continues for HEAP assistance

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It's been a very busy season for a popular program that helps low-income Lake County residents pay for cooling costs.

Applications began June 1 for the Home Energy Assistance Program's Summer Crisis Program — a federally funded program designed to help eligible low-income Ohio residents meet the costs

of home cooling.

Lake County's Community Action Agency Lifeline Inc. is the organization that administers the program in the county.

The program provides assistance to income-eligible Lake County households with an elderly member (60 years or older); households that can provide physician documentation that cooling assistance is needed for a household member's health; or house-

holds with a disconnection notice on their electricity.

These households are eligible for electric bill payment assistance up to \$250 and/or an air conditioner. Applicants may not receive an air conditioner if they have received one in the last three years.

Through Friday, Lifeline staff already has taken more than 800 applications for assistance, nearly double what the agency had last year, said Executive Director Carrie

Dotson. Lifeline also already has distributed about 125 air conditioners to people in need to help cool their home.

"Of the more than 800 we've seen, a lot of them are senior citizens who struggle with the heat and a lot are people with medical needs," Dotson said.

She believes the reason for the high volume of applications continues to be related to the economy, but also it

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## HEAP

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seems to be hotter this summer compared to last.

"In 10 years, I've never seen it like this," she said, when discussing the number of applications.

Appointments can be scheduled by calling Lifeline's automated appointment line at 866-223-1471. Callers receive a list of the required documents needed to com-

plete an application.

Appointments will be scheduled through Aug. 31, with walk-ins accepted on a first-come, first-served basis on Monday, Wednesday and Friday mornings at 8:30 a.m. Lifeline's Energy Assistance Office is located at 54 S. State St., Suite 303, Painesville.

Only customers who meet the eligibility requirements and have all required documentation will be able to complete their application

process on a walk-in basis. All others are encouraged to schedule an appointment.

To financially qualify for the assistance, Lake County residents must have a gross annual income at or below 200 percent of the federal poverty level. For example, a household of four people would earn \$46,100 or less.

*For more information about HEAP, call Lifeline's Energy Assistance Office at 440-350-9160.*