



## Community Action E-Pages

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### Things to Know About Energy Share

Many people are unaware of Energy Share and its versatility. This program is designed to help individuals and families with difficult energy situations. It's a loan type program with no interest, or strict repayment schedules, to help those who may not qualify for other programs such as LIEAP. If you are experiencing a difficult energy situation, help is available. Energy Share can help with everything from deposits to disconnects, it can cover old bills, restore services, pay for firewood, or propane if your tank is less than 10%. The program even helped one household with the cost of installing an electric service pole.

There are countless other situations and circumstances that have been brought to the Energy Share Committee in Billings. This group does their best to try to help every household in whatever way they can. The committee also makes referrals to other internal HRDC programs and to a myriad of outside community providers. The 3 page application is straight forward and easy to complete. It requires the applicant to include a short letter explaining circumstance and situation. The applicant must also enclose the bill that they need assistance paying, and one month of verified income with a bank statement. If the household currently receives SNAP benefits (food stamps), income verification or bank statements are not required.

Each week, the committee meets with HRDC's Energy Services Director to review processed applications. Once approved, the applicant is quickly notified to ensure that their service is not disrupted and to avoid a reconnection fee. Typically, Energy Share reviews 25 to 35 applications a week. The program runs all year with no breaks. Eligibility for Energy Share, requires that a LIEAP application be completed during the heating season, September 1st thru April 30th.

As a side note, the Pandemic approval rate for this program has been 80%. The committee is very sensitive to the challenges households are facing during COVID. There are many factors to be considered in the decision making process; including whether the applicant used Energy Share before? Did they pay back the loan? Are there special current circumstances such as medical, garnishments, or COVID that have impacted their income? In the end, however, the process is incredibly fair. If you or someone you know needs assistance, contact HRDC's Energy Services at 406.247.4788, go to our website for an application [www.hrdc7.org](http://www.hrdc7.org), or email us at [info@hrdc7.org](mailto:info@hrdc7.org).



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