

# Eligibility Guidelines for the New Jersey SHARES SMART Utility Assistance Program

## About the Program

NJ SHARES SMART Utility Assistance Program provides energy (gas and electric) assistance grants to income eligible households experiencing a temporary financial crisis. Eligibility is based on household size and income. Households who have income at or below State Median Income (SMI) guidelines can receive up to \$500 per utility per calendar year. Grants will be used for energy consumption only – not for deposits, reconnection fees, repairs, etc. All grant payments are issued directly to the utility company on the customer’s behalf and no customer will receive a credit balance.

## Eligibility Guidelines

### **Households MUST:**

- Have an active residential account with one of these utilities: Atlantic City Electric, Elizabethtown Gas, JCP&L, New Jersey Natural Gas, PSE&G, Rockland Electric and South Jersey Gas
- Reside at the service address listed on the utility bill
- Be experiencing a temporary financial crisis, such as a job loss or illness
- Be in arrears on their energy bill

### **Households MAY:**

- Receive one grant of up to \$500 for electric service or electric heating source, if the household is heated with electric, once between January 1 and December 31 of a given year
- Receive one grant of up to \$500 for natural gas (including cooking gas) heating source, if the household is heated with gas, once between January 1 and December 31 of a given year

### **Income Eligibility**

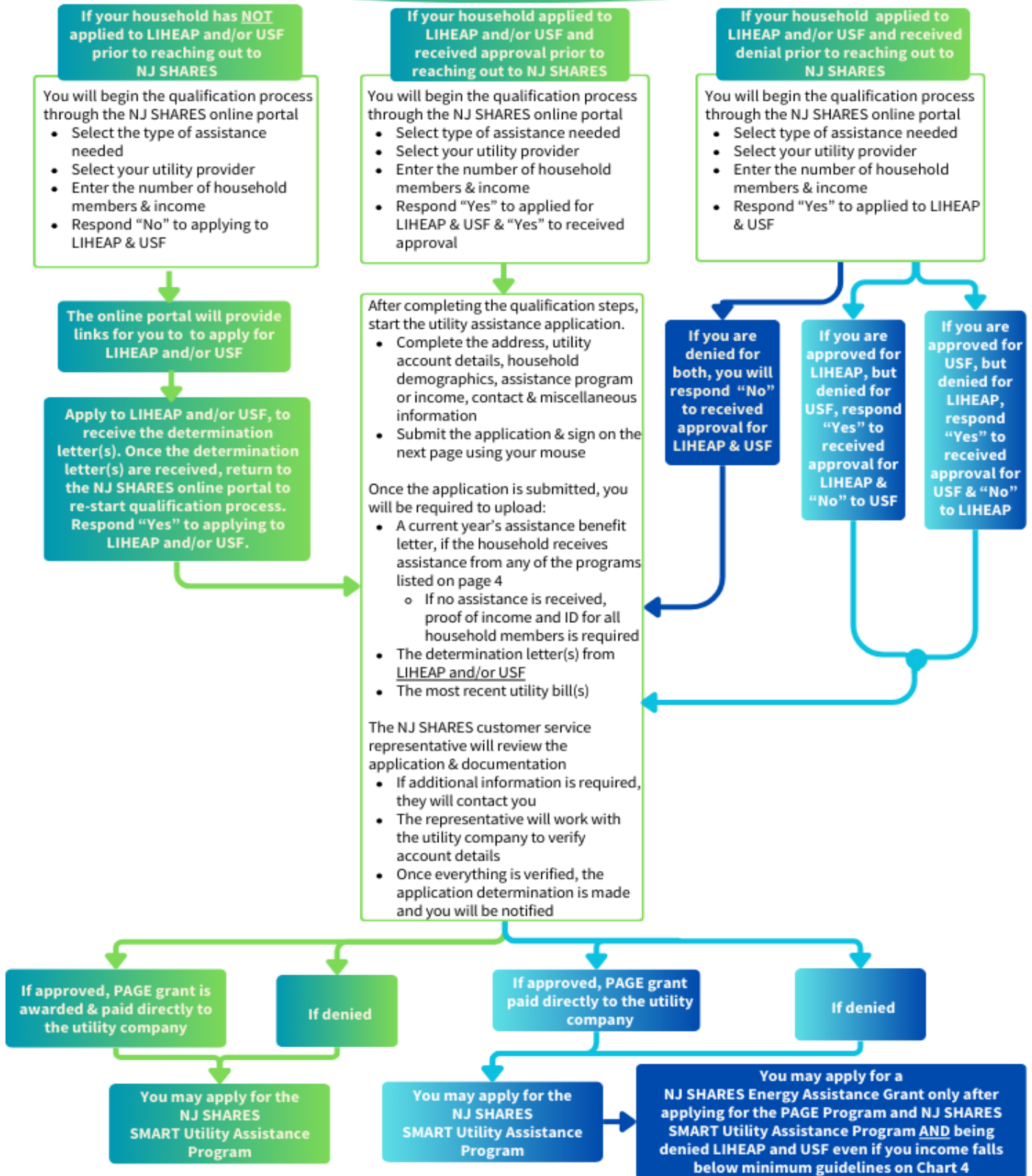
Household income must be at or below the State Median Income and either not qualify for federal programs such as the Low-income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) or state programs such as Universal Service Fund (USF) and New Jersey Board of Public Utilities Payment Assistance Gas and Electric (NJ BPU PAGE) Program **OR** receive benefits from any/all of these programs and are still in need of assistance. **See income charts on page 5.**

