

# Natural Gas and Electric Utility Assistance

## Eligibility Guidelines for the New Jersey SHARES Energy Grant

### About the Program

NJ SHARES provides energy assistance to moderate and fixed-income households experiencing a temporary financial crisis. Eligibility is based on household size and income. Our clients are families and individuals who do not qualify for some Federal and State assistance programs due to the household's income. NJ SHARES grant amounts can be up to \$700 for heating source (natural gas - including cooking gas and electric heat) and can be up to \$700 for electric service. Grants must result in continuance and/or restoration of service. All grant payments are issued directly to the utility company on the customer's behalf.

### Eligibility Guidelines

#### **Applicants MUST:**

- Reside in New Jersey and have a residential account only
- Be experiencing a temporary financial crisis, such as a job loss or illness
- Have arrears on their energy bill
- Have income over the limit for federal programs in New Jersey such as the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) and state programs such as the Universal Service Fund (USF), but does not exceed 400% of the Federal Poverty Level
- Have made a good faith payment of at least \$100 within 90 days of applying for NJ SHARES
- If applying for a NJ SHARES grant from two energy utilities on the same day, the good faith payment of at least \$100 within 90 days of applying can be a cumulative total of \$100 made amongst both utilities.

#### **Households MAY:**

- Receive a grant once between January 1 and December 31 of a given year
- Receive one natural gas heating source grant of up to \$700 and an electric service grant of up to \$700 if the household heats with natural gas
- Receive one electric heating source grant of up to \$700 if the household heats with electric

#### **Income Eligibility**

- NJ SHARES helps households that do not qualify for Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) or Universal Service Fund (USF).
- A household that is coded by the utility company for receiving USF benefits or has received a LIHEAP benefit within the current LIHEAP program year is not eligible for NJ SHARES. **See chart on Page 2.**

#### **Income Eligibility for Seniors and the Disabled**

- Applicants 65 years of age or older, with households of one or two members only, will be eligible for NJ SHARES if the maximum household income is \$92,969 gross annually or \$7,747.42 gross monthly. Applicants must show proof of age.
- Applicants receiving Social Security Disability (SSD) benefits, with households of one or two members only, will be eligible for NJ SHARES if the maximum household income is \$92,969 gross annually or \$7,747.42 gross monthly. Applicants must show proof of SSD benefit.

## NJ SHARES Energy Assistance Income Guidelines

The determination letter(s) for LIHEAP and/or USF must be provided to NJ SHARES to apply for the NJ SHARES Energy Assistance Grant

### LIHEAP Income Guidelines

1 Person / \$0 - \$3,464  
2 People / \$0 - \$4,530  
3 People / \$0 - \$5,596  
4 People / \$0 - \$6,662  
5 People / \$0 - \$7,728  
6 People / \$0 - \$8,794  
7 People / \$0 - \$8,994  
8 People / \$0 - \$9,193  
9 People / \$0 - \$9,393  
10 People / \$0 - \$9,593  
11 People / \$0 - \$9,793  
12 People / \$0 - \$9,993

For households greater than 12 people,  
add \$200 per additional person

### USF & NJ SHARES Income Guidelines

1 Person / \$0 - \$4,530  
2 People / \$0 - \$6,103  
3 People / \$0 - \$7,677  
4 People / \$0 - \$9,250  
5 People / \$0 - \$10,823  
6 People / \$0 - \$12,397  
7 People / \$0 - \$13,970  
8 People / \$0 - \$15,543  
9 People / \$0 - \$17,117  
10 People / \$0 - \$18,690  
11 People / \$0 - \$20,263  
12 People / \$0 - \$21,837

For households greater than 12 people,  
add \$1,574 per additional person

**Applicant must first apply to LIHEAP and USF  
(may also apply to PAGE, but not required)**

**If denied for USF and LIHEAP**  
Apply for the  
NJ SHARES Energy Assistance Grant

**If the household's gross monthly income exceeds  
the max shown in LIHEAP's income guidelines,  
applicant must first apply to USF only.  
(may also apply to PAGE, but not required)**

**If denied for USF**  
Apply for the  
NJ SHARES Energy Assistance Grant

## NJ SHARES Grant Policies and Procedures

### Residence and Billing

- Energy assistance applicants must be New Jersey residents with a residential account
- The applicant must reside at the address listed on his or her application.
- The utility bill must be in the applicant's name.

