

Your Rights and Responsibilities

PRIVACY NOTICE

Also known as the Tennesen Warning

Privacy Act Provisions: Federal and state law require us to tell you about your rights and responsibilities before we collect and use information about you that is classified as private or confidential. This form provides you with important information that complies with the federal Privacy Act of 1974, 5 USC section 552a (e) (3) and the Minnesota Government Data Practices Act, Minn. Stat. §13.04 subd. 2.

Please read this *Privacy Notice* carefully before completing and signing the *Minnesota Energy Programs Application*, and keep this *Privacy Notice* in your records for future use. This *Privacy Notice* applies to the Energy Assistance Program, Weatherization Assistance Program and Conservation Improvement Program, also known as Energy Programs.

Why do we collect the information on the application?

We will use your information to research, evaluate and administer the energy assistance programs.

We need the information:

- To know you from other individuals
- To see if you qualify for assistance
- To allow us to get federal or state funds for the assistance you receive
- To meet federal or state reporting requirements

What happens if you do not give us the information?

You have the right to not give us the information we ask for; however, if you do not provide the information, you may not be able to get services or help with energy bills.

Who will see this information?

Staff working in the following agencies or companies who need access to the application information to do their jobs in connection with the Energy Assistance, Weatherization and Conservation Improvement Programs will see and share information related to your energy assistance application:

- Local Energy Programs agencies under contract with the Minnesota Department of Commerce
- Local Energy Programs' auditors as required by OMB circulars
- Minnesota Departments of Administration, Commerce, Employment and Economic Development, Human Services, Revenue and the Office of Enterprise Technology
- United States Departments of Health and Human Services and Energy
- Minnesota Public Utilities Commission
- Minnesota Legislative Auditor
- Minnesota Attorney General's Office, as needed for litigation purposes
- Your energy vendor for affordability and Energy Assistance Programs
- Federal and State law enforcement authorities, as needed for litigation purposes
- Other agencies or entities as allowed by federal or state law

Why do we collect social security numbers?

We use social security numbers in the administration of the energy assistance programs and to assure that eligible applicants and their household members receive only allowable benefits. Federal law allows us to ask you to provide your social security number in order to process your application more quickly and to prevent, detect and correct fraud and abuse. 45 CFR 96.84; 42 U.S.C. 405 (c)(2)(C)(i). You are not required to provide it but it will assist us in processing your application more quickly.

Why do we ask for information about your race?

This is voluntary information. It is compiled and recorded for statistical purposes only. The program can not discriminate for reason of race or ethnic background, religion, gender, sexual orientation or political affiliation.

What if you think the facts in your file are wrong?

Talk to your Energy Assistance Program (EAP) Service Provider about what you think is wrong in your file.

What happens is you give false information?

The EAP or the department may check out any of the information you give. You may be held civilly or criminally liable under federal or state law for knowingly making false or fraudulent statements in your application.

You have these responsibilities:

You must tell us if you:

- Received help with your energy bills earlier this winter
- Move to a new address (tell us within 30 days of the move)
- Change your fuel dealer or gas or electric companies

You must pay your fuel bills. This program will pay only part of your bills. You must pay the rest.

You have certain rights to get help:

You have the right:

- To apply again if you get turned down
- To apply for more help if you need it
- To know what the rules are and how we decide what help you get
- To receive a response within a reasonable time of submitting all information
- To appeal within 30 days after you know the results of your application if:
 - You get turned down.
 - You think we used the wrong facts to make the decision.
 - You do not get the help you were promised.

How do you complain?

If you think your energy payment was not what it should be, or you did not get the services you thought you would, you may write to the local EAP agency listed on the application. Keep a record of the address and telephone number.

If you are not satisfied with their response, write to:

Appeals Officer
Energy Assistance Program
Minnesota Department of Commerce
85 East 7th Place, Suite 500
St. Paul, MN 55101-2198

If you feel you have been treated differently because of your color, race, national origin, religion, sex, age, marital status, political beliefs, or physical, mental or emotional disability, write to one of the following:

Minnesota Department of Human Rights
190 East 5th Street
St. Paul, MN 55101

-OR- U.S. Department of Health and Human Service
Office for Civil Rights, Region V
233 North Michigan Avenue, Suite 240
Chicago, IL 60601

Ask for Assistance:

Call the local EAP Service Provider listed on the application to request the application in large print or Braille. If you do not understand the information in this document, call the local EAP Service Provider listed on the application and ask to have it explained to you.