- If the gross monthly household income is at or below 60% of the State Median Income (SMI) which are the income guidelines for the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) and/or Universal Service Fund (USF) shown on the **income chart 1 on page 5**, the household must apply and receive a determination from those programs first.
- If the household receives benefits from LIHEAP and/or USF and is still in need of assistance, or if the household does not qualify for these programs, they must apply for the New Jersey Board of Public Utilities Payment Assistance for Gas and Electric (NJ BPU PAGE) program next. **See income chart 2 on page 5.**
- If the household receives benefits from LIHEAP and/or USF and/or NJ BPU PAGE Program and is still in need of assistance, or if the household does not qualify for these programs, they may be eligible for the NJ SMART Utility Assistance Program. **See income chart 2 on page 5.**

- If the gross monthly household income is above LIHEAP and/or USF but at or below the New Jersey Board of Public Utilities Payment Assistance for Gas and Electric (PAGE) Program guidelines shown on the **income chart 2 on page 5**, the household must apply and receive a determination from that program first.
- If the household receives benefits from the NJ BPU PAGE Program and is still in need of assistance, or if the household does not qualify for this program, they may be eligible for the NJ SMART Utility Assistance Program. **See income chart 2 on page 5.**

# Household income at or below 60% of the State Median Income

(Online application process flow. See income charts on next page)



**Household income above 60% of the State Median Income and at or below 100% of the State Median Income**  
(Online application process flow. See income charts on next page)

**If your gross monthly household income falls within the guidelines on Chart 1**

- You will begin the qualification process through the NJ SHARES online portal
- Select the type of assistance needed
  - Select your utility provider
  - Enter the number of household members & income

- After completing the qualification steps, start the utility assistance application.
- Complete the address, utility account details, household demographics, assistance program or income, contact & miscellaneous information
  - Submit the application & sign on the next page using your mouse

Once the application is submitted, you will be required to upload:

- ID for all household members
- Proof of the last 30 days of income for any household members age 18 and over
- The most recent utility bill(s)

The NJ SHARES customer service representative will review the application & documentation

- If additional information is required, they will contact you
- The representative will work with the utility company to verify account details
- Once everything is verified, the application determination is made and you will be notified

**If approved, PAGE grant is awarded & paid directly to the utility company**

**If denied**

**You may apply for the NJ SHARES SMART Utility Assistance Program**

**You may also apply for a NJ SHARES Energy Assistance Grant if your gross monthly household income falls within the guidelines on Chart 3 and you do not receive LIHEAP and/or USF benefits**

