



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

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**OPEN ENROLLMENT FOR STATE ENERGY ASSISTANCE
PROGRAM SET TO BEGIN ON NOV. 20**
Low-Income Customers Encouraged to Apply

MERRILLVILLE, Ind. – Natural gas customers who believe they may be eligible to receive heating bill assistance through the state’s Energy Assistance Program (EAP) can apply for these funds beginning Mon., Nov. 20, at energy assistance centers located throughout northern Indiana (see attached list).

To qualify for EAP funds, total household income must be at or below 150 percent of the federal poverty level. For example, a family of four with an annual income up to \$30,000.00 may qualify for EAP funds. The maximum amount a household can receive is \$535.00, which includes a \$200.00 crisis grant.

“Low-income customers who believe they may experience difficulty paying their heating bills this winter should take the time now to gather the documents they need to show they could qualify for energy assistance,” said NIPSCO President Mark Maassel. “As always, any customer who is experiencing trouble paying their bill should contact us before the bill is due so we have an opportunity to work together and explore what options may be available.”

Since the general requirements will vary from agency to agency, customers are encouraged to contact the agency ahead of time to confirm what documents they are required to bring. However, customers are typically asked to bring the following documents:

- Social security cards for all household members;
- Proof of income for the past 12 months (prior to date of application);
- Current utility bill; and
- Copy of lease for customers living in subsidized housing.

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ENERGY ASSISTANCE ENROLLMENT BEGINS NOV. 20
PAGE 2 OF 2

Applicant must have an income at or below 150 percent of the federal poverty guidelines, which are detailed below.

HOUSEHOLD SIZE	INCOME
1	\$14,700
2	\$19,800
3	\$24,900
4	\$30,000
5	\$35,100
6	\$40,200
7	\$45,300
8	\$50,400

Editor's Note: A full list of Energy Assistance Centers, or in-take sites, is enclosed in the body of the e-mail that delivered this news release.

NIPSCO, with headquarters in Merrillville, Ind., is one of the 10 energy distribution companies of NiSource Inc. (NYSE: NI). With over 712,000 natural gas customers and 445,000 electric customers across the northern third of Indiana, NIPSCO is the largest natural gas distribution company, and the second largest electric distribution company, in the state. NiSource distribution companies serve 3.7 million natural gas and electric customers primarily in nine states. More information about NIPSCO is available at www.nipsco.com.

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