

## Two Home Energy Assistance Programs in 2011

### What are the two programs?

- A. The Home Energy Assistance Program
- B. The Emergency Fuel Benefit Program

### **A. The Home Energy Assistance Program is a one-time home energy benefit of \$100 available to low-income families to help them cope with the high costs of home energy**

The program is administered by the Department of Finances and is based on total family income.

#### **1. Criteria to be eligible for the \$100**

- You must have filed a New Brunswick personal income tax return in 2009
- Your total family income in 2009 must have been \$28,000 or less
- You must be a resident of New Brunswick

#### **2. The program is open to:**

- Those who own their home
- People at minimum wage
- Seniors
- Citizens in NB Housing or subsidized housing apartments but are currently paying their heat
- Those on social assistance
- Note: only one benefit will be provided per household address

#### **3. How to apply?**

- Application forms are available at all Service New Brunswick Centres
- Forms are also on line: [www.snb.ca](http://www.snb.ca) or [www.gnb.ca](http://www.gnb.ca) (keyword: Finance)
- By telephone at the Department of Finance: 1-800-669-7070

#### **4. Information needed:**

To apply, you must know your total income (found on line 150 of the 2009 income tax return) and the amount found on line 150 of your spouse or common law partner's 2009 return. You also need a copy of your most recent electricity bill dated after July 1, 2010.

#### **5. Send the form to:**

Department of Finance  
Revenue and Taxation Division  
P.O. Box 3000

Fredericton, NB, E3B 5G5

or drop the completed application to the nearest Service New Brunswick Office

#### **6. How much money in the program?**

\$5.5 million

#### **7. When can you apply?**

January 4, 2011 to June 30, 2010. It can take about 2 to 4 weeks for an approved applicant to receive his or her benefit.

## **B. The Emergency Fuel Benefit Program administered by the Department of Social Development**

### **Overview:**

The emergency fuel benefit program is designed to provide assistance to eligible households to assist with the costs of winter heating.

### **Eligibility:**

Any household in New Brunswick that is in an emergency situation and unable to afford the cost of heating its home may be eligible to receive this benefit. The department will assess eligibility on a case-by-case basis.

### **Description:**

An emergency fuel benefit of up to \$550 per calendar year may be provided to eligible New Brunswick households whether or not they are receiving social assistance. This benefit is provided to eligible applicants regardless of what type of heating they use. Examples of an emergency situation include:

- A high heating bill due to the cold;
- Being unable to pay your rent or mortgage;
- Having to choose between feeding your family and paying your winter heating bill;
- An illness resulting in unexpected high medical costs, which has made it hard to pay your heating bill.

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For the purpose of assessing need for the emergency fuel benefit, the department will assess all household expenses, but remove the requirement that assets be depleted in order to qualify for assistance. The asset exemption will ensure that items such as investments (RSPs, GICs etc.), life insurance cash value, etc. are not considered in determining if the household is in need of an emergency fuel benefit, and cash-in-hand and bank accounts will only be considered if they exceed \$2,000. This will allow people to seek assistance for a present-day emergency without sacrificing savings for the future.

All New Brunswick households who find themselves in an emergency situation may apply for the emergency fuel benefit, because eligibility will be assessed on the basis of whether or not a household is in deficit, based on income and expenses. A benefit of up to \$550 per calendar year could be provided, depending on the size of the household deficit.

**Important note:** An applicant, if deemed eligible under both program, could receive up to \$550 from the Department of Social Development and \$100 from the Department of Finance.