# Income Guidelines

## LIHEAP/USF

### Income Guidelines

#### HOUSEHOLD SIZE / GROSS MONTHLY INCOME

**1 person / \$0 - \$3,991**

**2 people / \$0 - \$5,219**

**3 people / \$0 - \$6,448**

**4 people / \$0 - \$7,676**

**5 people / \$0 - \$8,904**

**6 people / \$0 - \$10,132**

**7 people / \$0 - \$10,362**

**8 people / \$0 - \$10,592**

**9 people / \$0 - \$10,823**

**10 people / \$0 - \$11,053**

**11 people / \$0 - \$11,283**

**12 people / \$0 - \$11,514**

For households greater than 12 people,  
add \$231 per additional person

## NJ BPU PAGE Program / NJ SHARES SMART

### Utility Assistance Program

#### Income Guidelines

#### HOUSEHOLD SIZE / GROSS MONTHLY INCOME

**1 person / \$0 - \$6,652**

**2 people / \$0 - \$8,699**

**3 people / \$0 - \$10,746**

**4 people / \$0 - \$12,793**

**5 people / \$0 - \$14,840**

**6 people / \$0 - \$16,887**

**7 people / \$0 - \$17,270**

**8 people / \$0 - \$17,654**

**9 people / \$0 - \$18,038**

**10 people / \$0 - \$18,422**

**11 people / \$0 - \$18,806**

**12 people / \$0 - \$19,189**

For households greater than 12 people,  
add \$384 per additional person

## NJ SHARES Energy Assistance Grant

### Income Guidelines

#### HOUSEHOLD SIZE / GROSS MONTHLY INCOME

**1 person / \$3,992 - \$5,020**

**2 people / \$5,220 - \$6,813**

**3 people / \$6,449 - \$8,607**

**4 people / \$7,677 - \$10,400**

**5 people / \$8,905 - \$12,193**

**6 people / \$10,133 - \$13,987**

**7 people / \$10,363 - \$15,780**

**8 people / \$10,593 - \$17,573**

**9 people / \$10,824 - \$19,367**

**10 people / \$11,054 - \$21,160**

**11 people / \$11,284 - \$22,953**

**12 people / \$11,515 - \$24,747**

For households greater than 12 people,  
add \$1,793 per additional person

# **NJ SHARES SMART Utility Assistance Program Policies and Procedures**

## **Residence and Billing**

- Applicants must be New Jersey residents with an active residential account.
- The applicant must reside at the service address listed on the utility bill.
- The utility bill must be in the applicant's name.

## **Acceptable Cases Where Applicants are Not the Customer of Record (utility bill is in someone else's name)**

- A spouse can apply for assistance provided they reside in the home. A marriage certificate is required for customers who are applying as married with different last names.
  - \* *If multiple names appear on the utility bill and are not disclosed on the application, we will require further documentation.*

## **Status with Energy Providers**

The gas or electric customer must be "at risk" of service termination, which can be any of the following:

- Customer has received a written notice of arrears (can be a bill showing arrears balance)
- Customer has a written termination or shut off notice
- Customer's service is shut off

## **Required Documentation**

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

## **Assistance Received**

If a household has received assistance from any of the programs below, they may provide the current year's benefit/determination letter instead of providing income and ID for the household.

- AQUA Aid Grant
- Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP)
- Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP)
- Lifeline Utility Assistance Program
- Lifeline Communications Program
- Medicaid
- New Jersey American Water H2O Program
- NJ SHARES SMART Utility Assistance Program
- NJ SHARES Mortgage Assistance, Rent, and Taxes (NJ SMART) Program
- Supplemental Security Income (SSI)
- Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)
- Universal Service Fund (USF)
- Work First New Jersey – Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF)
- Veteran's Pension
- Veteran's Survivor's Pension

If a household is applying for assistance from any of our programs below within the current calendar year, they will only have to provide the benefit/determination letter from one of the listed programs above or income

documentation and ID for the household once.

- NJ Board of Public Utilities Payment Assistance for Gas and Electric (NJ BPU PAGE) Program
- NJ SHARES Energy Assistance Grant
- NJ SHARES SMART Utility Assistance Program
- NJ SHARES Mortgage Assistance, Rent, and Taxes (NJ SMART) Program

**Personal ID for the Applicant and All Household Members (Applicable only if no other assistance listed on the previous page has been received.)**

Any unexpired government issued ID. ID must be provided for the applicant and all household members. If an 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.

**Proof of Income (Applicable only if no other assistance listed on the previous page has been received.)**

Proof of the last four consecutive weeks of income from the date of the application for all household members ages 18+. Any household members ages 18+ without income should be listed on the online application or Zero Income Affirmation form, if applying with paper. Proof of income includes:

<p><b>Paystubs</b> If paystubs cannot be produced: A letter signed and dated by the employer verifying paid in cash and the total gross monthly income.</p>	<p><b>Self-employed:</b> Letter confirming the total gross income for the last 30 consecutive days.</p>	<p><b>Unemployment:</b> Determination letter along with proof of receipt of last 30 days of unemployment benefit.</p>
<p><b>Rental Income:</b> Current lease and rental payment receipt.</p>	<p><b>Social Security Income:</b> Award letter for current year.</p>	<p><b>Pension Income:</b> Most recent check or letter verifying lifetime receipt of benefits.</p>
<p><b>Workers’ Compensation:</b> Current bank statements showing identified direct deposits with recipient’s name and address.</p>	<p><b>Alimony and/or Child Support:</b> Proof of payment and frequency.</p>	

**Medical Equipment**

If anyone in the household has a medical condition and relies on electric-powered medical equipment, please provide a note from the medical provider, or confirm this note is on file with the utility company.

**Most Recent Energy Provider Bill**

Provide the most recent gas and/or electric bill to include all pages. This information is verified with the designated utility provider.

**Completed, Signed and Dated Application**

- The application must be signed and dated.
- If 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.