

OSAGE UTILITY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM POLICY

Purpose of Funds

The Osage Utility Assistance Program is a temporary program in FY 2024 and serves enrolled Osage members within the Osage Reservation (Osage County). Various utility vendors throughout Osage County have increased their charges to utility customers during FY 2024. In response the Osage Nation Congress has appropriated funds to the Financial Assistance Department. The purpose of this temporary program is to provide financial assistance to Osage members, who are responsible for household utilities, while they adjust their monthly budgets to afford the increase.

Assistance is available once, from June 1st through September 30th, 2024, per household. The benefit includes payment for energy charges or heating materials that provides heat or cooling to the residential home. The payment will be issued directly to the utility vendor.

For the purposes of this policy, and efforts to avoid duplication of services or benefits, energy assistance from the Department of Human Services (DHS), ECAP or Osage Nation LIHEAP Program is inclusive and is counted as eligible benefits with Osage Utility Assistance Program. The Financial Assistance Department will cross check, confirm and document any benefits received.

Designation of Administration

Osage Nation Financial Assistance Department
239 W. 12th Street
Pawhuska, OK 74056
Financial-assist@osagenation-nsn.gov
(918) 287-5325

Eligibility Requirements

Eligible members for Osage Utility Assistance must:

- Reside within the boundaries of the Osage Reservation (Osage County)
- Be a legally enrolled member of the Osage Nation at the time of application
- Be 18 years or older and have a utility account in their name
- Submit a completed application and attach the utility bill

Application & Determination Process

Eligibility is determined on information provided within the program application and supporting documentation. If the applicant is determined eligible for Utility Assistance:

- A letter is mailed or emailed to the applicant, notifying them of the determination, amount of assistance and vendor to be paid
- A payable is processed to the accounting department
- A check is mailed directly to the vendor

If the applicant is determined ineligible for Utility Assistance:

- A letter is mailed or emailed to the applicant, stating the reasons of denial.

Policy Effective Date: 06/1/2024

Benefit Amount

The amount of assistance is \$300 per household, paid directly to the utility vendor.

Outreach Activities and Program Resources

- Information material shared to our website and social media
- Information material posted in local & other tribal buildings

Confidential Records and Reporting

Applicants are informed, at the time of application, of their Rights and Responsibilities, All program staff are required to sign confidentiality agreements. The Osage Nation Financial Assistance Department will utilize software, to track applications, eligible households, and approved benefits. In accordance with accounting policies, all expenditures will be processed and tracked in Microix and Abilia software. All hard copy files are stored in locked cabinets, in the Financial Assistance file room, until sent to the Archives department, for retention and disposal.

The program data will be disclosed in the Annual Program Report, and will be submitted to the Secretary of Social Services, in accordance with required deadlines.