### Exceptions in Cases Where Applicants are Not the Customer of Record

- All customer information should belong to the applicant/customer of record. Additional names appearing on the utility bill will require further documentation.

- The bill is in the spouse's name and the spouse resides in the home - a marriage certificate is required for customers who are applying as married with different last names.
- The bill is in the spouse's name and the spouse is deceased – copy of death certificate is required.
- The applicant is elderly or disabled and a volunteer, family member, or social worker that is applying on his/her behalf - Power of Attorney document or letter of authorization is required.

### **Status with Energy Providers - Gas and Electric**

- The gas or electric customer must be “**at risk**” of service termination, which can be any of the following:
  - The customer has received a written notice of arrears
  - The customer's bill shows an arrears balance
  - If the customer is on a payment plan, only arrearage consumption charges will be paid
  - The customer has a written termination or shut off notice on his/her bill
  - The customer's service is shut off
- Applicants must have made a good faith payment of at least \$100 on their account within the last 90 days. If a good faith payment has not been made within the previous 90 days of application, applicant must make the payment first
- Grants will be used for energy consumption charges only – not for deposits, reconnection fees, repairs, etc.
- No customer will receive a credit balance
- Grants must restore or maintain service

## **Required Documentation**

NJ SHARES must receive these required documents within **ten business days** of the application date.

### **Personal ID for the Applicant and All Household Members**

- Any unexpired government issued ID. ID must be provided for the applicant and all household members. If adult (18 and older) household member's ID shows a different last name than applicant, additional proof of residency is required. If the address is listed on the ID provided and it does not match the service address, additional proof of residency is required.

### **Proof of Residency**

- If any documentation provided throughout the application process includes an address that does not match the service address, further proof of residency will be required. To prove residency, additional documentation dated within 30 days of the application date showing name and address must be provided.

### **Completed Signed and Dated Application**

- The customer's signature and date must be on the application. A spouse can apply for assistance provided they reside in the home. A spouse cannot sign for the applicant.

### **Proof of Income**

- NJ SHARES requires proof of the last four consecutive weeks of income from the date of the application for all contributing household members. This includes: paystubs, current unemployment determination letter along with proof of receipt of the past 30 days of unemployment benefit, Social Security statement or award letter for the current year, rental income, pension statement, alimony, child support, self-employed self-certifying letter, current bank statements showing identified direct deposits with name and address, etc. If there are weeks entered with zero income, an explanation is required. Zero Income Affirmation is to be completed, signed and dated by the applicant when there are adult household members without income.
- Unemployment: Current unemployment determination letter along with proof of receipt of last 30 days of unemployment benefit.
- If paystubs cannot be produced: A letter signed and dated by the applicant's employer verifying paid in cash and

the total gross monthly income must be submitted. All employment letters will be verified.

- Self-employed: NJ SHARES will accept a signed and dated letter confirming the exact dollar amount of the total gross monthly income for 30 consecutive days prior to the application.
- Rental Income: If the customer is a landlord, the current lease and a recent rental receipt must be provided as back-up documents.
- Social Security Income: Award letter for the current year.
- Pension Income: Copy of most recent check or letter verifying lifetime receipt of benefits.
- Workers' Compensation: Current bank statements showing identified direct deposits with recipient's name and address should be furnished.
- Alimony and /or Child Support: Proof of Alimony and/or Child Support and payment frequency must be supplied.

#### **Most Recent Energy Provider Bill**

- This information is verified with the designated energy provider. The provider must be a New Jersey regulated utility company.