

Universal Service Fund Q&A

Q: How much money will I receive from USF?

A: If you are found eligible for USF, you will receive a USF credit on your electric and/or gas bill. The amount of the credit is different for each eligible customer, depending on how much of your income you spend on energy. The USF credit is capped at \$1,800 for both electric and gas combined.

Q: How do I apply for USF?

A: You can apply for USF and LIHEAP at the same time by completing a single USF/LIHEAP application available at www.energyassistance.nj.gov or by calling the USF/LIHEAP hotline at: 1-866-240-1347. LIHEAP benefits are only provided from November through April of each year so if you would like to be considered for both programs, please submit your application to your county USF/HEA agency during this time frame. If you submit your application during another time you will only be considered for USF. You may also be considered for USF/LIHEAP if you receive Food Stamps, Lifeline Utility Assistance or Pharmaceutical Assistance for the Aged and Disabled (PAAD), but additional information may be required from the applicant to determine USF eligibility.

Q: If I heat with oil or propane will I be eligible for USF benefits?

A: Expenses for oil or propane are not eligible for USF benefits.

Q: If I rent, am I eligible to apply for USF?

A: Yes. Renters and homeowners may apply for USF. However, you must have an electric or natural gas account in your name and meet the other eligibility requirements.

Q: Does everyone who receives Lifeline or LIHEAP qualify for a USF benefit?

A: No. USF eligibility is based on your household income and on how much you pay for energy each year. Not all LIHEAP and Lifeline recipients meet this eligibility requirement.

Q: Why is my USF credit different than my friend/neighbor?

A: The USF credit is individually calculated based on each household's income and energy burden. Since the income and energy burden of each USF recipient is different, the benefit that each USF recipient receives will be different.

Q: How will I receive my USF credit? Will I get a check?

A: The USF benefit will appear on your utility bill in the form of a credit.

Q: Will I get a USF benefit for both my natural gas bill and my electric bill?

A: All applicants must meet the eligibility requirements. You may receive a USF benefit for either your natural gas or electric costs or both. Each applicant's income and home energy usage is used to determine eligibility. The actual calculation of a benefit will depend upon how much electricity and natural gas

you use in comparison to your household income. Some applicants may only be eligible for USF on either their natural gas or electric bill, but not both.

Q: Will my USF benefit be different from year to year?

A: Your USF benefit may change because it is based upon your current reported income and your projected energy usage.

Q: If I move during the year, can I still continue to receive my USF benefit?

A: If you move within the USF benefit year, you may be eligible to receive your USF benefit at your new residence. When activating your new electric and/or gas account, please inform your energy company that you are a USF customer and would like to be evaluated for benefit eligibility at your new residence.

Q: How is the USF program funded?

A: All electric and natural gas customers contribute funding for the USF program through rates.

Q: Can USF assist me with my past overdue balance?

A: If you have an over-due balance of \$60 or more on your energy bill the first time you enter the USF program, you may be eligible for additional benefits under the Fresh Start Program. Through Fresh Start, your overdue balance may be forgiven if, after you are enrolled in USF for the first time, you pay your current bill on time and in-full for 12 months. If you are eligible for Fresh Start, you will be enrolled by your energy company and will receive information about how the program works.